

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of:	*	
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ALLISION WITH STATEN ISLAND	*	
FERRY TERMINAL MAINTENANCE	*	DCA-04-MM-001
PIER AT ST. GEORGE'S,	*	
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK BY THE	*	
FERRY ANDREW J. BARBERI on	*	
OCTOBER 15, 2003	*	

Thursday,
October 16, 2003

Coast Guard Center

INTERVIEW OF:

JASON RICE

PRESENT: BILL WOODY
MORGAN TURRELL

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TURRELL: Good morning, Mr. Rice. This is Morgan Terrell from the NTSB. We are interviewing you here on October 20, at the Coast Guard Activity Center.

If you would please kindly state your name, spelling it, please.

MR. RICE: My name is Jason Rice, J-A-S-O-N, R-I-C-E.

MR. TURRELL: And would you please acknowledge this is being recorded.

MR. RICE: Yes, I know.

MR. TURRELL: And how old are you?

MR. RICE: Twenty three.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. And how long have you been in the Coast Guard?

MR. RICE: Three and a half years, almost four years.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. And what is your current assignment with the Coast Guard?

MR. RICE: I work as a vessel traffic service operator in New York.

MR. TURRELL: And how long have you been at that particular post?

MR. RICE: About a year and a half.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. Have you responded to

1 other emergencies in the past?

2 MR. RICE: Yes.

3 MR. TURRELL: Roughly in one watch cycle, how
4 many emergencies do you typically encounter?

5 MR. RICE: It is not that often, but, I would
6 say maybe once a month.

7 MR. TURRELL: Once a month. And how many
8 times have you handled a major marine casualty?

9 MR. RICE: I would say that was my first major
10 marine casualty.

11 MR. TURRELL: And what is your duty assignment
12 when you receive a call from a major marine casualty,
13 your task work?

14 MR. RICE: First and foremost would be --
15 procedures, location, intentions and even -- First of
16 all, get their location. I already knew their location
17 because it is the Staten Island Ferry and he said he
18 was at St. George. Intentions, which he came me his
19 intentions that they, you know, what was happening.
20 And then if they need anything, which he stated he
21 needed assistance from the Coast Guard. And then tell
22 my watch supervisor, watch officer, which immediately
23 turned around, which they had already received a phone
24 call. So, they were already making all their initial
25 actions.

1 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, before, before you
2 received the call what were you doing? What was your
3 assignment?

4 MR. RICE: I was very busy at that time. A
5 lot of shipping traffic moves through the harbor, 14 is
6 one of the busiest channels, because that is the main
7 channel for the lower bay, upper bay -- New York Bay.
8 So, there was a lot of ships moving through at that
9 time. And I was pretty much working a lot with those
10 guys.

11 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And do you recall any
12 other traffic in the immediate vicinity of the Middle
13 Harbor, Staten Island Ferry Terminal, any major traffic
14 that may recollect something, having seen the ferry
15 accident, to your knowledge?

16 MR. RICE: No, I do not at this time.

17 MR. TURRELL: So you don't recall any, do you
18 have to refer to find that information, off the top of
19 your head, do you know that there was no other major
20 traffic who would have had a good observation of the
21 accident?

22 MR. RICE: Yes, from the top of my head I
23 can't say, I really wouldn't be able to know that.

24 MR. TURRELL: From your knowledge, do you
25 know, would you be able to get that information for us?

1 Do they normally log all the vessels that they handle,
2 is there a record of that somewhere?

3 MR. RICE: I believe we possibly made a
4 printout at that time.

5 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

6 MR. RICE: So, I think that is in the report,
7 our report.

8 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

9 MR. RICE: There is a printout of that area,
10 so that probably would have that.

11 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Now when you received the
12 call by VHS 14, do you recall if the call came from the
13 vessel or from another vessel?

14 MR. RICE: It came from the ferry Barberi.

15 MR. TURRELL: And besides the initial call,
16 were there subsequent calls from the ferry?

17 MR. RICE: Yes, I had, I believe one other
18 subsequent call that was from him saying that they,
19 there were five emergency vehicles were on the scene
20 and they were going to off load passengers.

21 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Did the person identify
22 himself as to who he was?

23 MR. RICE: The only way he identified himself
24 was saying he was from the ferry Barberi.

25 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Was it, to your knowledge,

1 the same person in both calls?

2 MR. RICE: By the sound of his voice, yes.
3 You get pretty familiar with hearing the voices all the
4 time, so.

5 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Normally when a vessel
6 departs New York, do they make a call normally?

7 MR. RICE: Yes, when they depart, is when we
8 receive their call. We don't normally receive a call
9 when they are moored.

10 MR. TURRELL: Do you remember if the vessel
11 checked in that day?

12 MR. RICE: Yes.

13 MR. TURRELL: And do you know off the top of
14 your head what time that departure call was made?

15 MR. RICE: It was approximately 1600.

16 MR. TURRELL: You didn't handle that call, it
17 a different operator, or was that you?

18 MR. RICE: Yes, that would have been a
19 different operator. I believe that is right around our
20 relief time.

21 MR. TURRELL: So there is no way for you to
22 know if it was the same operator on the ferry making
23 that call.

24 MR. RICE: The only way would be to, I don't
25 recollect if I made that initial check in or not, but

1 it would be recorded on the radio.

2 MR. TURRELL: Okay. After the vessel made its
3 second call, you didn't receive any further calls from
4 the Barberi that day, is that correct? After you
5 received two calls.

6 MR. RICE: After that phone call, that was the
7 last one.

8 MR. TURRELL: The last one.

9 Now after you received the first call, you
10 notified your watch commander and did he have any
11 instructions for you as to specifically what to do with
12 the Barberi, any further calls -- any subsequent calls?

13 MR. RICE: The next command I received was
14 made a security broadcast on 14, 13 and 16 about the
15 incident.

16 MR. TURRELL: Do you recall if any other
17 vessels called in offering assistance?

18 MR. RICE: No, not on 14.

19 MR. TURRELL: Do you recall if any other
20 vessels made inquiries to the Coast Guard about the
21 accident, over VHF 14?

22 MR. RICE: Not for that hour, pretty much it
23 was, it was pretty quick after that. Then we are
24 relieved again at 1600.

25 MR. TURRELL: Okay. I have no questions.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you recall watching
2 the boat transit to the harbor at all? I mean, was
3 anything out of the ordinary?

4 MR. RICE: Not really anything out of the
5 ordinary. I mean, we knew the winds were very high
6 that day and it had gotten to 50 knots throughout the
7 day and tides were really, really running weird that
8 day, so, that was and then we were trying to keep an
9 eye on everything, so, I wouldn't watch over the Staten
10 Island Ferry at that time.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

12 MR. TURRELL: Bill Woody.

13 MR. WOODY: Yes. You said a few things about
14 when an emergency comes in. You gets his location and
15 I missed the other two items. After you get the
16 location, what else do you get?

17 MR. RICE: It is called LINT procedures,
18 intention.

19 MR. WOODY: It is called LINT procedures.

20 MR. WOODY: L-E-N-T.

21 MR. RICE: L-I-N-T.

22 MR. WOODY: Okay. Okay.

23 MR. RICE: Location, intention, needs and
24 tell, is what it stands for.

25 MR. WOODY: Okay. Location, intention, and the

1 N is?

2 MR. RICE: Needs.

3 MR. WOODY: Needs.

4 MR. WOODY: All right. T?

5 MR. RICE: Tell.

6 MR. WOODY: Tell. What does that mean?

7 MR. RICE: That is informing your supervisors.

8 MR. WOODY: Okay. Pass the word up the line.

9 MR. RICE: Yes.

10 MR. WOODY: Okay. And then, okay, that is it.

11 MR. RICE: Yes.

12 MR. WOODY: Thank you, I just wanted to make
13 sure I got that.

14 You mentioned the report, is it a written
15 wrap-up report that you make when something like this
16 happens? Or what were you referring to when you said
17 our report?

18 MR. RICE: As in something --

19 MR. WOODY: I am sorry, I am trying to -- I
20 thought I heard you say our, there would be in our
21 report.

22 MR. RICE: -- that report.

23 MR. WOODY: That report.

24 MR. RICE: Yes.

25 MR. WOODY: Could you describe the incident

1 report to us and tell us what that is about?

2 MR. RICE: I do not make that report. The
3 watch supervisor made the report.

4 MR. WOODY: Okay.

5 MR. RICE: So, it is just a written report
6 that we log every time there is an incident with any
7 kind of vessel.

8 MR. WOODY: Okay. Is this a verbal report or a
9 written report?

10 MR. RICE: Written.

11 MR. WOODY: Written.

12 MR. RICE: Written report.

13 MR. WOODY: Okay.

14 MR. RICE: Details what happened.

15 MR. WOODY: Okay. So this would be something
16 that we could probably get then.

17 MR. RICE: Yes, it will have the printout of
18 the harbor or the printout of that general vicinity and
19 then that will have the written report of what happened
20 and the time.

21 MR. WOODY: Okay. And when you have all this
22 traffic, you say it was very busy, upper, lower bay and
23 the calls, do you pay any particular attention to the
24 ferries?

25 MR. RICE: Well, we, we do initially check

1 them in, give them their initial traffic, and as they
2 are transiting, we can see their radar moving along the
3 harbor, and we can, we can basically, if we needed to
4 contact them, we can call them and give them updates,
5 but normally we heard them on 13 making their, making
6 their tracking arrangements.

7 MR. WOODY: Okay.

8 MR. RICE: So, we don't have to update them as
9 much as they are moving through the harbor.

10 MR. WOODY: Okay. Very good.

11 I am sorry, I did have a couple of questions
12 about your watch setup. You mentioned about relieving
13 the watch. How many people are on the watch in the
14 vessel traffic center?

15 MR. RICE: Five, there is five, three special
16 operators, a watch supervisor and a watch officer
17 inside the --

18 MR. WOODY: Three special operators --

19 MR. RICE: Yes.

20 MR. WOODY: Okay.

21 MR. RICE: Channel 11, 14 and 12.

22 MR. WOODY: Channel 11 --

23 MR. RICE: Fourteen.

24 MR. WOODY: Fourteen.

25 MR. RICE: And 12.

1 MR. WOODY: Twelve. Okay. Describe, let's
2 say Sector 1, what is Sector 1?

3 MR. RICE: Channel 11 is initial calls,
4 initial check ins.

5 MR. WOODY: Okay. And the geographic vicinity.

6 MR. RICE: Would be the whole harbor, the
7 whole VHF area.

8 MR. WOODY: Okay. And 14 is that --

9 MR. RICE: Fourteen is the upper bay, lower
10 bay, -- New York Bay.

11 MR. WOODY: New York Bay. Okay. And 12?

12 MR. RICE: And then 12 monitors the -- part of
13 the lower bay, and the East River.

14 MR. WOODY: Okay. Good.

15 MR. RICE: And Anchorage.

16 MR. WOODY: And the Anchorage.

17 MR. RICE: Yes.

18 MR. WOODY: And how long are the duration of
19 your watches?

20 MR. RICE: Each sector is an hour, the
21 duration of the watch of 12 hours.

22 MR. WOODY: When you have an hour watch, do
23 you go every sector or --

24 MR. RICE: Yes, we go through 11, 14, and 12
25 each hour, and then you get an hour break and then go

1 back in.

2 MR. WOODY: You get an hour break between
3 sectors.

4 MR. RICE: Yes.

5 MR. WOODY: So, if you are on, if you were
6 handling say Channel 11, at the hour you would go off
7 for an hour and come back on --

8 MR. RICE: No, you go through each three, and
9 then you get an hour off.

10 MR. WOODY: Okay.

11 MR. RICE: So you are 11, 14, 12 and then the
12 hour off.

13 MR. WOODY: A hour off. Okay. And how often do
14 you have duty in the center?

15 MR. RICE: We work two on, two off, with
16 sliding weekends between, or a three day weekend every
17 other weekend.

18 MR. WOODY: Okay.

19 MR. RICE: And that was my first day back.

20 MR. WOODY: Okay. You come on for a 24 hour
21 shift, and you are off for --

22 MR. RICE: Two days on, two days off, a 48
23 hour shift where you are working a 12 hour watch, 12
24 hours off, 12 hour watch, 12 hours off.

25 MR. WOODY: Okay. Do you barracks here or

1 places to stay here in the building or do you go home?

2 MR. RICE: Yes, we have places to stay here
3 and you can go home, whichever.

4 MR. WOODY: Whichever you want. But, if you
5 are in the duty section --

6 MR. RICE: Right.

7 MR. WOODY: Your two days of duty then --

8 MR. RICE: Then you are staying here.

9 MR. WOODY: You stay here. If something, do
10 you hear any kind of recorded -- to record the radar?

11 MR. RICE: I don't believe there is. I
12 wouldn't know.

13 MR. WOODY: Okay. If there were -- appearing
14 on your radar, is there any way you would have a
15 recording that radar picture?

16 MR. RICE: I don't believe so.

17 MR. WOODY: Okay. Now, the voice, how many
18 channels are reported --

19 MR. RICE: You would have to ask, I am not
20 sure how many they record.

21 MR. WOODY: Okay. How about telephone calls
22 coming in, are they recorded?

23 MR. RICE: Not that I am aware of.

24 MR. WOODY: Okay. I think that is all I have,
25 I will pass it to the next person.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have no questions.

2 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: After you notified --
4 they were departing the New York side, that is the
5 routine.

6 MR. RICE: They called departing Whitehall,
7 and then they will either call departing St. George,
8 whichever one. They only have two places.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, if there is nothing
10 unusual during their trip.

11 MR. RICE: We normally will not hear from
12 them.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You won't hear from
14 them.

15 The passage arrangement as they going across
16 the harbor and they are making passage arrangements
17 with all the ferries and the tugs and barges and the
18 freighters, do they do that among themselves on a
19 different channel?

20 MR. RICE: Yes, that is Channel 13.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That is Channel 13. And
22 as far as, do you know of anyone who recording this?

23 MR. RICE: No, I do not. We may possibly,
24 but, I don't think we do.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right -- Anyone who is

1 recording it.

2 Okay. Thank you.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You said there were
4 heavy waves that day. Were there any recorded problems
5 that day --

6 MR. RICE: Yeah, problems wise, not that were
7 called in, but there were things we were enacting to, I
8 don't know how to put this. -- how they are able to
9 maneuver, you can close -- because of winds, because
10 they have to, there is 900 foot, thousand foot ships
11 going through there, and with winds like that, it is a
12 hazard to navigation for them to go through the harbor.

13 So, with winds like that, mainly VHF was enacting
14 things for the winds, because they were high that day.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When do you start
16 enacting?

17 MR. RICE: They were prior to my watch. It
18 was that night. So, the fourteen.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

20 MR. RICE: Or in the morning.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Anything specific about
22 what was, about what additional measures were taken or
23 what --

24 MR. RICE: -- points there is a zone where
25 there is only one way traffic. It is called RNA, radio

1 navigation area -- has those in certain areas that are,
2 you know, of times of high winds, or during all times
3 it is a hazard to go through there, pretty much,
4 because there is tracking going on and different things
5 that are going in the harbor. So we regulate that, we
6 monitor it very closely. So, that RNA was closed at
7 different points of the day for that.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. What was problem,
9 what did you say --

10 MR. RICE: The Bergen Point.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: RNA.

12 MR. RICE: RNA.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: RNA, Radio Navigation
14 Area.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you know what time
17 the call came in, that call was logged in?

18 MR. RICE: Yes, 15:25.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And what time did your
20 watch start?

21 MR. RICE: My watch began at 0700.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But, that is on and off
23 during the course of the day.

24 MR. RICE: Correct.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And the voices,

1 you said, you get familiar with the voices you hear on
2 a daily basis.

3 MR. RICE: Yes.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, hypothetical
5 question, if you know the voices of certain people, do
6 you match voice to voice, you would know who it were?

7 MR. RICE: From hearing different Staten
8 Island Ferries voices, pretty much, yeah, because some
9 of them have different accents, some of them aren't
10 from, you can tell, just by the different accents that
11 they have. So, yes, some of the Staten Island ferries
12 captain recorded and then I heard them, I know that was
13 the Staten Island Ferry compared to say a Sandy Hook
14 pilot.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right.

16 MR. RICE: You can tell the difference on the
17 radio after a time.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You can't place a name.

19 MR. RICE: I wouldn't be able to place a name,
20 no, no. I don't know their names, just their voices.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Channel, you said
22 it was Channel 13 you were monitoring.

23 MR. RICE: Channel 14.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, 14.

25 MR. RICE: Thirteen is bridge to bridge.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you are not sure if
2 that was recorded or you don't know if they do record?

3 MR. RICE: No.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

5 MR. RICE: I don't believe so.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That is all.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just a couple of real
8 quick things. You were talking about -- measures,
9 normally at what time do you start taking measures?

10 MR. RICE: Well, there are all different types
11 of measures throughout, different types of winds, but,
12 for gusts of 35, then is when we were mainly concerned,
13 when we are getting gusts of over 35 at Bergen Point
14 and at Robins Roost.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And was, you were
16 getting gusts up to --

17 MR. RICE: Upwards of 50 that day.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Fifty. And take
19 measures generally beginning at 35 knots.

20 MR. RICE: Yes.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just because I am
22 stationed here, I know some of the measures, did they
23 already have -- on tugs along the side, all the barges?

24 MR. RICE: Yes.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, and do you know

1 when that was implemented?

2 MR. RICE: I do not know the time but they
3 would have been recorded.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

5 MR. RICE: They would have it.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you said the tides
7 were running heavy.

8 MR. RICE: Yeah, they were running below
9 normal, I think a foot, a foot and a half.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And so, and that is
11 recorded also, the tides and the current.

12 MR. RICE: I think that they made a printout
13 of the tides for the incident report. I think that is
14 what we automatically do for an incident report, is the
15 tide printout.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Immediately following,
17 was there a lot of action, obviously, could you see on
18 camera the location?

19 MR. RICE: We did zoom in the camera and we do
20 have that recorded. We don't have the initial,
21 anything recorded, but after I received the call, we
22 turned the Governor's Island camera and we began
23 recording on that. So, we have that on tape.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. That is all I
25 have.

1 MR. TURRELL: If there are no other questions.

2 MR. WOODY: Just a couple. You talk about
3 the regulating the navigation area and who makes that
4 decision to effect the restrictions on the waterways?

5 MR. RICE: That would be the watch officer and
6 the WOD.

7 MR. WOODY: The watch officer and the --

8 MR. RICE: Deputy OD, he would call
9 Commander Fremonta.

10 MR. WOODY: Okay. And Commander Fremonta,
11 what is his position?

12 MR. RICE: The WOD.

13 MR. WOODY: WOD. WOD stands for the watch
14 officer --

15 MR. RICE: -- Division commander.

16 MR. WOODY: Okay. One last question, you
17 mentioned about your rating, what is your rating?

18 MR. RICE: I am operational specialist, 1st
19 Class. Relatively new rate in the Coast Guard, OF-1.
20 A merger of several different ratings.

21 MR. WOODY: Okay. And this is specifically
22 for the Vessel Traffic Services or --

23 MR. RICE: As of now we have both --
24 Operational Specialists, but, once this merger
25 completes, then it will mainly be all operational

1 specialists.

2 MR. WOODY: I see. Okay.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have just one other
4 question. Have you worked VCF in any other harbor
5 besides New York?

6 MR. RICE: No.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are there any
8 prerequisites working in the VCF?

9 MR. RICE: Prerequisites would be
10 communications, -- radios, but really they didn't
11 screen me when I put in, when I applied.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was your previous
13 position?

14 MR. RICE: I was a rateman on the 378 out in
15 Alameda, California. So, I was talking on radios and
16 monitoring radar and those things. And so, it kind of
17 worked hand in hand. They do request for rateman and
18 quartermasters.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So to the best of your
20 knowledge, they wouldn't just hire or assign -- three
21 from the search and rescue stations who had no radar
22 operational type of experience.

23 MR. RICE: Right.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

25 MR. TURRELL: That is all the questions we

1 have, Mr. Rice. We appreciate your cooperation. And
2 thank you very much.

3 MR. RICE: Okay.

4 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)