

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of: *
*
* Docket No. DCA03MM032
SS NORWAY *
*

Wednesday,
May 28, 2003

INTERVIEW OF:

JOSE OMIER

PRESENT:

ROB JONES, NTSB
LEONARDO ESQUEA, NCL

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. JONES: This is interview with Jose Omier,
3 Safety Number 3-0-3. And it is two o'clock, the 28 of
4 May.

5 Okay, Jose, I will introduce myself to you.
6 I am Rob Jones and Leonardo from NCL.

7 And your duties are?

8 MR. OMIER: When they come through?

9 MR. JONES: No, when, what do you do on the
10 ship?

11 MR. OMIER: Second steward.

12 MR. JONES: Second steward. Okay. That
13 morning, we would just like to kind of get a time frame
14 for that morning. So, what were you doing immediately
15 before you noticed there was something wrong or heard
16 anything?

17 MR. OMIER: Well, I was --

18 MR. JONES: Okay.

19 MR. OMIER: And was sleeping.

20 MR. JONES: And what is your room number?

21 MR. OMIER: Biscayne 310.

22 MR. JONES: Okay.

23 MR. OMIER: I was sleeping and I worked that
24 night until three o'clock in the morning because I had
25 something to finish, a scheduling for the -- I fall

1 asleep and I wake about 20 minutes to seven, that was
2 the time I wake or something like 15 minutes to seven.

3 And what happened is that apparently this, whatever
4 explosion or what happened before, that sound before, I
5 didn't hear it. I didn't realize that there was
6 something going on. And after that time I began to
7 follow up with the work I was doing and then the lights
8 went off.

9 MR. JONES: Okay. That was your first
10 indication.

11 MR. OMIER: Yes, that something was wrong.

12 MR. JONES: The lights going off.

13 MR. OMIER: Yes.

14 MR. JONES: In your cabin.

15 MR. OMIER: Exactly.

16 MR. JONES: Okay.

17 MR. OMIER: After that I, I got up and opened
18 the door to go outside and then the emergency light was
19 on, so I immediately know something is wrong. I put on
20 the TV to know what is going on because sometime you
21 know -- So I checked, you know, when you put on this
22 channel three or 11, you can see where the ship is and
23 then, actually the ship was docked, okay. But, I
24 didn't have anything else, I was aware something is
25 wrong. And then I saw people running around and you

1 know, this gangway, gangway all the way up, there was
2 people like pushing going through, everybody was
3 running out, going out. But, I didn't hear any
4 announcement, any alarm or anything. I just, I just,
5 didn't follow the people. I just stand there and focus
6 in, you know, to get a chance to what is going on
7 before I did any movement. And then right away I hear
8 the Alpha, I think it was in main galley -- somebody,
9 in the mess room or somewhere like that, after that
10 then I hear the Bravo. After the Bravo then right away
11 I know there is something, something big. So, I went
12 back into my room, I was standing by the door. I went
13 back into my room. I went to my room. I went back
14 inside the room and then I get myself ready, my jacket,
15 I get my hat and my card and then I waited until the
16 alarm sounded.

17 MR. JONES: Okay. When you heard the alarm,
18 what was the alarm, the sound of the alarm?

19 MR. OMIER: Well, it, you didn't hear that
20 that strong blast. But, you could hear the seven
21 short.

22 MR. JONES: Okay.

23 MR. OMIER: You know you have to be at the
24 emergency station. The whistle, you know the whistle
25 alarm that just goes --

1 MR. JONES: Right.

2 MR. OMIER: And then I went upstairs to my
3 station.

4 MR. JONES: And where is your station?

5 MR. OMIER: On the -- station that is number
6 two.

7 MR. JONES: Okay. So you heard Alpha, you
8 heard Bravo and then you were still in your room and
9 when you finally heard the emergency alarm.

10 MR. OMIER: Yes.

11 MR. JONES: You went to your station and so
12 you remained aboard the ship.

13 MR. OMIER: Yes.

14 MR. JONES: The entire time.

15 MR. OMIER: Exactly.

16 MR. JONES: Okay. So no, so no time that day
17 did you go ashore?

18 MR. OMIER: No.

19 MR. JONES: Okay.

20 MR. OMIER: I finished working that day until
21 11:30.

22 MR. JONES: Okay.

23 MR. OMIER: And anyway, you know, I have to
24 get the board to check off the people.

25 MR. JONES: Right.

1 MR. OMIER: I checked off everybody and
2 remained in there until we went to the meeting and
3 everything was checked out there.

4 I think, the only person that normally worked
5 with me, beside me and was missing was -- who is that
6 lady that is in 204?

7 MR. JONES: Okay.

8 MR. OMIER: But, I saw her with her lights,
9 she went before me. But, when she was passing by
10 Biscayne, you know, they were telling people get out,
11 get out, there was something going on, and nobody know
12 what it is, so they said to get out --

13 MR. JONES: And who did you see waving people
14 out at the gangway?

15 MR. OMIER: Well, I didn't see exactly people,
16 but I heard the noise.

17 MR. JONES: You did.

18 MR. OMIER: Yes. Get off the ship, get off
19 the ship.

20 MR. JONES: Okay.

21 MR. OMIER: And I saw people -- You had some
22 people that were panic, they were like, look this way,
23 look this way and there was -- I was like, I couldn't
24 see, but I still didn't do anything until I wait for
25 the alarm to sound and then I did what I had to do.

1 MR. JONES: Okay. And what kind of training
2 did you get?

3 MR. OMIER: I --

4 MR. JONES: What kind of training do you have
5 from NCL?

6 MR. OMIER: I have all the basic safety course
7 and -- I went to even lifeboat commander. Everything,
8 fire fighting.

9 MR. JONES: Do you feel that training help you
10 in this situation?

11 MR. OMIER: Yes, it has, even though, if you
12 don't have these training, you would be panic. You do
13 this training and -- then it becomes like a habit. So
14 you know exactly what to do. Because even though I
15 hear people say get off the ship, I won't get off,
16 because I know, I know what I am suppose to do,
17 especially -- I wouldn't do that.

18 MR. JONES: That is great.

19 Did, sorry for going back, but, your exact
20 duties on the emergency team?

21 MR. OMIER: Route station leader.

22 MR. JONES: Route station leader. Okay. And
23 that one has a number.

24 MR. OMIER: Route station number three.

25 MR. JONES: And that, are you taking up to

1 passengers?

2 MR. OMIER: No.

3 MR. JONES: No. Muster crew members?

4 MR. OMIER: --

5 MR. JONES: Okay. And how many are in that
6 station?

7 MR. OMIER: That station is -- about 125.

8 MR. JONES: So, you, at that time you were
9 responsible for taking them up is 125. Do you have an
10 estimate of how many were there?

11 MR. OMIER: Not exactly. I didn't have the
12 number. Because I know something like over 20
13 something like that.

14 MR. JONES: Okay.

15 MR. OMIER: Yeah.

16 MR. JONES: And how do you relay that to the
17 bridge or --

18 MR. OMIER: There is a messenger that goes
19 around with his clipboard.

20 MR. JONES: Okay.

21 MR. OMIER: And then, at that time, no one --

22 MR. JONES: Okay. And how long did you stay
23 at that station?

24 MR. OMIER: I wouldn't exactly know how many
25 hours, but it was a for a long time until they called

1 me into the --

2 MR. JONES: And how did you know --

3 MR. OMIER: Probably 10, 10:30 somewhere
4 around that time. It was a long while. I know it was
5 a long while.

6 MR. JONES: Okay. I think that kind of covers
7 it, Jose.

8 MR. OMIER: I think the most people I was
9 missing was the fire fighters because I have a lot of
10 fire fighters in that area, that station.

11 MR. JONES: And do you think they were ashore,
12 do you know where they were at the time?

13 MR. OMIER: The fire fighters, they were the
14 people that were missing at the time, when we would
15 have the drill, most of them are missing because they
16 are downstairs fighting the fire, but they will come
17 up, they will come up after, and then I can get chance
18 to check them off, but in this real emergency, then it
19 was something else. It was the next day --

20 MR. JONES: So this was the first time an
21 actual emergency happened.

22 MR. OMIER: Yes.

23 MR. JONES: You seemed to perform pretty well.

24 Do you think there is anything this company or other
25 ships could do to make drills more realistic?

1 MR. OMIER: Well, I, I think I can make a
2 recommendation. For example, you know, you know, the
3 time we are living now, like for example, I know, I
4 know -- things like explosion and things like that, I
5 think, if I had heard the explosion myself, I was close
6 to the explosion -- Then you have, you know, you know,
7 the impact, you know, it is different. But, I think
8 they should do something to prepare people for this
9 thing like explosion observation.

10 MR. JONES: And the way you do drills now, and
11 I know this company does a lot of drills, this ship, do
12 you know beforehand the drills are coming, when the
13 drills are coming?

14 MR. OMIER: Well, we, like the drills we know
15 exactly when we are having drills.

16 MR. JONES: Right. Do you think having some
17 unannounced drills --

18 MR. OMIER: Would help.

19 MR. JONES: Would help.

20 MR. OMIER: Well, you know, if we are doing
21 like, for the --

22 MR. JONES: Probably and practical.

23 MR. OMIER: Yes.

24 MR. JONES: Without, just the crew was aboard.

25 MR. OMIER: Yes, I would recommend that.

1 MR. JONES: Okay.

2 MR. OMIER: It would help. At least you know
3 exactly what this person is able to do. And then you
4 can take that, you know right away where you are going
5 to find certain people. Some people really, some
6 people really get panicky easily, some people not, and
7 then right away you can know these guys --

8 MR. JONES: How long have you been working for
9 the company?

10 MR. OMIER: Eleven years.

11 MR. JONES: Eleven years with NCL.

12 MR. OMIER: Yes.

13 MR. JONES: And how long on this ship?

14 MR. OMIER: My first ship.

15 MR. JONES: This is your ship, huh?

16 MR. OMIER: Yes.

17 MR. JONES: It is a grand old ship.

18 MR. OMIER: Yes.

19 MR. JONES: Did you have a sea going career
20 before you came to NCL?

21 MR. OMIER: Nothing.

22 MR. JONES: And did they provide you the
23 training to go up to second steward, in the steward
24 department?

25 MR. OMIER: Well, you know, you make yourself,

1 you know, if you feel like you can do the job, a chance
2 and you train --

3 MR. JONES: Okay. That is all I have. Leo?

4 MR. ESQUEA: I just want to make it clear.
5 You were in your cabin at the time of that, you didn't
6 hear the blast.

7 MR. OMIER: No.

8 MR. ESQUEA: Okay. You left your cabin, and
9 you went to your emergency station.

10 MR. OMIER: No. I didn't left my cabin. I
11 just opened the door, I opened the door when the light
12 went off to make sure what was going on, and I stand by
13 the door.

14 MR. ESQUEA: Okay.

15 MR. OMIER: And then that is when I --

16 MR. ESQUEA: And what time did you leave your
17 cabin?

18 MR. OMIER: Exactly what time I leave my
19 cabin, when I leave for my emergency station, then that
20 was about, I would say like seven o'clock, because that
21 is when the alarm sounded.

22 MR. ESQUEA: So you left after the alarm.

23 MR. OMIER: Yes.

24 MR. ESQUEA: Okay. Where is your station, your
25 emergency station?

1 MR. OMIER: My emergency station is Olympia
2 Deck, route number three.

3 MR. ESQUEA: Okay. And how was the traffic
4 when you got into your station? Did you see the crew
5 members doing passenger direction, or where you --

6 MR. OMIER: Well, most of the crew members
7 that was running, when I -- I checked the one on the
8 outside to let him know -- so I check the crew and I
9 went upstairs to Olympia, because the guests didn't
10 know what was going on.

11 MR. ESQUEA: So, the guests you encountered on
12 your way --

13 MR. OMIER: I didn't -- But, they know there
14 is an emergency station and they don't move, they just
15 stay. If you don't tell them what to do, they don't
16 move. So, that is what happened, so I didn't encounter
17 much people, just a few that was running on Biscayne.
18 They were told to get off the ship.

19 MR. ESQUEA: They told --

20 MR. OMIER: Yes, told to get off the ship.
21 From what I understand that is where everything
22 happened.

23 MR. JONES: Do you think a situation like
24 this, the passengers should be able to look to crew
25 members for direction?

1 MR. OMIER: No, I don't think so. That is
2 why we have the steward -- but, I mean, if they are not
3 here, these alarms, you know, then we have to be sure
4 you are -- having people running in and out different
5 directions --

6 MR. JONES: Okay. Thank you, Jose.

7 MR. OMIER: Thank you.

8 MR. JONES: You are welcome. This concluded
9 Jose Omier's interview and we will start with another
10 one shortly.

11 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)