

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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In the matter of: :
 :
ALLISION WITH STATEN ISLAND FERRY :
TERMINAL MAINTENANCE PIER AT :
ST. GEORGE, STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK : DCA04MM001 BY THE FERRY ANDREW J.
BARBERI :
ON OCTOBER 15, 2003 :
 :
INTERVIEW OF: :
 :
EUGENE BRADY :
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Office of Marine Safety
NTSB

October 24, 2003

The above captioned interview was conducted, pursuant to notice.

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PROCEEDINGS

CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Good afternoon. It is October 24th, Friday. We're in the Staten Island Ferry's office. We're interviewing Mr. Eugene Brady about the accident on the Andrew Barberi on October 15th. My name is Morgan Turrell, group chairman, to my left:

CAPTAIN RYAN: Captain Ryan, New York City DOT, Staten Island Ferry.

MR. STEFANO: Nick Stefano, Coast Guard investigations.

CHRISTINE: Christine ..., Special Agent, Coast Guard Investigative Service.

MR. COBB: Charles Cobb, Coast Guard Marine Investigator.

MR. MURRELL: Robert Murrell, New York State Department of Transportation.

MR. HARDY: Detective Anthony Hardy, NYPD.

MR. BRADY: Gene Brady, Eugene Brady. E-U-G-E-N-E, B-R-A-D-Y.

CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Okay, and please acknowledge you're being recorded.

MR. BRADY: I am aware that we are being recorded.

CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Okay, and your age, sir?

MR. BRADY: Forty-three.

CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Mr. Brady, how long have you worked for the ferries?

MR. BRADY: Since 1988.

CHAIRMAN TURRELL: What is your current job title at the ferries?

MR. BRADY: I am the assistant to the Director.

1 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: And what do those duties entail?

2 MR. BRADY: The maintenance, concessions, and work in the terminals,
3 the operations.

4 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: And how did you get started in 1988? What was
5 your position and how did you move up to where you are now?

6 MR. BRADY: I was a deck hand in 1988. And two years ago I was
7 appointed.

8 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Can you tell us a little bit, in your own words, what
9 happened October 15th, from your perspective -- what you saw and what you heard
10 and what happened?

11 MR. BRADY: I was inside the terminal at around three o'clock I guess it
12 was. I'm not sure of the time. And I heard fire engines, and I see the fireman running
13 with a body -- with a body board -- a board that they would use. So my first thought
14 was maybe a construction accident, so curiously, I just walked behind them, and
15 when I came out to the breezeway on exiting -- I seen everybody running out onto the
16 pier.

17 I was just looking over to try to see what was going on and I seen life
18 jackets floating in the water. And at that point is when I realized that it was maybe
19 something more serious.

20 I was carrying tools at the time, so I proceeded to my office and John
21 White was in the office at that time, working on his computer, doing some paperwork
22 or something, and I -- I asked John what was going on. I think something happened.
23 And then the two of us exited the office -- we couldn't see anything in terms of a boat
24 or anything like that, we were just looking around, and trying to see what was going
25 on, a lot of action.

1 I guess the boat was coming around at that time. We went down to
2 the running slip and stood there, waiting for the boat to come in. When the boat
3 came in, I got onto the boat to see whatever assistance, or lend a hand, or whatever -
4 - whatever it was that I could do. I had no idea the magnitude of any of this situation
5 that we were about to see. It was terrible.

6 And then I stayed on the boat for a few minutes, trying to help people
7 -- helping people get off, carrying people off.

8 Shortly after that, John White came to me when I was out on the dock,
9 walking in and out, helping people, and John White came over to me and said to me
10 that we needed to go, and he asked me if I knew where Richie Smith lived, the
11 Assistant Captain. And I said that I did know where he lived. And he asked me to take
12 a ride with him and see if we could find him. He got in the truck and we drove to his
13 house.

14 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: And then what?

15 MR. BRADY: When we pulled up, John was on the phone -- I don't
16 know who he was talking to, but I jumped right out. I walked over to the front door,
17 and I noticed that it was closed but it wasn't -- the door catch wasn't -- it wasn't all the
18 way closed. John was still on the phone, and I said to John, hey, John, the door is
19 open. He's getting out of the car, and I knocked and walked in at the same time.

20 As soon as I came through the door, I seen Mrs. Smith. She turned
21 around I guess when she heard the door open and the light came into the house. The
22 house was a little dark, I guess. There wasn't a lot of light in the house. But I remember
23 the light went on her and she turned around and she's crying. And I said to her,
24 where's Richie? Calm down, calm down, where's Richie? She was hysterical. Her
25 daughter was there in the room with her, and they were holding a little baby. The

1 television was on, and there was a picture of the boat on the television. New York
2 One.

3 She said that Richie went up -- no, she said that Richie was going to try
4 to commit suicide. And I asked where he was, and she said he was in the bathroom.
5 Not being familiar with the house, I started looking for the bathroom. I found the
6 bathroom and no one was in it. It's only a few steps away from where I originally
7 stood. I said, he's not in the bathroom. She said, he's in the bathroom upstairs.

8 John and I raced upstairs and at the top of the stairs it was obvious --
9 there was a bedroom directly in front of us, the door was opened, and to the left was
10 the bathroom door. We knew it was the bathroom because the entrance door was
11 smaller. We just knew that was the bathroom. So we went up, as calmly as we could,
12 actually, and knocked on the door. Said, Richie. Richie you in there?

13 And Richie -- he responded. He said -- I don't even recall exactly what
14 it was that he said, but he acknowledged that he was inside the bathroom. And he
15 said he would be right out. John said, It's Gene Brady and I. It's John White and Gene
16 Brady, we need to talk to you right now Rich, you've got to open up the door. And he
17 responded again that he would be right out. Just give him a minute, and he'd be right
18 out.

19 At some point prior to that, after she had said -- I'm going to go back a
20 little bit -- after she had said that he was in the bathroom, we had asked her -- she said
21 he was going to commit suicide -- we asked her if he had a gun, how he was -- she
22 said, yes, he has a gun. But she didn't say that -- specifically that he had it with him.
23 She said -- I had said to her, is there a gun in the house? And she said, yes, there's a
24 gun in the house.

25 So when we got to the top of the stairs and knocked on the door, we

1 were trying to be calm. We were saying, hey, Rich, you know, open the door. And
2 then John and I were looking at each other saying, well, there's a possibility that he
3 has a gun and we knew he was in the room. So I said -- John and I agreed that we
4 wouldn't rush the door and break down the door and anything in fear that he might
5 have a gun and we didn't know what would happen.

6 At that point we had some dialogue going with him, so I said to John
7 that I'm going to go downstairs and I'm going to call 911. I went downstairs, and I
8 couldn't find the phone, and I remember asking where's the phone, where's the
9 phone, and anyway I end up with a phone, and I went out on the front lawn because
10 there was less chaos. So I exited the house, I went on the front lawn, and I dialed 911.

11 I called three times and got a recording. Twice and I got a recording,
12 but I hung up each time I got a recording. I think it was the third time that they picked
13 up, if I remember correctly. And I told the 911 operator -- I think I gave her my name,
14 and I told her that I worked for the Department of Transportation and that I was at the
15 house of the Captain of the boat and that he was threatening to commit suicide, but
16 he was locked in the bathroom. I just said we needed help. She asked me some
17 questions, I went through whatever she asked me -- I don't recall what was really said
18 in that whole conversation. And she said that help would be on the way.

19 Went back in the house. Went back upstairs. When I coming up the
20 stairs, I noticed some blood on the stairway. It was like at the top step that I seen the
21 blood. It was a big spot of blood. I don't remember if it was on the riser or was it on
22 the step itself, but I seen it.

23 And as soon as I seen it, simultaneously John was right there, I said,
24 "John, there's blood on the steps." And he said, "I just heard some weird noises in there"
25 -- he's bleeding, you know, and at that point John said, "Can you pick the lock?" It

1 was just a -- a bathroom entry lock -- you can slip the thing in there and open it up. I
2 said "Absolutely."

3 So I looked around and I couldn't find anything. I ran into the
4 bedroom and there were some cards, maybe birthday cards or some cards that were
5 displayed on the bedroom dresser, and one of them had a coat hanger, like a little
6 coat hanger on the card. So I pulled that apart and I took that wire and I came back
7 and I was trying to jimmy the lock, but the wire bent. It wasn't good.

8 At that time Richie's wife came up behind me and she said here's a
9 screwdriver. The screwdriver was just too big. So John and I decided to break the
10 door down. I was in the front. John said, "break it down". When I kicked the door, the
11 door didn't just fly open, but the whole frame sort of buckled and went in maybe a
12 foot, but it still didn't break, the whole thing went in. But I had John behind me,
13 slammed me through the door. So we burst through the door, and as soon as we got
14 in there, Richie was laying on the floor with his feet towards us, and he was bleeding --
15 a lot of blood.

16 He just was laying there and John got down on his knee, I think, John
17 got down close to him, still trying to talk to him and checking the wounds. We seen
18 there was blood on his chest, a lot of blood on his chest -- his clothes were soaked. His
19 buttoned-up shirt was open and he was in a T-shirt.

20 I said to John, I'm going back to call 911 again. John was trying to
21 give him first aid. We were getting towels. I said, I'm going to go call again. I ran
22 back outside the house. I had the phone. I had the phone. Somehow I knew where
23 the phone was. I called back on 911. I told them that we had gotten into the
24 bathroom and that he shot himself.

25 I'm going to go back again. Once we got through the bathroom, I

1 think one of the first things that John did was pick up a gun off the floor, and said to
2 me, what kind of gun is this? And I looked at it and I said I think it's a BB gun, or a pellet
3 gun. I think it's a pellet gun. It was easy to tell because the gun wasn't like any of
4 these ones that look like a real gun. It sort of was like a long barrelled gun. And the
5 bottom of the gun was open so that you could -- I could see that it was some kind of a
6 pump gun. So I knew it was an air gun. So I said to him, I think it's a BB gun or a pellet
7 gun. He said, well, get rid of it. Put it somewhere. So I went into the bedroom and I
8 put it in the laundry basket to keep it out of the mess.

9 At that point is when I went down and I called back 911. I called them
10 back and I told them that he had shot himself. We had thought that he had shot
11 himself in the head, because when he was laying there, there was a lot of blood by his
12 head. We also had -- when he was trying to give a little first aid there, we had pulled
13 up his shirt, and we seen wounds on his chest, on his left side chest, two on this side,
14 and one on this side. And John was saying -- I said, well, he shot himself in the chest,
15 and we were talking about that when -- before I went back out and John said, I think
16 he shot himself in the head too because of the blood by his head.

17 This all kind of happened kind of quick and I'm sorry to be back-
18 tracking on you. So anyway, I went back outside and I had called 911 and I told them
19 that he shot himself, and -- I don't even know if I mentioned that he had cut his wrist. It
20 was pretty obvious that he cut his wrist. We had put towels on it. His wrist was pretty
21 wide open. I think it was his left wrist, I remember -- yes, it was his left wrist.

22 And I told him, look, you guys got to get here quicker, because it
23 seemed like quite a long time, you know, I don't really know how much time had gone
24 by, but it seemed like we were waiting for a while, you know. I said, you guys got to
25 come here now. This situation had changed. And they just told me, go back inside,

1 try to administer more first aid. Put towels on it and hang up the phone and go back
2 and help the guy.

3 And that's what I did. I went back inside. And Richie's wife was
4 hopping all around and I was trying to calm her down. And John stayed in the room.
5 And then I went back outside again, and the police had pulled up, or the ambulance,
6 or somebody had come. I don't recall who it was first, and I brought them in and
7 showed them where the situation was.

8 After that, once they got there, I grabbed Richie's wife and made her,
9 escorted her downstairs into the living room, and told her that she needed to stay
10 away and let them do what they had to do.

11 At that time I realized that the daughter was gone. And -- she was
12 only dressed in like a little T-shirt, she had this little infant baby, and I was like -- and I
13 went out in the back yard and I looked out the window, I seen the daughter out there,
14 freezing, crying, shivering and shivering. So I went in the back yard and I told her,
15 come back inside, and then I had his wife and his daughter on the couch, and I just
16 sort of stayed with them, and asked them, tried to calm them down, tell them that
17 everything was going to be okay.

18 Then I guess the rest is history. The police were there, the ambulance
19 was there. Richie's sister showed up. She had called -- at some point she had called
20 when I was on the phone with 911, I think, and she was saying this is Richie's sister, who
21 is this? And I told her my name is Gene and I'm over here trying to help out. She was
22 already in route to the house. She said, I'll be there shortly. So she came, and they
23 were all upset.

24 After all that, we packed them in their car. John -- I drove the two
25 women to the hospital in their car. John followed me over. I went in the hospital. I

1 gave them their keys. I told them where the car was parked and I came back to the
2 ferry. And that's it.

3 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: You said that when Captain Smith was behind
4 the door and you started a dialogue, can you tell us if he said anything about the
5 accident?

6 MR. BRADY: We didn't talk about the accident. It was not mentioned.

7 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Did he relate any names of people who may
8 have been involved in the accident?

9 MR. BRADY: He didn't say anything like that.

10 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: He said he'd be right out. He'd be right out. Give
11 him a minute. What of those things --

12 MR. BRADY: He was very calm. He sounded calm. And we were
13 trying to be calm. But it wasn't calm. It wasn't a calm situation. We were not calm.
14 But we were trying to be calm, and he sounded calm.

15 Oh, and then there was one other thing that was -- that I forgot to say.
16 While I was with the women, I went back up to check on Richie. I had them sitting on
17 the couch. Now the police were there and everything, and I went back up to see
18 what was going on, and see if I could help, and the -- the paramedics had him on the
19 board and they were going to carry him out, and they were having a rough time
20 lifting him up. So I -- there was one man on each end, but the board had handles that
21 if there was people on any side, you were able to assist them. So they were trying to
22 pick him up and they were having a rough time, so I got to the center of the board
23 and I was lifting him up. At that point I was sort of right near Richie's head, you know,
24 and I was saying, Richie, everything's going to be okay. Relax, duh-duh. And he just
25 said, "Why, why? I was feeling so mellow, why did you come here?" Not even "why

1 did you come here", but he said to me -- "I was feeling so mellow" -- and that's the only
2 thing I could think of that --

3 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Do you recall any comments that Captain Smith
4 may have made to his wife?

5 MR. BRADY: No, I don't.

6 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Captain Ryan?

7 CAPTAIN RYAN: Did you hear him say anything about what happened
8 on the boat? What may have happened?

9 MR. BRADY: Anything that Richie was saying, once we broke down the
10 door, it wasn't really as calm as it was prior to breaking the door down -- anything that
11 Richie was saying was soft spoken. He wasn't shouting out or anything. He was kind of
12 -- all I heard was any dialogue that John and I were having, I -- you know -- no, the
13 answer to that question is no. I didn't hear anything.

14 CAPTAIN RYAN: Was there any other blood trail except for that one
15 drop -- that one --

16 MR. BRADY: I didn't see any other blood -- obviously, other than what
17 was in the bathroom. That was the only blood that I seen. And that's when we
18 determined that -- that's when we figured, oh, he's in there, and I said, John, there's
19 blood. You know, I see blood. And that's when we figured he might have hurt himself
20 already and we should -- John had said, "I just heard some strange noise in there. It
21 sounded like metal." That's what he was saying. "It sounded like metal hitting the
22 floor."

23 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: The blood on the landing, where --

24 MR. BRADY: There wasn't any -

25 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Oh, on the stairs. On the steps.

1 MR. BRADY: It was only maybe the top two steps, and I'm not -- and as
2 I said -- if I recall, and I can't remember well, were the stairs brown? I think so. Were
3 the risers white? That's what I think because I remember there was contrast. It wasn't
4 like I was looking at something brown, with a brown spot of blood. I remember seeing
5 the contrast in my head, of seeing that it was -- I knew that it was blood right away.

6 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Is it possible that on your first trip upstairs that one
7 of you may have had blood on you from the accident scene and brought it there?

8 MR. BRADY: I didn't have any blood on me -- at all.

9 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: And do you know if John had any?

10 MR. BRADY: John, I don't think went on the boat.

11 CAPTAIN RYAN: Do you know if Richie was in the bathroom, out of the
12 bathroom, did he go up and down or --

13 MR. BRADY: Well, now that you -- that's a good question, Pat. Now
14 that you mention it, at some point, in all the madness, after we had broken down the
15 door, there was another bedroom to the left, and I seen bloody handprints on that
16 door. Underneath the door knob, there was a swipe of blood. I had seen that. But
17 that was after we had broken down the door. I remember thinking to myself, look
18 there's blood on the door. In my mind I said, oh, there's blood on that door also. But
19 I'm sorry -- I don't remember specifically what your question was.

20 CAPTAIN RYAN: If at any time Richie would leave the bathroom, come
21 down talk to his wife and his daughter and go back --

22 MR. BRADY: Oh, absolutely not. No. When we got to Richie, he wasn't
23 in any condition to be getting up to do anything. He was in -- I'm not a medical guy,
24 and I really don't know, but I sure can tell if someone is bleeding a lot. And he was not
25 looking good at all. He was -- we was as white as a sheet. He looked bad.

1 MR. STEFANO: That handprint on the door. Was it on the outside of the
2 door? Can you describe where --

3 MR. BRADY: Well, it was a left-handed door -- wait, I'm sorry, it was a
4 right handed door, and it was under the door knob, and it wasn't a hand print, it
5 looked more like a three finger smear, just a smear. It was thick blood. I remember
6 thinking to myself -- and also -- there were a lot of tools. It seemed like Richie might
7 have been doing some work in his house, because I remember specifically there
8 being a chop saw just on the left side of the bathroom door. And I was thinking that
9 he really had to climb over this pile of stuff to get to that door. There was some stuff
10 there. It wasn't just a clear path and walk through.

11 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Nick.

12 MR. STEFANO: That's it.

13 CHRISTINE: Did you hear the heavy metal sound like something was
14 being dropped? Did you actually hear it?

15 MR. BRADY: I didn't hear that. John -- John -- when I came back up I
16 said to John, "John, there's blood on the stairs." And John goes, "I heard a noise,
17 Gene. I don't know what it is, but it sounded like metal hitting the floor."

18 CHRISTINE: So it may have happened while you were downstairs.

19 MR. BRADY: Absolutely happened when I was downstairs. I had to
20 come -- I was trying to do that 911 thing, and I was trying to stay away from the
21 madness.

22 MR. HARDY: The blood -- it was more contained more around the hair
23 or the body, where was more of the blood? Where was most of the blood in the
24 bathroom?

25 MR. BRADY: That's another thing you -- I'm a little squeamish. I mean

1 put me in the position, I could actually be a lot better, but I don't really like blood, so I
2 really didn't go in there and John was doing the first aid thing. We got sort of
3 haphazardly delegated what we were doing. He was doing the first aid thing, he -- he
4 was asking me get me clean towels, get me towels. Get me towels. To answer your
5 question, there was a lot of blood by his chest. There was a lot of blood by his left arm.
6 And there was blood by his head. I could see the blood by his head, so there was just
7 a lot of blood.

8 MR. HARDY: And he was on his back?

9 MR. BRADY: Absolutely, he was on his back.

10 MR. HARDY: Did you know Captain Smith before this?

11 MR. BRADY: Absolutely.

12 MR. HARDY: Can you describe -- you knew where he lived, but can
13 you tell us about Captain Smith from your perspective.

14 MR. BRADY: Captain Smith is a very nice man. He's a conscientious
15 captain. He's also a stickler for the rules. He wouldn't tolerate anybody not doing
16 what they were supposed to be doing. He was kind of thorough like that. He didn't
17 like it if you tried to play games, if you didn't want to show up for your lookout,
18 anything like that. Late lookout, he didn't appreciate if you would come up late. He
19 was a good captain -- and he is a good captain, he's just -- you know -- me, I feel a
20 little bit biased because I really like the guy, you know. And it's a terrible thing that
21 happened, but I'm sure everybody that interviewed said, oh, he was a great guy. He
22 is a great guy. He was a good captain. He was very calm. I worked on his crew.

23 And how I knew where he lived is that Christmas time, he threw a party
24 for the crew. Usually if you worked on his crew, he would have the crew members of
25 his boat come over to his house. His wife would prepare food, and I went to a

1 Christmas party at his house.

2 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Do you know if Captain Smith has an associate
3 there -- friend, colleague that he's been seen around a lot, kind of buddies? Anyone
4 in particular that you know that he --

5 MR. BRADY: No. Captain Smith was friendly with everybody, but I
6 wouldn't specifically say that there was anybody that he was palling around with.

7 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: And Captain Gansas? Do you know much
8 about Captain Gansas?

9 MR. BRADY: I worked with him.

10 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: What can you tell us about Captain Gansas?

11 MR. BRADY: To start off with, he's a gentleman. He's a straight --
12 straight guy, a hard working guy. Again, you know, I feel a little bit biased, he's a great
13 guy, you know. He's into health. He's into taking care of himself. And again, he was a
14 good captain.

15 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Did you ever have the opportunity to actually sail
16 with him in the wheel house?

17 MR. BRADY: I don't know if I was ever on any of his crews as a crew
18 member, but certainly down here in the mix, you work with everyone.

19 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Do you have anything more? That concludes
20 the interview. If you'll just say again that this is being recorded, just acknowledge you
21 know it's being recorded.

22 MR. BRADY: I acknowledge that I'm being recorded.

23 CHAIRMAN TURRELL: Good interview. Thank you.

24 (Whereupon, the interview of Mr. Eugene Brady in the above
25 captioned matter was adjourned.)