

Transcript; Susan Durnell 5/24/00

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of:

M.S. NIEUW AMSTERDAM PAX 2
TARR INLET, ALASKA 5/23/00

Recorded Interview of SUSAN DURNELL.

May 24, 2000

Syneau
Tarr Inlet, Alaska
Barrett House
Bartlett

BEFORE:

Gary Abe
Investigator

ORIGINAL

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2 THE INVESTIGATOR: I am now talking with Sue
3 Durnell, ^{she} and spouse, ^{of} Carl Durnell. And it's about 5:15
4 local time. And this is at ^{Garrett} Garrett House.

5 I've talked with -- Sue, the same procedure
6 is if you want to stop at any time, just let me know
7 and I'll pause it. Okay?

8 Sue, let's just go ahead and start off again
9 like I started off with Carl.

E X A M I N A T I O N

10
11 BY THE INVESTIGATOR:

12 Q Can you describe how and what and when any
13 emergency instructions were given to you once you
14 boarded, and did it consist of any drills, for
15 instance? And did they show you or tell you how to get
16 a hold of your life jackets?

17 And just feel free to just keep on talking,
18 you know, however you want to go into any type of
19 description.

20 A Okay. We boarded the ship in Vancouver and
21 we were... and I kept telling my sister-in-law we had
22 to go through a drill. Right?

23 She's been on numerous cruises. We were just
24 like one big bore. And she was telling me she never
25 shows up for them. And I said, "You have to show up

1 for these. You have to or they come down and get you
2 in your cabin."

3 So, before we left Vancouver --

4 Q Do they really? Come and get you?

5 A They did on the Norwegian ride.

6 Q Oh, really?

7 A Okay, yes, they did.

8 So we heard the -- I didn't pay much
9 attention to what they talk about. Okay? I heard the
10 alarm. The guy said, "We have to get our stuff and go
11 up to our muster station."

12 And when we got up there --

13 Q This is the drill?

14 A Yes. And we had not left dock yet. We were
15 still in Vancouver.

16 And we went up to where we were supposed to
17 be and the crew members were very helpful in showing us
18 how to put on the life jackets correctly. One of them
19 made sure I was dressed properly.

20 He showed me everything I was supposed to do
21 and got me in it, told me where the light was, where my
22 whistle was, and was very thorough.

23 We went through the drill. Everybody checked
24 in to where we had to be and it was over. And that was
25 it.

1 Q How do you know where the life jackets were?

2 A Hal gave it to me.

3 Q I mean the instructions.

4 A Oh, I knew they were in the closet above my
5 clothes, mainly because I was putting clothes away.

6 And I just had known that's where they were. It was
7 just there. It was orange; it was there.

8 Q Did they have any instructions in the room
9 like, you know, where --

10 A Not that I noticed.

11 Q -- where to find life jackets? What you were
12 supposed to do?

13 A Not that I personally noticed.

14 Q Do they have any --

15 A They could be there.

16 Q Yes. Did they have any instructions as to
17 where you should exit if there was an emergency?

18 A No. Out the cabin, probably at the closest
19 exit.

20 Q I mean but there weren't any specific
21 instructions as to, you know, for your cabin, where you
22 should go?

23 A Not that I was aware of.

24 Q I mean, for instance, like in a hotel room,
25 you have it on your door. You know, what --

1 A It could have been on the closet door. To be
2 honest with you, I probably just didn't read it.

3 Q Okay.

4 A It may have been on the inside of a closet
5 door. I would have to go back and look to see if it
6 was there.

7 Q Did they talk with you or give you any
8 instruction about, you know, if there was a fire or
9 smoke, what you were supposed to do?

10 A Not that I recall.

11 Q Okay. Anything else that you want to talk
12 about?

13 A But, I will pay attention much more closely
14 if I ever do this again, and I won't be talking and
15 chatting.

16 THE INVESTIGATOR: I'm sure you won't. I
17 mean I'm sure you won't be chatting and you will be
18 paying more attention.

19 MS. DURNELL: You don't really take it that
20 serious because it's never going to happen.

21 THE INVESTIGATOR: I'm sure the same thing
22 happens to people who are involved with an airline
23 incident -- not an accident but an incident -- that
24 they may not pay attention.

25 MS. DURNELL: Well, I have to tell you, when

1 I got in that little five-seater plane yesterday and he
2 went through with me where everything was, I definitely
3 paid attention.

4 BY THE INVESTIGATOR:

5 Q Lets move on to the actual incident. Just
6 for your information, Carl started with the breakfast
7 room because you all were having breakfast together.

8 A Yes.

9 Q And you could either start there or wherever
10 you want to start.

11 A We were eating breakfast. We did not bring
12 our cameras and binoculars up in that even though the
13 Forest Rangers were already on because we knew we could
14 run back and get them. We just weren't going to tote
15 everything.

16 And while we were sitting there, all of a
17 sudden, these buzzers started going on. And it's like,
18 gee, what's this? We started counting the bleeps, you
19 know.

20 And I counted eight before there was a semi-
21 long one. My husband and brother-in-law counted nine.
22 We were trying to figure out if it was an emergency
23 because they had said seven.

24 And then the captain came on and said that
25 there was a small fire -- I believe that's what he

1 said. There was a small fire and nothing to be overly
2 alarmed about, that it was being taken care of.

3 And so --

4 Q Did he give a location of where the fire was?

5 A He might have said D-deck.

6 Q Okay.

7 A Which was the crew deck. It was down in the
8 bottom, way below us. So I wasn't, you know, it was
9 down in the crew deck.

10 Q What were the other people doing in the
11 breakfast room? Were there other people in the
12 breakfast room?

13 A Oh, it was full. They were milling around
14 the Ranger table, eating. Some were in line. Most of
15 them were getting ready to go out on deck because the
16 Ranger had just started speaking saying that he was
17 going to be out on deck and where we should meet him.
18 And, because we were kind of late getting started. We
19 personally were.

20 Everybody else had already had their --
21 pretty much had their cameras and coats and their hats
22 on and their gloves and their woolies. And they were
23 pretty much starting to mill around outside, anxious to
24 see the glaciers and the icebergs and looking for
25 animals.

1 And so we finished eating. And we decided
2 that we were going to go down and get our ~~stock~~^{stuff} so we
3 could go up and do some observing.

4 And we started down --

5 Q "We" being?

6 A My brother-in-law, sister-in-law, my husband
7 and I.

8 Q Okay.

9 A -- started down. We were on the fourth deck.
10 And we started down to B-deck, which was two decks
11 down. And there was a lot of people coming up. There
12 were a lot of crew members standing right at B-deck
13 when we started to go down.

14 And none of them said anything to us. They
15 just watched us. There had to be at least five of them
16 standing there.

17 Nobody said a word about, Gee, you know,
18 there is smoke. I suggest you don't go down there.

19 Nothing was said. We got down and when we
20 walked into our hallway, there was a girl banging on
21 the door across the street -- across the hall --
22 telling someone to get up, that she needed to, you
23 know, "It's Eileen. Please, open your door."

24 And there was a little bit of smoke at that
25 point.

1 Q "Eileen"? The person knocking on the door
2 was not Eileen?

3 A She was yelling for Eileen.

4 Q Was that a crew member?

5 A No, it was just another passenger.

6 Q Okay.

7 A And, at that point, it was starting to get a
8 little smoky. And we went in the room. Carl grabbed
9 his medicine. I grabbed mine. I had a sweatshirt with
10 a turtleneck that I just put over the clothes I had on,
11 grabbed my coat.

12 He had the life jackets out. I grabbed some
13 jewelry out of a drawer. He grabbed the money out of a
14 suitcase, Traveler's checks. And we -- that was it.

15 It couldn't have been four minutes max. I
16 mean we were moving in the room.

17 Q How long do you think it was between when you
18 left the breakfast room until you got to the cabin?

19 A Well, from the time we left the breakfast
20 room until we got to our cabin? It couldn't have been
21 five minutes.

22 Q Okay.

23 A And we couldn't have been inside more than
24 four minutes because I mean we just started throwing
25 things. And I just grabbed a bag and started pushing

1 stuff in.

2 When we opened the door --

3 Q Before you go to that, did you hear anything
4 more from the PA system? Or any alarms while --?

5 A I don't recall hearing anything.

6 Q Okay.

7 A Personally, myself, no.

8 Q Okay.

9 A So we opened the door and it was just -- it
10 was a blanket of smoke. You couldn't see your hand in
11 front of your face if you tried.

12 And Carl just said, "Go."

13 And I did what he said. He said, "Go." I
14 started going. And it was so bad, I put my jacket over
15 my face. I didn't know what good that was going to do
16 me. I couldn't see anywhere.

17 But, then I couldn't see anything either.

18 And as I walked along the hallway --

19 Q Which way did you go?

20 A Left. I went left, because that's where -- I
21 used that elevator and steps more than anything, so I
22 knew that's where I could go.

23 Q Okay.

24 A And he kept saying that everything was closed
25 because he was hammering. And he was yelling, "Help,

1 we're down here. Help. Help us. You've got people in
2 here."

3 And I kept going. He yelled at me to --

4 Q He was knocking on the ceiling?

5 A On the wall or the doors because we knew
6 there were openings. He was trying to find the
7 opening. There was two openings before you would get
8 to the aft.

9 Q Okay.

10 A One at center ship, maybe. And there was one
11 close to our room. I'm assuming the doors closed.

12 Q Right.

13 A It ^{was solid} followed. There was nothing there. And
14 I got -- it would have been past center ship. I ran
15 into the fire extinguished doors were open.

16 And I closed one, and I flipped the other
17 one, too. I just instinctively closed them because I
18 knew somebody would run into them. Somebody would be
19 running into and you couldn't see where you were going.

20 And he told me to hit the floor. I did not
21 hit the floor. I figured I was more mobile standing
22 straight going. If I had the floor, I would be in more
23 trouble.

24 And I must have gone maybe three-quarters and
25 there was a ^{pocket} packet that was not as severe. You could

1 actually see the floor. You could actually see on both
2 sides.

3 And I told -- I yelled back then, "I found
4 air. I found air. Hurry. Come up this way."

5 I don't recall him ever answering me after he
6 told me to hit the floor. But I couldn't see. I knew
7 there was smoke ahead of me again.

8 And I just kept going. And when I got to the
9 doorway where the stairs were, there was a crew person
10 coming up the steps that had just a filter mask on,
11 like you would use in a doctor's office or something.
12 Just a filter mask alone.

13 And he grabbed me. And I kept yelling, "My
14 husband is laying in the hallway. My husband needs
15 help."

16 And he dragged me up two flights of steps.
17 And he deposited me in the restaurant. And he spoke to
18 some other people in a foreign language. And he just
19 disappeared. I don't know where he went.

20 He went away from me like he was going to go
21 back down. And I sat in the restaurant and they told
22 us we had to evacuate the restaurant at that point.

23 I personally did not ever hear them say:

24 You need to evacuate the NC deck.

25 People told me it was announced once. I

1 personally do not ever recall hearing it. There was no
2 alarms in the hallway going off when we opened the
3 doors.

4 I remember them telling us that:

5 In the cabins, you do not hear any
6 announcements.

7 I do recall them saying that twice on the
8 ship.

9 "If you are in your cabin, you do not hear
10 announcements. They only go in the hallway."

11 That bothers me as I think about that now.

12 Q So, any announcements at all?

13 A "Do not go in the cabins. They're only in
14 the hallway and the open areas, the open decks,
15 restaurants of the ship."

16 And after they told me that I had to evacuate
17 the Ledo, the restaurant --

18 Q Is that the same place you had breakfast?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay.

21 A I went out on the deck and there were four
22 crew people standing there. I know one was the lady
23 from the photographer desk. Okay?

24 And there was three other members there. And
25 I went over to them and I said, "I have lost my

1 husband. He is on B-deck laying in the hall. I need
2 someone to go down; he needs help."

3 And they kind of looked at me, and they were
4 all American people that understood English. And they
5 kind of looked at me and said, "Ma'am, don't worry
6 about it; everything is going to be taken care of."

7 And I said, "You don't understand. He needs
8 help down there. It's very bad down there. I just
9 came up from down there."

10 And they just said, "Everyone is being rung
11 door to door or hallways."

12 And I said, "He's not in our room."

13 And, at that point, I said, "He's got a white
14 jacket on." And they were looking around the deck with
15 me, and the one girl said, "Is that him over there?"

16 And one of the other men turned around and
17 said, "Oh, that man has a white beard. And she said,
18 "No, he doesn't. Ma'am, would you please look?"

19 And I looked and he was sitting all by
20 himself at the front of the ship just -- and he had his
21 life jacket on. I don't know how he got his life
22 jacket on.

23 He was sitting there with his life jacket on.
24 And I just found my way to him and hugged him and said,
25 "Oh, my... I'm so glad that you're all right and I

1 found you."

2 And at that point, I said, "Don't you want
3 some water or something?"

4 Nobody was offering anything to him. And I
5 went and got some water -- for both of us because I
6 said, "Oh, my God, you know, my throat's burning. It's
7 so bad," and I couldn't find anybody to give me a piece
8 of gum or anything.

9 And some of our friends that were traveling
10 with us said under the deck it wasn't so breezy. And I
11 said, "I'm really getting cold out here. Let's go.
12 We'll go in and..."

13 Q These friends are from?

14 A Apopka, Florida.

15 Q These are not your --

16 A Relatives? No. They were friends.

17 Q Okay.

18 A And so we went to sit by them. And then it
19 came over the PA that we had to go to our muster
20 station -- mustering stations -- our life boats.

21 So, anyway --

22 Q That was for everyone?

23 A That was for everyone. So everyone started
24 going up another flight of steps, very, very
25 emphatically. The people were very kind about that.

1 And I did see, before they mentioned that --
2 I got ahead of my story -- there were people on deck.
3 There were two of them standing with a group of four
4 that had the regular gas masks. And they were standing
5 up on deck.

6 I don't know if they had finished their jobs
7 or if their floors had been cleared. They were just
8 standing around with everybody else.

9 And so we went up to our muster station.

10 Q Do those crew members who are supposed to be
11 part of the emergency team, do they have distinctive
12 clothing on?

13 A A lot of them said "Traffic Control" on them.
14 But I never seen them at points where traffic needed to
15 be controlled.

16 Q Okay, but that's what they wore, "Traffic
17 Control"? That's -- okay.

18 A And so we went up and we got to our lifeboat.
19 And we hadn't found my sister-in-law and brother-in-law
20 at that point.

21 And we checked in and I asked the guy with
22 the clipboard, you know, "I'm looking for Winnies. Are
23 Winnies here?"

24 And he said, "Yes." And I just screamed
25 "Beverly" and up her hand came from the back. And we

1 went back and hugged and cried. And it's like, "Oh, my
2 gosh, you know, what's going on? What's going to
3 happen next?"

4 And Carl was with Bill standing next to him.
5 And the next thing I knew, they said that we could go
6 inside to the restaurants only.

7 And I seen Billy grab my husband's arm. And
8 Bev said, "He's having problems." And I went, "He's
9 fine." And she said, "No, he's not."

10 And Billy ushered him very quickly inside.
11 We actually walked down a flight of steps where there
12 were another five or six people standing.

13 And I said, "Does anybody here speak
14 English?"

15 Q To those five or six people who were
16 standing?

17 A Two people. And I said, "Does anybody here
18 speak English? We need a doctor."

19 And it was like, "No, no, no further. You
20 can't go, no further."

21 And I'm saying, "We need to get to a doctor."
22 And they just pointed up. So we went back to main deck
23 to the main office. Laid him on a couch and asked for
24 medical assistance.

25 They were there within five minutes. I was

1 amazed at how quickly --

2 Q When you asked for medical assistance, was
3 that through a telephone?

4 A It was the girls that were standing there at
5 the desk.

6 Q Okay.

7 A And they were there like much quicker than I
8 anticipated. And they had a wheelchair. They had an
9 oxygen tank. They took one look at him. I'm certain
10 the one grabbed his pulse rate.

11 And they put a mask on him immediately and
12 said, "We're going to take you down to medical." And
13 they looked at me and said, "You can't come. You've
14 already breathed enough smoke. He's got oxygen on. He
15 is going to be fine because we have to go through smoke
16 to get there."

17 And, "You can call us later."

18 So he went down. They took him. And my
19 brother-in-law and sister-in-law and I went into one of
20 the lounges. And I started wandering, to be honest
21 with you. And some lady yelled at me about dragging my
22 straps on my life jacket.

23 So I threw the life jackets down. And I went
24 outside to get air. My throat was burning so badly.
25 And I went out. And by that time, the Forest Ranger

1 had just come back on and said, "Sorry for the
2 interruption. I will now continue my talk of where I
3 was."

4 And so it was like 35-50 minutes that he had
5 not been speaking, that he was going to resume.

6 And I looked at the tee-shirts that were out
7 there that they had on sale and just trying to get some
8 air. And I sat down and took some deep breaths.

9 And I went back in and Bev and Bill were
10 where I had left them. And Billy asked me where my
11 life jackets were and I told him I just threw them
12 down.

13 He said, "Well, go get them," he would wrap
14 them up for me and make sure that they got put back
15 where they should be.

16 And he said, "Where are you going?" I said,
17 "I'm going to call on Carl." And I got up. And I knew
18 where the phone was outside the Ledo Restaurant. And I
19 called and they told me he was fine, everything was
20 fine.

21 And I said, "Okay, I'll call back in a few
22 more minutes." And we went -- and they said we could --
23 -- that everything was clear. The smoke was all
24 cleared, we could go back to our cabins.

25 And I looked at Bill --

1 Q They said that over the PA?

2 A Over the PA.

3 Q Okay.

4 A And I looked at Bev and Bill and I said, "I'm
5 not going down there until Billy goes." And Billy kind
6 of laughed and Bev says, "Well, you know, we have to go
7 down there eventually."

8 And I said, "Well, then I guess we're all
9 going to go together because I'm not going by myself."

10 And so we all went down to the cabin and
11 Billy put my life jackets away. And I called on Carl
12 again. And, at that point, they said his EKG was
13 erratic, that there was problems.

14 And I said, "Can we get there yet? Can we
15 come?" And they said yes. So that was probably 45
16 minutes before I saw him down in the ship thing.

17 And when we walked in, they had hundreds of
18 wires on him, which I found out later was one of their
19 EKGs was not working properly, so they hooked him to
20 two.

21 So he had extra wires. They had i.v.'s
22 hanging all over the place. They had a nitro patch on
23 him. They told me they had given him nitro under the
24 tongue and they were giving him the nitro direct,
25 because they couldn't control the pain.

1 And they showed me the EKG and at that point,
2 I believe the captain had come on and said that we
3 weren't going to be staying and watching any crabbing
4 or anything of the glaciers, that we were -- because of
5 time, we could not stay in the Bay.

6 And s he was turning the ship and going back.

7 And I said to them, the girls down there,
8 something about, "Gee, it's a shame that they're not
9 going to be able to stay. Is it because of the fire?"
10 And they told me no, it was because my husband was
11 being medivacked off the ship.

12 And, at that time, there was people there
13 from the front office. There was representatives from
14 Holland-America there. They offered assistance of
15 packing, what they could do to help to assist me to get
16 ready to go, that I was going with him.

17 And I said -- I refused their help because I
18 had my sister-in-law and brother-in-law to help. They
19 packed me up. I didn't -- I did not need strangers at
20 that point packing me.

21 My brother-in-law and sister-in-law packed me
22 up. And I talked to some other friends who kept coming
23 down to our room because at one point they paged me.
24 And of course that went all over the ship.

25 And I was on my way to see him when they

1 paged me. And I thought, well, I don't know what they
2 want me for, they can wait. I'm just going down to
3 medical.

4 And they had paged me. He wanted to give me
5 something, a watch or something. He wanted me to take
6 some of his possessions off. And they said that they
7 had paged me, that I didn't have to answer the page.

8 The people we were traveling with at that
9 point knew something was wrong. So they came down to
10 see him, I guess.

11 Q "They being?

12 A Good friends. I understand the captain came
13 down and spoke with him. I don't know what he shared
14 with Carl, I wasn't there.

15 I did not stay in medical. I did not see the
16 volume of people that went in and out. I do know that
17 they knew I was in the hall with him.

18 I did not ask for medical assistance, but no
19 one even asked if I needed anything, which was my fault
20 probably for not asking because their main concern was
21 taking care of him.

22 Everybody else was treated that came in, so
23 maybe ^{they} ~~he~~ just didn't ask.

24 Q Were there other people that came in?

25 A I understand there was. I did see some

1 people getting medivacked out. There was one of the
2 crew members came in with burned hands and was asking
3 for help.

4 And there were four other people that had
5 walked in and said -- I don't know if they just had
6 questions to ask, or what. But, they were down there
7 and they were speaking with the nurses.

8 And I don't know what was said. I was
9 speaking with a crew person that was in a suit jacket.
10 And he was very difficult to understand. But he was
11 telling me that one cabin had been destroyed on D-deck
12 and it was an electrical fire. They thought it had
13 come from a television cord.

14 And that he wished me the best.

15 And then one of the reps from Holland
16 American, the customer service lady, gave me a hug,
17 wished me the best and kind of stated, "Well, now
18 you're on your own, honey. We've got him off the ship.
19 We've made arrangements for you to get to the airport
20 to get to Juneau, which they told me how much my flight
21 was going to cost -- \$55.

22 Q What was that again? I mean he was
23 medivacked from the ship to --

24 A No, we were tendered to the Forest Ranger
25 station.

1 Q Right.

2 A And he was medivacked from the station. I
3 had to wait for a taxi to take me into town.

4 Q An air taxi?

5 A No, a taxi. A cab to take me into town, ten
6 miles. And my flight was at 5:15. So, at 2:30, they
7 told me I had to be down there with him with my luggage
8 because everything was going to start at 3.

9 Q Okay.

10 A And by the time we got in the tender and got
11 lowered and everything, when I got to the airport, it
12 was 4:30, twenty to 5, and my flight was at 5:15.

13 And they had made all the arrangements was
14 what I was told -- arrangements. I did not understand
15 what that meant until I got out of the cab at the
16 airport and I said, "Do I owe you anything?" And he
17 said, "You owe me \$8."

18 But, they had informed me on the ship that I
19 would have to pay \$55 for my flight to Juneau -- and
20 just to let me know that I was going to have to cover.

21 They did not go into any extent at that point
22 except they had made arrangements, I was on my own.

23 And --

24 Q Did they say that?

25 A The one lady did, that I was on my own.

1 But, my sister-in-law and brother-in-law were
2 not allowed to accompany me. That they had to stay on
3 the ship. And my sister-in-law was sorry at that.

4 They just told her that the cost would be
5 astronomical, that it would be very, very expensive if
6 she got off the ship.

7 That it was best if she stayed on and I went
8 on by myself with him.

9 And I got to the airport and the helicopter
10 he was on had landed because of bad weather. He was at
11 the airport with me.

12 And the guys came in and talked to me at the
13 airport and said they were going to try to go up one
14 more time. And if they could not get up, then they
15 were going to bring in the Coast Guard with a bigger
16 plane -- to get him over here to Juneau.

17 And I was leaving on the 5:15 flight, which I
18 left. In fact, Kate picked me up from -- I thought she
19 was Port Authority. She's the liaison -- picked me up
20 at--

21 Q Liaison for?

22 A For cruisers --

23 Q Okay, she works for Holland?

24 A No. She's between Port Authority and the
25 ship. She's a liaison, but she does not -- Don

1 Hanburger, you met, was her boss.

2 Q Okay.

3 A But, she does not work for any ship company.
4 She's just the liaison for any problems that arise.
5 She met me at the airport.

6 And he landed just as we were driving away
7 from the airport. That was when he landed.

8 And when we got here, Kate was the one --
9 Kate suggested that I should be checked because she
10 thought I didn't sound very well.

11 And when I got into the hospital here and got
12 him checked in, the emergency room department
13 encouraged strongly per by the doctor that I needed to
14 be checked also for smoke inhalation.

15 And they found -- they did find that there
16 was a little discrepancies with me, and I have to be
17 checked again. But, not enough to admit me, just that
18 I needed to be checked.

19 Q Is there anything else that you wanted to add
20 about the actual incident all the way through from I
21 guess the time that you heard the first alarm practiced
22 all the way through to the hospital? Up to this point?

23 A Do I want to add anything?

24 Q Yes.

25 A Well, okay. You know, we lived in Florida

1 and we go through a lot of emergencies for hurricanes
2 and everything that you're supposed to do and the
3 drills that you have to have.

4 And I know the cruise ships were aware of it
5 when you go on it that they are staffed with people
6 from foreign countries.

7 If they're going to do that, they need key
8 people that speak the language of the majority of the
9 people that are going to be on that ship -- Canadians,
10 Americans. Most of your people that are on an American
11 ship do speak American.

12 And when you are talking to a person and
13 asking for help and they have no conception of what
14 you're saying whatsoever, in a situation like that,
15 it's very difficult.

16 They're all very nice people. They're all
17 very thankful they have their jobs and they do a good
18 job at it. But, it's very hard to communicate with
19 someone that doesn't understand you, and especially in
20 a panic situation, to direct you, you have to be able
21 to communicate.

22 And they need some people -- if you've got
23 people on the ship that you know all the time, you're
24 going to have mainly Japanese and American and Mexican,
25 you better have those three languages there so those

1 people understand what you're doing.

2 I know you can't cover every dialect in the
3 world, but if you're going to have people that you can
4 take a sense of how many people of what kind, cut that
5 pie into thirds and get the major languages represented
6 so they can at least be directed if they need to be.

7 Q Let me ask you, since it's sort of going into
8 the next topic, how would you evaluate the reactions or
9 the actions of the staff that you encountered in the
10 sense of were they professional? Was there some panic?
11 Were they helpful?

12 Did they provide the assistance that you
13 expected for that kind of incident?

14 A Well, the little gentleman that dragged me up
15 two flights of steps, I'm very thankful to him. If I
16 wouldn't have found him, I don't know. If he wouldn't
17 have grabbed me, I probably would have went back after
18 Carl.

19 He wouldn't allow me to. He would not allow
20 me to go back. I don't know if he understood me
21 because I do know he did not speak English.

22 Q Right.

23 A So I'm certain he did not understand
24 everything I was saying. If he did understand me, he
25 did not communicate back to me in my language that he

1 did understand me.

2 I think he probably understood "B-deck". And
3 I kept screaming "B-deck, husband." Maybe, he picked
4 that out.

5 He was the only one I saw. And when I got up
6 in the restaurant, there was no one, there was nobody
7 in there directing anybody.

8 When I got out on deck, the four people I
9 asked for assistance kind of, well, they just kind of
10 wanted to console me that everything was going to be
11 okay, I didn't have to panic, that the situation was
12 under control.

13 Maybe, they need more two-way radios. I
14 didn't see too many of them. You know, walkie-talkies.

15 Q Right.

16 A Maybe, that would help. In a situation like
17 that, if there was more radio contact between floors as
18 to what was going on.

19 Q Did they seem, the crew members that you
20 encountered, were they calm? Would you describe their
21 reaction as being calm?

22 A The ones up on deck were calm. During the
23 actual scrambling of everything, you didn't see that
24 because it was on the crew deck. I mean, the people,
25 the firemen that put the garb on after it was over

1 with, I mean, they all came up. You could see that
2 they were dirty, they were tired, they were warm.

3 And they had even taken fire gear from the
4 fourth floor. I mean they had taken fire gear from
5 every floor.

6 I was told afterwards that the Coast Guard
7 had brought a chopper out. I don't know how many was
8 on it. I did not see the chopper. I was told by other
9 people on the ship that the Coast Guard had been out
10 there during the fire. That they were there to lend
11 assistance if it was needed.

12 I gather, evidently, I don't know if they
13 ever boarded the ship. I don't know.

14 Q When you say that you heard this, did you
15 hear that after you were back here?

16 A No, I heard it when I was on the ship.

17 Q Oh, you were still on the ship.

18 A I was still on the ship when I heard the
19 Coast Guard was there.

20 Q Oh, okay.

21 A Actually, once we left the ship, they made
22 arrangements for the ship RN to be with Carl. And she
23 was under that idea or whatever also that she was to be
24 going with him to Juneau. That the arrangements had
25 been made.

1 They put a portable EKG on him to bring him
2 over in the tender. They were very good as far as the
3 doctors' standpoint down there. I commend them for how
4 they handled the situation.

5 But, once we got on shore, she was told she
6 could not go, there was not room in the chopper. She
7 had to go back to the ship. That the arrangements that
8 were made were not as they seemed.

9 And she was not happy leaving her patient
10 knowing that she was to also not only be a comfort to
11 him but she was also supposed to be a little bit of a
12 support to me, because she had been with him from the
13 beginning.

14 We had talked on the ship. We had a rapport.

15 Q Right.

16 A And I wouldn't have been on my own, per se.
17 There would have been another person with me, that at
18 least I knew someone.

19 Q From the time that you left the ship until
20 you got to the hospital.

21 A And she was to be here. She was to stay here
22 with him -- or with me. She was going to stay until
23 they were going to fly her to me in Seward.

24 And she had to go back on the tender and get
25 back on the ship.

1 So I don't know if the mix-up came with the
2 Coast Guard not taking him and then the... brought him
3 in or whatever. But, I understand the chopper was very
4 small. There was no room for anyone.

5 And that was another reason I couldn't go on
6 the chopper, which they had made sure there was a
7 flight there.

8 Q Based upon your experience, are there any
9 recommendations that you would have?

10 A I think that they need key people in the
11 spots to direct the people. And I think that fire can
12 spread faster than what you anticipate.

13 I think they kind of closed the door after
14 the horse was out. They should have been one floor
15 ahead at all times if they needed to go even two floors
16 to protect the people that were on board ship.

17 You know, if it's on D-deck, well, don't say
18 you can't use C-deck. Say you can't use B and C right
19 off the bat. Be over-cautious rather than under-
20 cautious.

21 Q You don't feel that they were?

22 A Over-cautious? No. No. And he, the
23 captain, came on, I would say it was spaced like every
24 fifteen to twenty minutes.

25 Within that fifteen to twenty minutes, you

1 had no idea. You know, first, "Oh, there's a fire on
2 D-deck." The next thing I heard was, "Well, I don't
3 think anyone should be going down on C-deck. We need
4 everyone not to be using C-deck."

5 After that, I didn't hear anything about any
6 other decks. Then he come on and said, "We have
7 actually now have the fire under control."

8 And then maybe twenty minutes later, he came
9 back on and he said, "The fire is now extinguished."

10 So there was like twenty-minute intervals.
11 And when he said it was extinguished, which when we
12 were all standing up there at our muster stations, and
13 they said:

14 "Oh, the smoke is being cleared from the
15 ship. You are now allowed to go back only into the
16 dining rooms. And as the ship clears, you will be
17 notified that you can go down to your rooms, or
18 whatever."

19 That was it.

20 Q Did you see any smoke on the outside?

21 A No, I did not. And the only way -- I
22 remember when the Princess burned and it was on TV and
23 that was from aerial shots.

24 And I think the only way you would probably
25 have seen that is if somebody had a video cam and was

1 flying over Glacier Bay at that point to see how much
2 smoke was really billowing out of the New Amsterdam.

3 Considering that this is an unpopulated area,
4 the news crews just couldn't get out like they do in
5 other areas to, you know, get the pictures to show
6 people.

7 My daughter, from what I understand, they
8 can't even be on the computer because she hasn't seen
9 any pictures of the New Amsterdam.

10 So I don't know if there are any.

11 Q Any --?

12 A She's been on the computer checking
13 everything about where the ship is and what happened
14 and everything. And, of course, there's always
15 pictures on the computer.

16 And she hasn't said a word about seeing
17 anything like that up until this time. So I doubt it
18 unless somebody has personal ones and they haven't
19 turned them over yet.

20 Q Okay. Are there any other recommendations?

21 A Well, I did notice that there was no smoke
22 alarms -- not smoke alarms. There was no sprinkler
23 system.

24 And it didn't dawn on me until I walked into
25 my room here at Barrett House that when I seen the

1 sprinkler system on the ceiling in here, I went, "I
2 don't recall seeing a sprinkling system on that whole
3 ship."

4 And we sailed two years ago on a Norwegian
5 ship and I know there were sprinkler systems on that
6 ship. And it just never dawned on me. It's not
7 something that it's in your mind when you book a cruise
8 or whatever to ask those kinds of questions:

9 "Oh, do they have a sprinkler system on that
10 ship?"

11 Trust me. I will again. I'll never sail
12 again on a ship that doesn't have all the proper
13 regulation -- to my regulations.

14 Q Did they have smoke alarms? And didn't they
15 work?

16 A I don't know. I did not ever hear a smoke
17 alarm, ever anywhere. And I don't recall seeing one in
18 our room. If they were in the hallways, when I was in
19 the hallway in the depth of that smoke, when you
20 couldn't see your hand in front of your face, there was
21 no alarms going off. There was nothing going off.
22 Nothing.

23 Q Is there anything else that you want add, so
24 we can just go back, and think of anything that you
25 would like to add to this interview? Either about the

1 emergency, about the incident, about the crew's
2 professionalism, the assistance, medical assistance?

3 A The medical assistance was wonderful.

4 Q The recommendations?

5 A The recommendations is, you know, I read an
6 article today in the newspaper -- and I have to be
7 honest with you, that's where I read it. And I know
8 you can't believe everything you read.

9 But, the standards that shipped was built on
10 was 1974 standards. That they have been changed since
11 then. And that you had fifteen years from the year the
12 ship was built, or until the year 2005.

13 I think the New Amsterdam borders on that
14 fifteen years possibly. I think fifteen years is too
15 much. I think eight to ten years would be max.

16 Get all these ships really safe for
17 everybody. I never considered a ship fifteen years old
18 old until you live through something like this.

19 And you see that the standards change rather
20 quickly. And when a standard changes, I think they all
21 need to be brought up to that speed. That when new
22 regulation goes through they have to meet it within
23 twelve months or something. But, it has to be met.

24 It's important that it's met, or it wouldn't
25 be a regulation.

1 THE INVESTIGATOR: Okay. Is there anything
2 else that you want to add?

3 MS. DURNELL: That's all. No.

4 THE INVESTIGATOR: You don't think so?

5 MS. DURNELL: I don't think so. It's just a
6 day I never want to live again.

7 THE INVESTIGATOR: Okay. I can understand
8 that. This interview is going to conclude. It's about
9 6 o'clock in the evening. I discussed with Carl and
10 Susan beforehand that this was going to be taped, and
11 they understand that.

12 And we also went over the confidentiality
13 part of it, and also talked about our mission and how,
14 through their cooperation, how it's going to benefit
15 future individuals who use lines.

16 And, hopefully, their experience is going to
17 make cruise lines a lot safer and possibly eliminate
18 some of the things that occurred to them.

19 So that concludes this interview.

20 Thank you.

21 (Whereupon, the taped interview was
22 concluded.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached
proceedings before: NTSB

In the Matter of: LIVE TAPE INTERVIEWS

were held as herein appears and that this is the
original transcript thereof for the file of the
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