

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of:            )  
                                  )  
                                  )  
SS NORWAY                    ) DCA 03 MM 032  
                                  )

Miami, Florida

Friday  
June 6, 2003

The above-entitled matter came on for the  
Interview of Ricardo Brown, pursuant to  
Notice.

APPEARANCES:

For the National Transportation Safety Board:

JIM WALSH

For the United States Coast Guard:

JUAN TORRES

For Norwegian Cruise Lines:

JOHANNAS KERSON

Also Present:

I N D E X

WITNESS:

PAGE:

Ricardo Brown - by Mr. Walsh  
                  - by Mr. Kerson

## 1 PROCEEDINGS

2 MR. WALSH: This is the seventh interview of  
3 the day, 6/6/03, and we're talking to Ricardo Brown,  
4 executive housekeeper on board the SS Norway.

## 5 EXAMINATION

6 BY MR. WALSH:

7 Q Sir, would you please give us your name  
8 slowly?

9 A Yes, my name is Ricardo Brown. I am the  
10 executive housekeeper on board the SS Norway.

11 Q Your safety number, sir?

12 A My safety number is 366.

13 Q And your crew number?

14 A Two zero two.

15 Q And as executive housekeeper, what do you do  
16 on board, sir?

17 A As executive housekeeper on board the Norway,  
18 I'm in charge of the entire housekeeping operating.

19 Q And what type of hours do you normally work?

20 A Well, my hours begin like at 8:00 a.m. in the  
21 morning and finish obviously 9:00 in the evening.

22 Q And is that Monday through Sunday?

23 A Monday through Sunday.

24 Q Is it the same when you're out at sea and in  
25 port?

1           A     Both.

2           Q     Both out at sea and in port, seven days a  
3 week. On Saturday, when did you go to bed? Saturday,  
4 the 24th of May.

5           A     On the 24th of May, it's Saturday, normally  
6 that's the day prior to debarkation and barkation  
7 [sic], so that's the day that we have a little bit like  
8 extra work, we check in and the room steward will  
9 accompany like with the luggage trolleys and all those  
10 things, me and my assistant.

11                     So normally on Saturday evening I retire more  
12 or less between 10:00 and 10:30 on Saturday evenings.

13           Q     You mentioned these trolleys. Is it your  
14 department that takes care of the luggage, the  
15 passengers' luggage?

16           A     That's correct.

17           Q     How do they do that? Tell us that process.

18           A     It's very simple and easy. We have a work  
19 load of like most of the room stewards and utility  
20 hotels conjointly we do the luggage. The process of  
21 debarkation of the luggage, with the help of the  
22 stevedores, which is a longshoreman. They come on  
23 board at say 7:00 in the morning, sometime the times  
24 vary a little bit. They come at 7:00 in the morning  
25 and then they have like a system for my utilities.

1           Q     Ricardo, for us on the ship, take us ship  
2 side. It's 10:00 in the evening on Saturday night.  
3 You're coming towards Miami. What do the passengers do  
4 with their luggage?

5           A     Well, the passengers, they have been told  
6 prior, you know, they have a debarkation taught by the  
7 cruise director on board the ship, so he inform them  
8 that they have to put their luggage out at least before  
9 3:00 a.m. Sunday morning.

10          Q     And now your staff works --

11          A     My staff go through and I have my staff that  
12 work through the night, there's people from the galley,  
13 people from utilities and they around and they pick up  
14 all the luggage and put them in the area that they're  
15 supposed to be, which is stair tower one and stair  
16 tower six.

17          Q     What time do they start removing that  
18 luggage?

19          A     Well, they would start some time, it varies a  
20 lot, depends on how fast the guests put the luggage  
21 out. Sometimes they put it out -- most likely the  
22 guests start putting out the luggage at 11:00 in the  
23 evening, so throughout that time, straight down.

24          Q     And when do they usually finish?

25          A     They finish 5:00, sometime 4:00 in the

1 morning. Most of the time 4:00 in the morning is the  
2 time they normally finish.

3 Q And you're in bed at this time.

4 A Oh, yeah.

5 Q So you don't need to supervise that?

6 A No, I have some supervising. Housekeeping  
7 has someone to do it 24 hours a day.

8 Q So you're in bed, it's now Sunday morning,  
9 you're coming into Miami. When do you normally get up?

10 A At 6:00 in the morning.

11 Q And did you get up at 6:00 on the 25th?

12 A Every morning at 6:00 my clock sounds.

13 Q So you're up at 6:00. Now what happens?  
14 Take us through that day.

15 A Okay. It's 6:00 in the morning and I get up  
16 in the morning, normally we have what you call a United  
17 States public out inspection that is carried out every  
18 Sunday morning at 7:30.

19 Q By you?

20 A No, by the entire line. All the heads of  
21 departments, you know, the one who had that inspection  
22 is the hotel director.

23 Q Okay.

24 A So like I get up at 6:00 in the morning and  
25 you know, I take a little breather. From that I go in

1 the bathroom, treat my shoes like at least clockwork  
2 thing and then shortly, as I am just about to enter the  
3 shower, I would say roughly about 20 after 6:00, more  
4 or less at time, 20 after 6:00, 6:30, that's when I  
5 heard the little noise.

6 Q Can you describe the little noise?

7 A You know, like something like boom and then,  
8 you know, the ship shakes like sometimes -- I would say  
9 like sometimes when we go into a port, you know how the  
10 captain go in and hit or whatnot, so it just shook a  
11 little bit and right after that I have my electric  
12 shaver just about to clean up, so right away, fraction  
13 of seconds I would say, the water pressure just went  
14 down.

15 Q The water pressure?

16 A Yes, the water pressure went down and then  
17 right away I saw the electricity dim at least about  
18 three times and then the light went off, so right away  
19 I grabbed my torch and shortly after that the alarm  
20 went off.

21 Q And what alarm was that, sir?

22 A The seven short and one long blast in the  
23 internal alarm system. So at that time I just drag my  
24 pants on, drag everything on and then just rush out and  
25 go down to my assigned area, I'm the zone leader for

1 zones number one and two, so I went there, picked up my  
2 clip board, see my station leaders and they go through  
3 the whole scenario, we go through, we check everybody.

4 After I report back, everybody has been  
5 checked and that's it.

6 Q You're a zone leader for one and two. About  
7 how many people are in those zones?

8 A Three. I have three assistants.

9 Q Three assistants and you're in charge of  
10 zones one and two.

11 A Yes, sir.

12 Q How many people are in those zones,  
13 approximately, that you're in charge of during this?

14 A My station leaders, these are three guys.

15 Q Right. How many people are --

16 A Well, we have a clip board and there is quite  
17 a few crew members on that.

18 Q Approximately?

19 A Well, roughly I would say in that clip board  
20 we have roughly, roughly I would say about 30, 30 to 40  
21 people, more or less.

22 Q What are you doing with these people? Are  
23 they -- what do they do?

24 A Well, you know, this is their emergency  
25 station, so they report to the station, because these



1 people, they all have instruction what to do in an  
2 emergency. So therefore, like they are the one  
3 actually like assistant, for instance you have a group  
4 that go down and start checking from all the way down,  
5 which down in Dolphin Deck, C Deck, Biscayne Deck, all  
6 the way up.

7 They're assisting in making sure they have  
8 all crews and passengers vacate the rooms.

9 Q So they're doing that by --

10 A Oh, yes. They go around and do that and  
11 knocking them out, because at that time most likely  
12 when the alarm sounds, most likely at that particular  
13 morning, on Sunday morning, most of the guests are up,  
14 because this is a very early turn around morning, so  
15 people are out already having breakfast, people are out  
16 wandering, people are out taking care of the bills and  
17 whatnot, et cetera, et cetera.

18 Q So these people, your assistants gather those  
19 musters, then they come to you.

20 A Then they come to me, yes. They report back  
21 and then we say hey, well, like for instance this crew  
22 member is missing, that crew member is missing, so  
23 right away we go to the command center, which is the  
24 evacuation center, then we report it to the coordinator  
25 and then she will call up -- along with the hotel

1 director, call the bridge and say okay, crew member so  
2 and so and so and so are missing.

3 Q The evacuation center is the hotel director's  
4 office?

5 A Yes. That's the hotel director's office,  
6 with the Group Services coordinator.

7 Q Do you remember if you folks were missing  
8 anybody in zone one or zone two?

9 A Yes, just a minimum. Minimum people, which  
10 is an average. Like every week, as you know we have a  
11 training every single week. We have a life boat  
12 training on board the ship, so therefore it varies.

13 Sometimes the lists are long, sometimes the  
14 lists are short, it depends, because some time like a  
15 crew member will be signing -- like could be signing  
16 off and whatnot, so normally the crew members signing  
17 off on that particular day obviously he's not going to  
18 show up.

19 But in like an emergency, you normally go and  
20 in that case it was emergency. But again, the lists  
21 were minimum at the time.

22 Q Mr. Brown, what is your cabin number?

23 A My cabin number is Viking 1024.

24 Q Now you've made your call to the hotel  
25 director, the hotel director has gone to the bridge.

1 Now what happens?

2 A Right after that I just go back to my  
3 emergency station and await instruction.

4 Q What instructions were they?

5 A Well, the instruction is like for instance  
6 the command center will come back to us and say well,  
7 they are all like for instance, there are still like 30  
8 guests that are unaccountable for, go through again.  
9 So we have to go through everything again.

10 Q Was there ever an announcement that you heard  
11 that guests were still not accounted for?

12 A Well, the command inform all the station  
13 leaders that we have to -- we all have to go, because  
14 remember, is eight zones, so therefore we go through it  
15 and every one of us have to go through it again and  
16 then report it back.

17 Q Do you remember hearing 41 as a number  
18 initially?

19 A I can't recall that.

20 Q How many times do you think your guys checked  
21 those cabins?

22 A Well, we go through it, I mean like for  
23 instance I have the guy go through it, I go around also  
24 to double check and make instruction to the guys, I ask  
25 stewards and at that time, you know, if I remember, we

1 have all the donuts on the door also, too, which is  
2 signifying that the guests are out of the room.

3 Q So the donut goes on the door.

4 A Yes.

5 Q What color are those donuts?

6 A Green.

7 Q Is there a donut that says red?

8 A We have also red.

9 Q What does a red donut mean?

10 A Well, normally the red donut means probably  
11 someone is in the room, but then again some time the  
12 red donuts also is signifying that we don't have or we  
13 didn't have sufficient donuts for all the entire door  
14 knobs, because remember, is 1,019 rooms, so if we don't  
15 have at the time sufficient donuts, some of the door  
16 had red. I see some red donuts on the doors.

17 Q So your people check the doors. Now it's  
18 been checked a couple of times.

19 A Yes. They go in physically and check. Not  
20 the door, they have to go in there. Knock on the door,  
21 go inside there and check and no one is there. When  
22 they go, they do a thorough search. They go under the  
23 bed, check the closet, check the bathroom, because they  
24 are instructed to do so.

25 Q Do you remember seeing the fire fighters as

1 well?

2 A I can't recall that. Where I was, there  
3 wasn't. As I said, zones one and two is all the way  
4 forward of the ship port side, that's my station.

5 Q I guess to make it more clear, do you  
6 remember seeing ship board fire fighters also checking  
7 the rooms in zone one and zone two?

8 A Not that I can recall.

9 Q Okay. Now all the rooms are checked, all the  
10 passengers are on station. Now what happens?

11 A Again, when all the passengers are at  
12 station, we just stay there and we just await  
13 instruction and then the captain come on the PA system  
14 and give a brief explanation of what happened, like  
15 maybe fire is under control, this is what -- they go  
16 down.

17 Q What happened on Sunday?

18 A On that particular Sunday?

19 Q Yes.

20 A After we finished double checking all the  
21 rooms, as I said, we go back and we report and say all  
22 rooms are checked. We go, stand there and await  
23 instruction.

24 Q And what announcement happened then?

25 A Well, the announcement that they made was

1 that the captain came on the PA system and as I said,  
2 he mentioned to guests like well, you know -- the  
3 captain and the cruise director, they were the one who  
4 actually keeping --

5 Q Mr. Brown, where passengers are mustered,  
6 your people then checked, what's the next announcement  
7 that you recall?

8 A The next announcement, there weren't. The  
9 only other announcement that were made was like the  
10 announcement keeping the guests informed of what will  
11 happening. This was the only announcement.

12 Q Cruise director and captain are doing that?

13 A Both of them.

14 Q Is there an announcement that's made for the  
15 guests to leave their muster stations?

16 A Well, yes, there was announcement made,  
17 because at that time, that's when they -- at that time  
18 they felt confident that everything was under control,  
19 so that's when the guests they started to moving slowly  
20 down to the rooms. They go down, they were asked to go  
21 and check their personal belongings, because some of  
22 them have their personal belongings still in the room  
23 and that's when they started to evacuating the ship.

24 Q Do you recall which stairways the captain  
25 told them to use?

1           A     Well, they was using the -- one of them was  
2 using stair tower one and stair tower three.

3           Q     Do you recall seeing them come down into your  
4 zone, zone one?

5           A     Yes, because I was there, because I was also  
6 assisting the guests to move them off, because at the  
7 time, remember the luggage was still there. The  
8 luggage was still there in the area, so they were  
9 making their way through. Yeah, luggage was still on  
10 the ship.

11          Q     The luggage was on ship and they're making  
12 their way through this area.

13          A     Yes. Well, as you know already in emergency  
14 all of the area is clear so people was flowing and the  
15 flow was just a continuous flow, everybody moving  
16 through.

17          Q     Continuous flow. They're going to their  
18 cabins. Do you remember if the lights ever went back  
19 on after you left your cabin?

20          A     Emergency lights was on. Most of the  
21 emergency light was on.

22          Q     Do you recall if the guests asked people what  
23 was going on or if they asked you any questions or your  
24 crew any questions?

25          A     Well, to be quite honest to you, I weren't

1 asked any question, they was like saying to me -- most  
2 of the people were saying that -- I mean honestly,  
3 there was like giving us like praise in the sense of  
4 this thing was -- at no moment I heard like anyone  
5 saying oh, this situation was mishandled,  
6 unprofessional or whatnot. They was like giving us all  
7 the accolades, saying that everything was handled very  
8 nice, thank you very much for the trip. Unfortunately  
9 this was to happen on the last day, that's it.

10 Q The guests are giving you this information  
11 and your crew and this is what you're hearing?

12 A Yes. I mean I was posted right there, as I  
13 said, between zones one and two, so I was right there  
14 in the area, that's stair tower number one, that's  
15 where the guests normally and Sunday morning that's  
16 where they disembarked the ship, from that particular  
17 stair tower.

18 Q So what deck are you on again?

19 A I'm in Norway Deck.

20 Q You're on Norway Deck and you're in the stair  
21 tower in Norway Deck and as the passengers now -- are  
22 they coming from up, down?

23 A They are coming from up. Most of them coming  
24 from up, nobody is coming from down. Most likely --  
25 again, at that time it's just like a minimum amount of



1 guests that would go and pick up their carry ons. It's  
2 just a minimum amount, but most of the guests are  
3 coming from up and they just keep exiting off. They  
4 come from up stair tower one, take a little bend and  
5 walk through and off they go.

6 Q So they come down stair tower one facing aft,  
7 make a left-hand turn and exit the ship?

8 A Exactly.

9 Q And you're stationed right in that area?

10 A I'm stationed right here and then you have  
11 some fellow crew member also guiding them this way,  
12 Madam, this way, you know.

13 Q And you saw everything flowing continuously?

14 A Oh, yes.

15 Q Did you have your radio at that time?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And it was on channel --

18 A Six.

19 Q You were on channel six. Who do you talk  
20 with on channel six?

21 A Well, at the time, like for instance if they  
22 would ask anything like the hotel director would keep  
23 asking hey, Ricardo, how is everything there; I was  
24 saying, you know, hey, just on the ball, everything  
25 just moving slowly but surely, very nice.

1 Q So the hotel director is on channel six as  
2 well?

3 A He's on channel six. The only people that  
4 are like on channel five is like the (inaudible)  
5 people. Only the hotel use channel six.

6 Q Okay. Can you recall about approximately  
7 what time no more guests were coming up the stairway?

8 A Honestly, I don't want to guess. I really  
9 can't.

10 Q You can't even guess?

11 A No.

12 Q When you didn't see any more guests leaving  
13 at your own station, what happened next?

14 A After most likely went -- for instance, all  
15 the guests was flowing off from stair tower one and  
16 stair tower three, so like when most likely nobody was  
17 there, like you know, we most likely actually didn't  
18 know that, because they still make the announcement,  
19 like they make like a last call, like all guests -- a  
20 lot of guests wanted to get off the ship, so they all  
21 got off and when they got off, that was it.

22 You know, we just stand by and wait for  
23 further instruction.

24 Q And that instruction, do you remember what  
25 that next instruction was?

1           A     The next instruction, my concern as executive  
2 housekeeper, what going to be the next step, I mean  
3 like what about the luggage, that was my concern about  
4 and then I was told by management hey, that will be our  
5 vice president who is taking care of that, so he was  
6 handling that from land side, so we just not going to  
7 worry about that for the time being and that was it.

8           Q     Mr. Brown, do you remember seeing any shore  
9 side people from the office coming on board at stair  
10 tower one?

11          A     No. I can't remember.

12          Q     Do you know of any who were on board at this  
13 time?

14          A     Where I was, I was just manning my station  
15 there, so the ship is very large and maybe I don't know  
16 people are coming around and walking, but I was at that  
17 particular area, that's my emergency station and this  
18 was an emergency, so therefore I man my station.

19          Q     Do you remember the captain make an  
20 announcement for the crew that he was going to sound  
21 another signal and that they were to muster?

22          A     Yes. They were going to sound the long,  
23 which is the abandon ship signal, because they wanted  
24 to do -- this is after all the guests debarked the  
25 ship, because they needed to just do a head count.

1           Q     And then he did that. He made the  
2 announcement first?

3           A     He did that, yes. He made the announcement  
4 and people went up to the emergency debarkation, up on  
5 the emergency life boat station and that's when the  
6 checker walked around and called off everybody. At the  
7 same time there were some people also ashore side.  
8 Approximately there was about 100, if I can recall,  
9 102, 106 people shore side, because they also was told  
10 to go ashore.

11          Q     Do you recall when the abandon ship signal  
12 and you went up top side, out on the Weather Deck,  
13 seeing more crew members leaving the ship?

14          A     No. From where I'm standing, Raft Station  
15 3.4, while I was standing there, we are manning our  
16 area, so everybody is just standing there and that's  
17 when they come up and started to -- the checker came  
18 out and started calling everybody's number, checking  
19 off everybody.

20          Q     And then from there where did you go?

21          A     After that, after we were finished there we  
22 just went back to -- matter of fact, I make my way down  
23 back to the hotel director, who was there and we just  
24 chit-chatted for a little bit and find out how is  
25 everything and we was saying that everything went

1 smooth and whatnot.

2           So I asked about the question, as I said my  
3 concern is with the luggage and he tell me the same  
4 thing, just await instruction and then we take it from  
5 there and that was it.

6           Q     I'm just curious about this point, because  
7 when we talked about it a little earlier you were  
8 saying that normally between 10:00 or 11:00 and 4:00  
9 most of the luggage is removed from the passageway,  
10 right?

11          A     Yeah. That's at night.

12          Q     That's at night.

13          A     At night, Saturday night.

14          Q     Saturday night and this was Sunday morning?

15          A     We're talking about Sunday morning.

16          Q     So there was still more luggage in the  
17 passageway on Sunday morning?

18          A     Some time we have people, you know, we have  
19 people that doesn't put out their luggage. This is  
20 happen every week. You have people that don't put the  
21 luggage out, sometime when they call, like information  
22 would call, this is week in, week out, information will  
23 call and say Ricardo a guest from such and such a room  
24 say that they didn't pick up the luggage and I'll ask  
25 my supervisor, I say no, sir, they just put it out.

1 Q Do you do color tags per deck?

2 A Yes. We have what you call deck plan, what  
3 deck to use, what color tag.

4 Q And the luggage is taken from the passenger  
5 area and put where to go ashore?

6 A Norway Deck, stair tower one, Norway Deck,  
7 stair tower six.

8 Q So the luggage goes ashore from the same --

9 A Exactly, via conveyor belt. There's two huge  
10 conveyor belts from land base hooked up to both gangway  
11 forward and also aft and that's when we discharge the  
12 luggage on.

13 Q Is that normally discharged before the  
14 passengers go or after the passengers go?

15 A No, that's the first thing we start in the  
16 morning.

17 Q That's the luggage?

18 A Yes. The luggage -- the passenger cannot  
19 leave the ship until all the luggage is off the ship.

20 Q And that luggage, was it pretty much -- where  
21 in the stair tower, because you hadn't off loaded it  
22 yet, correct?

23 A Mm-hmm.

24 Q Where was it in stair tower one?

25 A Well, in stair tower one we have what you

1 call -- we have a big holding room, this is in the  
2 back, that passengers -- it's behind the scene,  
3 passengers not allowed in that particular area.

4 That is the area and then we have another  
5 small holding room where they hook up for the conveyor  
6 belt and then the portion which is -- I mean there's an  
7 area there where you put the luggage in the lobby area.  
8 That is stair tower one.

9 Q And stair tower six?

10 A And stair tower six.

11 MR. WALSH: Great. Johanna's?

12 EXAMINATION

13 BY KERSON:

14 Q How you doing?

15 A I'm doing fine, sir.

16 Q Good to see you.

17 A Likewise.

18 Q How long have you been in the company?

19 A I been with Norwegian Cruise Lines for --  
20 November coming up will be ten years, 15th of November  
21 will be ten years. I joined Norwegian Cruise Lines on  
22 the 15th of November of 1993. But I work with previous  
23 company before.

24 Q Yes, I know that. And how long have you been  
25 on the SS Norway?

1           A     On the SS Norway on and off, the first ship  
2 that I joined in the company was the SS Norway back in  
3 '93. Then I left the Norway for a little bit. I went  
4 on the Norwegian Sea, I was on the Norwegian Sea for  
5 about two and a half year, came back to the Norway  
6 again, when around would -- you know, went to the  
7 Norwegian Crown, I was on the Crown also for at least  
8 about a couple years also and then from there, went to  
9 Marco Polo. I started to float around a little bit  
10 until I came back to the legendary Norway.

11           Q     Okay. How long have you been in  
12 housekeeping?

13           A     I've been housekeeper for maybe -- I will say  
14 I have a total of 23 years at sea, I've been a  
15 housekeeper, combining with Royal Caribbean and with  
16 Norwegian Cruise Lines, I've been housekeeper for maybe  
17 17, 18 years.

18           MR. KERSON: No further questions.

19           MR. WALSH: Juan?

20           MR. TORRES: No questions.

21           MR. WALSH: Mr. Brown, you've been very  
22 helpful. Thank you very much. This concludes the  
23 interview with Ricardo Brown, executive housekeeper on  
24 board the SS Norway.

25           (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)