

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 *
 *

Friday
October 17, 2003

Staten Island, NY

INTERVIEW

SHIRAM AGNI

PRESENT:

ROB JONES, NTSB
RICHARD GONZALEZ, USCG
STEVE MATTEI, NYPD

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. JONES: This is Rob Jones with the NTSB. And we are conducting an interview of, could you state your name?

MR. AGIN: Shiram Agin.

MR. JONES: Okay. Well, we will do the spelling on that. Okay.

MR. AGIN: S-H-I-R-A-M, A-G-N-I.

MR. JONES: Okay. All right, sir, if you could take us back to, just a couple of minutes before the accident, what you were seeing, where you were located on the vessel.

MR. AGIN: Okay. I was -- of the ferry, by the exit. And there were a couple of -- very close to the exit.

MR. JONES: Can you estimate about how far you were back, a couple of rows, by the seats?

MR. AGIN: About 20 feet.

MR. JONES: Okay. Twenty feet from the doors.

MR. AGIN: Yeah, the doors.

MR. JONES: Okay.

MR. AGIN: Yeah.

MR. JONES: Okay. What happened next?

MR. AGIN: All of a sudden, you know, I know when we approached the dock, the ferry slows down. I

1 have been riding the ferry for the last 25 years.
2 Okay. All of sudden it like zoom, like a jet, you know,
3 it went so fast, you know, all the people started
4 screaming and going backwards, you know. Then I don't
5 know, all the debris fell on me, bounced sideways, you
6 know, everything. I saw people just screaming.

7 MR. JONES: Did you notice the people running
8 first or --

9 MR. AGIN: Yes, they were running from the,
10 from the front to the back.

11 MR. JONES: Okay.

12 MR. AGIN: When they saw maybe it was going to
13 hit. They just started screaming and --

14 MR. JONES: And you were seated at the time.

15 MR. AGIN: I was seated all the time.

16 MR. JONES: Okay.

17 MR. AGIN: All the time.

18 MR. JONES: And when you saw them running.

19 MR. AGIN: Right.

20 MR. JONES: You started running?

21 MR. AGIN: I started running.

22 MR. JONES: Okay.

23 MR. AGIN: And there were a few people sitting
24 next to me. They couldn't even move. I don't know,
25 they, a couple of women, they collapsed, and just laid

1 on the floor. And I knew, my leg was hurt, so, I
2 couldn't hardly walk myself. I couldn't get out, you
3 know. But, it was too late anyway, I mean, you know,
4 the debris was all over the place.

5 MR. JONES: And prior to this happening did
6 you hear any, any bells or whistles?

7 MR. AGIN: Nothing at all. There was no
8 announcement, nothing.

9 MR. JONES: You just, you just realized that
10 the vessel was going faster than you are used to.

11 MR. AGIN: The last couple of minutes.

12 MR. JONES: Okay.

13 MR. AGIN: Before the end of the journey, you
14 know, all the way, no problem at all. It was going
15 nice and smooth. But, I know by my experience, when we
16 approach the dock, somewhere they put the ferry in
17 reverse to slow it down. The newer ferry. Older
18 ferry, I think they put it in neutral, you know. This
19 I could see because that is why, all of sudden it is
20 going like zoom. I mean, it wasn't like slowing down,
21 it took the speed, you know, tremendous speed. I mean,
22 actually like a jet flying over you. Very fast.

23 MR. JONES: Did you realize an increase in
24 speed or was it just the same speed that --

25 MR. AGIN: No, it increased its speed all of a

1 sudden.

2 MR. JONES: I am sorry, it increased its
3 speed.

4 MR. AGIN: Yeah, increased, right.

5 MR. JONES: Okay. That is what --

6 MR. AGIN: That is -- It was going, all of a
7 sudden it just, more speed.

8 MR. JONES: Okay. All right. Take your time
9 and take a rest any time you want.

10 MR. AGIN: Okay.

11 MR. JONES: And after the accident, were you
12 assisted by any crew members?

13 MR. AGIN: No crew, I had wait until the FDNY
14 showed up.

15 MR. JONES: Okay.

16 MR. AGIN: There were no crew members at all.

17 MR. JONES: Do you know about where you were
18 when the vessel stopped? Did you get carried back
19 further into the vessel or when you were running?

20 MR. AGIN: No, I was taken on the side of
21 vessel. I think two or three FDNY, they pick me up.
22 And then I don't know, I was just like blacked out for
23 a time being. Until I got into the ambulance, then I
24 knew again, you know, just like, you know, I was
25 already in the ambulance.

1 MR. JONES: Okay. I am going to turn it over
2 to the Detective right now.

3 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Detective Mattei.

4 What level were you on?

5 MR. AGIN: On the lower deck.

6 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Lower level.

7 MR. AGIN: Right, lower level.

8 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Okay. Now you are facing
9 Staten Island on the lower level --

10 MR. AGIN: Right.

11 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Were you next to the window
12 or in the middle?

13 MR. AGIN: The middle.

14 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Or sitting to the left.

15 MR. AGIN: The middle.

16 DETECTIVE MATTEI: So you were in the middle.

17 MR. AGIN: Right.

18 DETECTIVE MATTEI: And right in front of you
19 basically is the doors, the --

20 MR. AGIN: Right.

21 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Okay.

22 MR. AGIN: Correct, right.

23 DETECTIVE MATTEI: In that area before you
24 struck did you see any crew members come down or --

25 MR. AGIN: No. Not at all.

1 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Okay. What about during,
2 before it struck, and just the normal flight that you
3 were taking, the normal, you know, did any crew members
4 walking down, cleaning up anything?

5 MR. AGIN: No.

6 DETECTIVE MATTEI: So you didn't see any crew
7 members the whole time you were down there from the
8 Manhattan to the time of the incident?

9 MR. AGIN: Exactly, right, right.

10 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Okay. And you have been
11 taking the ferry for how long?

12 MR. AGIN: Twenty five years.

13 DETECTIVE MATTEI: Okay. That is all I have.

14 MR. GONZALEZ: I have nothing, thank you, sir.

15 MR. AGIN: Thank you very much.

16 MR. JONES: Shiram, first name?

17 MR. AGIN: Yes, yes.

18 MR. JONES: If there is anything you can
19 suggest that would have helped such a terrible
20 situation, other than the accident occurring, either
21 medical or something that you think, I would like to
22 give you the opportunity to suggest it, if you come up
23 with an idea right now.

24 MR. AGIN: -- earlier, emergency --

25 MR. JONES: Okay.

1 MR. AGIN: Maybe I don't think -- But, I was
2 just laying there over a half hour.

3 MR. JONES: Okay. If we need to do a follow up
4 interview, could I have your phone number? Would that
5 be all right?

6 MR. AGIN: Yeah, sure.

7 MR. JONES: Okay.

8 MR. AGIN: My home number is XXXXXXXXXXXXX.

9 MR. JONES: Okay.

10 MR. AGIN: All right.

11 MR. JONES: And your date of birth, or your
12 birthday, how old are you?

13 MR. AGIN: Eight, five, forty-six.

14 MR. JONES: Okay. Great, Shiram. Thank you
15 very much.

16 MR. AGIN: Thank you.

17 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)