

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of:

ALLISION WITH STATEN ISLAND
FERRY TERMINAL MAINTENANCE
PIER AT ST. GEORGE'S,
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK BY THE
FERRY ANDREW J. BARBERI on
OCTOBER 15, 2003

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DCA-04-MM-001

Friday,
October 24, 2003

Staten Island, NY

INTERVIEW OF:

TINA EVANS and WAYNE EVANS

PRESENT:

ROB JONES, NTSB
RICHARD GONZALEZ, USCG

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. JONES: This is an interview with Tina Evans, regarding the Staten Island Ferry incident on October 15.

And Ms. Evans, this is being recorded and is that okay with your permission?

MRS. EVANS: Yes, it is. You have my permission to record this interview.

MR. JONES: Okay. My name is Rob Jones, with the NTSB and Richard Gonzalez is here with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Ms. Evans, in your own words, if you could take us back approximately where you were on the ferry, and the first indication that something was going wrong or whatever you can remember about that day.

MRS. EVANS: Sure. Let's see, I got on the boat, was headed back home. Okay. Like I usually do, I sit in the middle part of the boat. I was just reading like some paperwork, looking at my watch, noticing it was about five to 10 minutes before the boat should dock, so it is time for me to get up and be down stairs to where the doors are. Okay.

MR. JONES: Excuse me, so you were on the, what level were you sitting on?

MRS. EVANS: I don't, whatever the, not the

1 top, not the very bottom.

2 MR. JONES: Okay.

3 MRS. EVANS: But --

4 MR. JONES: The middle.

5 MRS. EVANS: The middle.

6 MR. JONES: Okay. That is fine.

7 MRS. EVANS: I don't know what the decks are
8 called.

9 MR. JONES: Okay.

10 MRS. EVANS: Okay. All right. So, I just put
11 my stuff away, headed down to where the doors would be
12 and I noticed that it wasn't right. We weren't, we
13 weren't slowing down. We weren't positioned the
14 correct way coming at the pier. I could see what
15 looked like part of a pier. I don't know, okay. And I
16 didn't hear any announcements like usually would be,
17 docking in slip number four, five, St. George, to take
18 your belongings with you and, you know, thank you for
19 riding the Staten Island Ferry and have a nice day.
20 And because of that, it is like, okay, it is wrong, it
21 is too fast, so I just started like, I turned around
22 and started like running up the stairs, towards where I
23 was seated before this. And we didn't, we didn't slow
24 down. We must have hit something because I can
25 remember like stuff starting to fall. I can remember a

1 man next to me, I don't know what happened to that man,
2 and that is kind of what my recollection of things
3 were.

4 One of the next things I remember is what
5 would come to be four police officers, I would assume,
6 in front of me, I was asking them just like, please,
7 help me, do something for me, you know. After that I
8 remember, I don't know who the cop was, the voice was
9 always behind me, you know, telling me, it is going to
10 be fine, we are going to get you to the ambulance. He
11 rode with me in the ambulance. I can remember them
12 like cutting off my clothes and stuff in the ambulance.
13 I can remember them asking me my name in the ambulance
14 and telling what my name was. And I can remember
15 arriving here. And that is about all my recollection,
16 but I was told by one of the staff here, the social
17 worker, that I had given the cop in the ambulance or
18 somebody, my husband's name and cell phone number,
19 because I couldn't figure out how he was called.

20 And the next thing I know I remember waking
21 up Friday, Friday is my best recollection of
22 everything, of getting up. And that is about it on the
23 boat. You know, there was no, nobody was screaming.
24 There was nothing out of the ordinary really.

25 MR. JONES: Okay.

1 MRS. EVANS: You know, like we were in danger.

2 MR. JONES: Do you remember where you were,
3 after you remember the boat striking and then the next
4 thing is the cops around you.

5 MRS. EVANS: Do I remember where I was?

6 MR. JONES: Yeah.

7 MRS. EVANS: No clue where I was.

8 MR. JONES: Okay.

9 MRS. EVANS: No clue at all.

10 MR. JONES: Yes.

11 MRS. EVANS: All right.

12 MR. JONES: And did you see any crew members
13 around, helping? Could you identify the crew?

14 MRS. EVANS: I didn't see any crew members,
15 period. Usually, because I ride the boat every day,
16 usually you see the crew members walk by us all and
17 head like down, because I get off in the lower part,
18 head down pass us all, go outside. They are usually
19 saying excuse me and stuff. I didn't see any crew
20 members. I didn't see anybody with a deck hand shirt.
21 I didn't see any white shirts. And usually you see
22 those guys walking by you all the time.

23 MR. JONES: Okay.

24 MRS. EVANS: Even walking around the boat, I
25 didn't see that.

1 MR. JONES: Okay. So nothing ahead of the
2 accident.

3 MRS. EVANS: Nothing ahead of the accident.

4 MR. JONES: How about after the accident?

5 MRS. EVANS: I don't remember much after,
6 didn't see, no. Don't remember seeing them after the
7 accident.

8 MR. JONES: Yeah.

9 MRS. EVANS: But, they are usually like
10 everywhere before the accident.

11 MR. JONES: And did you, how did you feel just
12 about the response after the accident? Do you think
13 you were gotten off to the hospital in a timely manner?

14 MRS. EVANS: From the time, I think so, from
15 my recollection, from the time that I first saw those
16 police officers to the time that I got here. I don't
17 know what the time, time frame was, but, you know, I
18 think so.

19 MR. JONES: Okay. Just to help you gauge that
20 a little bit, it is going from the records I can get,
21 from the time it happened to the time the boat got to
22 the dock, where police and fire could come, it was
23 about 23 minutes.

24 MRS. EVANS: I have no recollection of those
25 23 minutes.

1 MR. JONES: Yeah.

2 MRS. EVANS: After whatever started like
3 coming down, I have no recollection.

4 MR. JONES: Yeah. And how is everything going
5 here? It seems quite the hospital.

6 MRS. EVANS: Except for yesterday, everything
7 was going fine here.

8 MR. JONES: Okay. Sorry that happened.

9 MRS. EVANS: Okay.

10 MR. JONES: Yeah, that was, that was just the
11 1-2-0 detectives, huh?

12 MRS. EVANS: Yes.

13 MR. JONES: I will make sure, I meet them
14 every night, I will make sure that they know about it,
15 at least from, that is what I gathered from your
16 response here.

17 MRS. EVANS: Yes.

18 MR. JONES: Okay.

19 Do you have anything, Richard?

20 MR. GONZALEZ: No, actually you asked the
21 questions that I was going to ask. Where were you
22 when, before the impact and also the, had you seen any
23 deck hands around, but you already answered all those.
24 Thank you.

25 MR. JONES: Okay.

1 MRS. EVANS: Okay. All right.

2 MR. JONES: You say you normally, you ride the
3 ferry every day.

4 MRS. EVANS: Every day.

5 MR. JONES: So, you hear the announcements
6 every day.

7 MRS. EVANS: Every day at both ends. Yes.

8 MR. JONES: And you do see the crew heading --

9 MRS. EVANS: The crew goes down through,
10 about, you know, you can almost gauge them, you know,
11 they are coming down through so it is about time for
12 the boat to be getting in. You also know that when the
13 boat starts getting in, we start slowing down.

14 MR. JONES: There you go.

15 MRS. EVANS: In the past. And we are pointed
16 in a different direction than what we were pointed in.

17 MR. JONES: Right.

18 MRS. EVANS: Okay. You can actually see where
19 things that come down.

20 MR. JONES: And do you usually get off the
21 lower level?

22 MRS. EVANS: I get at the lower level on my
23 way to work and if Wayne is picking me up from work, I
24 always get out at the lower level.

25 MR. JONES: Okay.

1 MRS. EVANS: Okay.

2 MR. JONES: So that is mostly for people that
3 are getting picked up by cars, then.

4 MRS. EVANS: Yeah, it is everybody getting
5 picked up by cars.

6 MR. JONES: Right. Because I noticed with all
7 the construction down there, why would anybody want,
8 choose to go out that way as opposed to the upper
9 level, where is, you know, just out to the buses and
10 walk up the ramps to where the public parking might be
11 up, up in town.

12 MRS. EVANS: Well, you can walk out to your
13 car, you can park your cars down there, too.

14 MR. JONES: Right.

15 MRS. EVANS: During the day. So, yeah, that
16 is why I would get out at the lower level.

17 MR. JONES: Yes. A couple of things we have
18 been hearing and well, I don't want to put anything,
19 any words in your mouth, one of the things we asked at
20 the end of an interview, you ride the ferry daily, you
21 see what goes on all the time. Is there anything you
22 can recommend, a safety idea, anything that comes to
23 mind after an incident like this, that might help the
24 ferries or people that are on them or yourself?

25 MRS. EVANS: Yeah. One thing, if this is

1 going to happen again, if this ever happened again, and
2 we weren't, they need to give, provide some sort of
3 like announcement that, yeah, we are either like, we
4 are about to hit, you know, please either move to a
5 certain part of the boat, or whatever procedure they
6 put in place for the passengers, you know. That is the
7 biggest thing is communication and there wasn't any.

8 MR. JONES: You were right on the stairwell,
9 correct?

10 MRS. EVANS: Yeah. In fact, I was almost down
11 to the bottom.

12 MR. JONES: And you didn't hear anything down
13 there?

14 MRS. EVANS: I didn't hear anything. It was
15 quiet.

16 MR. JONES: Not even a single shout from
17 anybody?

18 MRS. EVANS: I didn't hear anything.

19 MR. JONES: Okay.

20 MRS. EVANS: It is like we all are just in
21 shock and awe. Like this is about to happen and just
22 get out of there.

23 MR. JONES: Right.

24 MRS. EVANS: Yeah.

25 MR. JONES: Okay. Mrs. Evans, that is all I

1 have. I appreciate your time.

2 MRS. EVANS: You are welcome.

3 MR. JONES: Actually, we could talk to
4 yourself now, this is an interview with Daniel?

5 MR. EVANS: Wayne.

6 MR. JONES: Wayne, I am sorry. I have got
7 Daniel from somewhere.

8 MR. JONES: Wayne Evans, and this is being
9 taped, if that is okay with you.

10 MR. EVANS: You have my permission to tape
11 this interview.

12 MR. JONES: Okay. All right. Mr. Evans, from
13 your point of view.

14 MR. EVANS: I work at night, and my wife
15 called me and asked if it would be okay to pick her up
16 from the boat, because her meeting was canceled and she
17 was coming home early to do some homework. So I drove
18 to the ferry terminal. And as I was driving down Bay
19 Terrace, the first thing I noticed something seemed
20 strange. One of the ferries, I couldn't tell you
21 whether it was going to Manhattan or coming into Staten
22 Island. Just the angle of it seemed close to Governor's
23 Island. It just stuck in my mind seeing that in play,
24 the direction of it, where it was to the Governor's
25 Island. And I parked my car down the passenger pick up

1 area, which is on the lower level now because of the
2 construction, by the side of the ferry terminal.

3 MR. JONES: Okay.

4 MR. EVANS: I sat in the car, then the ferry
5 came to the terminal and my initial thought was it was
6 an empty ferry, because they sometimes store in the
7 piers when they are not using them in the rush hour.
8 And then as it got a bit closer, I hear the engines,
9 like revving noises of the engines. And then seen it
10 hit the pier. Still my initial thought was it an empty
11 ferry. And then it moved, I actually saw people on the
12 upper level. And then there was construction workers
13 and police officers running from the ferry terminal
14 over to that pier.

15 And then there is a ferry, ferry boat in
16 there, who started maneuvering the ferry backwards and
17 I could see the side was all ripped open and the front
18 was all bent in.

19 MR. JONES: Okay.

20 MR. EVANS: And then there was three fellows
21 running around and I asked them if that was the three
22 o'clock boat from Manhattan, and they didn't know. And
23 then the ferry terminal, they started closing that up,
24 they started closing the areas off and ended up on the
25 street. And I was like frantic, I was dialing Tina's

1 cell phone, non stop, trying to get ahold of her. And
2 I was asking the police and the ambulance service and
3 nobody knew who had been taken the hospital.

4 And then I met with some other people looking
5 for relatives and we were directed by one of the
6 ambulance workers to the ferry terminal, they told me
7 they had the information set up there. I go up to the
8 ferry terminal, they said, no, it is Burrow Hall. So,
9 we went to Burrow Hall, and they tell us, no, it is
10 around the corner in the courthouse, in the jury room.

11 So, I got there and I just was about to register my
12 wife for the Red Cross, and my cell rung and it was the
13 social worker for St. Vincent's, saying that my wife
14 was being admitted to, was in the hospital. And at the
15 time my car was still in car park and I had no money on
16 me, and they arranged for an officer to drive me to the
17 hospital. And I am not sure about the time line,
18 probably around 6:30, seven o'clock.

19 MR. JONES: About the time you got here?

20 MR. EVANS: Probably later than that, I had to
21 wait, wait a long time for the officer to come back and
22 take me to the hospital. When I arrived here, I was
23 taken to the waiting area. I was told that she was in
24 the ER. And none of the staff would give me her
25 condition. They wanted the doctors to tell me how she

1 was. At that time the City Councilmen were here, the
2 Mayor was here. Social workers were talking to me.
3 And then I don't know how late it was, and the doctor
4 came out and told me what had happened to her. That is
5 it.

6 MR. JONES: Okay. When you said you looked,
7 you were at Bay Terrace, is that the last set of lights
8 before you head down?

9 MR. EVANS: Yeah, it goes up the hill, and you
10 can look over, you can see the water.

11 MR. JONES: Okay.

12 MRS. EVANS: The waterways of Manhattan.

13 MR. JONES: Okay. And something looked at of
14 sorts to you then?

15 MR. EVANS: Just the angle of the ship.

16 MR. JONES: Yeah.

17 MR. EVANS: One of the ferries, I know they
18 normally go to Manhattan that way and they come to
19 Staten Island, you know, closer to the Statute of
20 Liberty.

21 MR. JONES: Yes.

22 MR. EVANS: So, I couldn't tell which way the
23 boat was going. Just from the angle of it, it didn't
24 look right.

25 MR. JONES: Yeah. Do you know, were you are

1 at light, like the corner, I wouldn't mind taking that
2 look from that view myself?

3 MR. EVANS: You have the traffic light on the
4 corner, there, where buses come down, you go up that
5 hill.

6 MR. JONES: Right.

7 MR. EVANS: And you look over there area.

8 MR. JONES: Okay.

9 MR. EVANS: As you are driving up.

10 MR. JONES: All right. And then when you came
11 down, you parked and got out of car or --

12 MR. EVANS: No, I sat in my car.

13 MR. JONES: Is that at a stall or was that at
14 that turn around, where you just are waiting for her to
15 walk out?

16 MR. EVANS: Yeah, down Butler Hill, some other
17 cars and I just parked in the bin, besides of the ferry
18 terminal.

19 MR. JONES: Okay.

20 MR. EVANS: Before the first, you know those
21 two stop signs?

22 MR. JONES: Right.

23 MR. EVANS: It is before the first one.

24 MR. JONES: Okay.

25 MR. EVANS: And you come down the hill, just

1 around the bend.

2 MR. JONES: And so you didn't --

3 MR. EVANS: I didn't pull all the way up to
4 the ferry, no.

5 MR. JONES: Okay. So you parked there.

6 MR. EVANS: Yeah.

7 MR. JONES: Okay. And that is when you saw the
8 ferry going by.

9 MR. EVANS: Pass the ferry terminal. My first
10 reaction was that it was an empty ferry they were
11 taking over there to the pier, because sometimes those
12 ferries are over there.

13 MR. JONES: All right. I know there was a
14 small ferry in there.

15 MR. EVANS: There was.

16 MR. JONES: It is like a little maintenance
17 ferry. Was it that or was it a tugboat that --

18 MR. EVANS: I think it was the little white
19 tug.

20 MR. JONES: Okay. That went out to assist the
21 boat.

22 MR. EVANS: A little white tug, yeah.

23 MR. JONES: All right. And were you trying to
24 get on the boat or I am sure you were trying to find
25 your wife and --

1 MR. EVANS: Trying to find my wife.

2 MR. JONES: Yeah.

3 MR. EVANS: The police and the fire fighters,
4 they couldn't, there is no access from that area, they
5 have to go further up the street and around to get onto
6 the boat. And then they moved it anyway and nobody
7 would let me to the ferry terminal.

8 MR. JONES: And the police were just keeping
9 everybody out.

10 MR. EVANS: Keeping everybody out, yeah.

11 MR. JONES: So, anything, Richard?

12 MR. GONZALEZ: Yes. Did you happen to see,
13 you said you saw people on the ferry?

14 MR. EVANS: I did on the top level.

15 MR. GONZALEZ: The top level.

16 MR. EVANS: Just somebody in white tee shirt
17 move in the window and I just, that is the first
18 indication, I saw that it was actually a full, you
19 know, well, not full, but people on that ferry.

20 MR. GONZALEZ: And when you saw, when they
21 were pulling, when they were leaving, did you happen to
22 see how it was moving, was it moving backwards or was
23 it moving out from the --

24 MR. EVANS: It was moving backwards and the
25 ferry, tug was turning it.

1 MR. GONZALEZ: Okay.

2 MR. EVANS: The damage was going out.

3 MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you.

4 MR. JONES: I did hear some of what you said,
5 but, also I would like to open up the opportunity for
6 yourself, after being through something like this, you
7 know, with your wife and from the perspective, looking
8 for the injured, you know, your loved ones, is there
9 anything you can suggest that would help things
10 anywhere?

11 MR. EVANS: I know it is chaos, I have been
12 through an emergency, training myself, I was in the
13 Navy, Royal Navy.

14 MR. JONES: Yes.

15 MR. EVANS: It is difficult, people don't
16 know, it is hard to say whether you should have a
17 immediate list of people that they have taken to
18 hospitals. It is hard to say.

19 MR. JONES: Right.

20 MR. EVANS: I am sure people train for this,
21 you know, on regular basis, until they get, you know,
22 an emergency, information is set up, you don't know.

23 MR. JONES: Right.

24 MR. EVANS: It is tough, very hard not knowing
25 for hours.

1 MR. JONES: Right, I am sure, I am sure it is.

2 I am sure.

3 That is all I have right now. Unless you
4 can, either one of you can think of anything else you
5 would like to, you would like to say?

6 MR. EVANS: No.

7 MRS. EVANS: No.

8 MR. JONES: Thank you. I am going to end the
9 interview.

10 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)