

# The Arrival That Never Took Place...

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It was a shock to everyone... it was something no one could have believed possible. After months of planning, expectation, anticipation and intensive labors at the Belfast shipyards of Harland & Wolff, the *Titanic* – the largest steamer in the world – had departed on her maiden voyage and promptly sunk. In an era when technological breakthroughs were viewed as a basis for confidence in man's forward progress on all levels, the greatest technological wonder of the age had sunk in less than three hours, after running afoul of a simple piece of ice.

More stunning than any technological or monetary loss, roughly two-thirds of her passengers and crew had gone to the bottom with her. The public was outraged, as well as afraid. Something had obviously gone very wrong, many questions had been raised, and answers had to follow *poste haste*. The Captain of the ship had gone down with her. However, some of her officers, not to mention the Managing Director of the White Star Line, Joseph Bruce Ismay, had survived, and they would all face some serious questions.

This was especially true of Bruce Ismay, son of the Line's founder. Whereas the ship's senior officers had stayed aboard until the last possible moment, fighting to save others, Ismay had boarded a lifeboat and had escaped the sinking without even getting his feet wet. It is said that most male survivors of the *Titanic* disaster faced a stigma of sorts; if this was true of ordinary passengers or crewmen, then this would obviously be far truer of the Managing Director of the White Star Line.

The press, first to report the details of the sinking, was quick to point fingers, and most of them seemed to point in Ismay's direction. Then, when rumors began to circulate that the ship had been running at full speed through a known danger area, that they were trying to make it into New York early, and that Bruce Ismay had apparently known about or been involved with the matter, everyone went wild. Vitriolic and personal attacks were made upon Ismay, going to the point of bestowing him with the clever if stinging nickname of "J. Brute Ismay".

By the time the American Inquiry into the disaster began, just after the *Carpathia* docked in New York, many had already made up their minds that Bruce Ismay was the villain in the affair. Both Inquiries, as well as the later Limitation of Liability Hearings, had to wade through this mess and try to get to the truth of the matter.

This was no simple task.

The White Star Line was, at the time, suffering from a dubious fame. Their reputation had gone from an all-time peak to a rock-bottom low in record time. Bruce Ismay, the relatively shy, aloof businessman was suffering under intense personal attack. There were legal, commercial and monetary ramifications at stake. If poor decisions or mistakes in navigation had been made during the voyage – either due to incompetence or simple overconfidence – then it would obviously not be in the interests of those involved to discuss the situation

openly. If there were no poor decisions or mistakes in navigation, then it would be difficult to convince the public of that fact, because most had their minds made up already.

Because of all these factors, serious doubt overshadows the matter to this day. Basically, the hotly-debated questions are: were any of those in charge of the *Titanic* trying to get her into New York on Tuesday night, rather than Wednesday morning, as scheduled? Was the *Titanic* running at “full speed” at the time of the collision, thus reducing reaction time when the iceberg was sighted and contributing to the sinking? Was Bruce Ismay sitting behind the scenes, quietly dictating or pressuring Captain Smith or his officers into going against their better judgment and steam at recklessly high speed into the ice field?

This article has been prepared in an attempt to settle the issue with some measure of finality with the best evidence available, and has not been written to “clear” or “condemn” any of those involved, other than to point out errors in judgment or mistakes.

Perhaps the best place to begin this discussion would be to find out whether there would have been any advantage to having the *Titanic* arrive early in New York, on Tuesday night rather than on Wednesday morning in the first place.

To find the answer to this point, one must consider the ruthless nature of the competition between the first-rate shipping lines of the day, especially between White Star and Cunard, and also with the two primary German lines and the French Line. Usually, publicity and public attention was most focused on a large ship during its maiden voyage. The press continued to feed the public reports on the size, luxury, or the speed of new liners, whipping them into a frenzy in the months coming up to that all-important event. As a result, a steamship company would never enjoy so much free publicity as it would pick up just prior to, during and immediately following the maiden voyage of one of their new crack liners. It was a relatively rare business opportunity for those in charge of the steamship companies, and savvy businessmen at the helms of these companies were quick to make the most of the events. If it was their ship making the maiden voyage, they were quick to tout its features; if the ship happened to belong to a competitor, they would be quick to find ways of detracting from its reputation without overtly looking like they were trying to do so.

As an example of this, on the very day before the *Lusitania* arrived in New York on her maiden voyage, the White Star Line made a press announcement about their response, a ship that would be bigger than the *Lusitania* and which eventually became the *Olympic*. This was a blatant attempt to draw publicity away from the new Cunarder and bring attention back to the White Star Line, and was certainly not unique in the annals of maritime history.

Hence, from a publicity standpoint, there could have been an advantage to having the *Titanic* arrive in New York early. For one thing, it was widely known that the White Star Line was building luxurious ships with no thought of trying to capture the Blue Riband. However, their most recent ocean liners – the *Celtic*, the *Cedric*, the *Baltic*, and the *Adriatic*, commonly known as “The Big Four” – had perhaps tipped the scales too far in the sluggish direction. In early May of 1907, the largest and newest of the four, the *Adriatic*, entered service. At 24,541 tons, she was most certainly the largest liner in service at the time, and yet her twin screws and reciprocating engines could propel her at a mere 16.5-17 knots. Within four months, the Cunard Line put the *Lusitania* into service. Not only was she significantly larger

than the *Adriatic*, but she was also the fastest liner in the world, at over 25 knots. This immediately made the *Adriatic* seem like a comfortable, yet unnecessarily sluggish ship. It would have been obvious to everyone that White Star's next entrants would not only have to be much larger and more luxurious than the Cunard sisters, but also a good deal faster than their "Big Four" had been. The *Olympic* and *Titanic* were thus designed as 21-knot ships.

Hence, from a purely public-relations standpoint, if the *Titanic* had arrived in New York on Tuesday evening rather than her regularly scheduled Wednesday morning arrival – and on her maiden voyage, at that – it would have gone a long way toward cementing the view that the *Olympic* and *Titanic* were no slouches when compared to the *Lusitania* and the *Mauretania*.

Would there have been any practical advantages to having the *Titanic* dock on Tuesday evening rather than Wednesday morning on her maiden voyage? Although less important than the public-relations aspect of this matter, the answer to this question is also affirmative. Basically, the practicality stemmed from the short duration of the turnaround in New York and the large amount of work that needed to be done during that short period of time.

Many maritime enthusiasts do not understand the immense quantity of work required to turn a ship like the *Titanic* around while she was in port. All of the passengers and their belongings needed to be disembarked from the ship, after which all cabins and accommodations needed to be thoroughly cleaned and "re-made" – perhaps this is best illustrated by attempting to picture a first-class hotel doing a complete turnover of all patrons all at the same time, instead of in a staggered progression.

While all of this was going on, other and more mundane tasks were also being carried out. Coaling a ship in port is a notoriously clumsy, dirty, noisy task that takes an inordinate amount of time under even the best conditions. The ship's crew worked very hard to ensure that all passenger spaces were sealed off from the coal dust raised in this process, but the dust invariably slipped through the barriers and made its way into the ship. This necessitated a thorough cleaning of the ship prior to the embarkation of a fresh batch of – for the purposes of our discussion – east-bound passengers.

However, all of this would be moot if the *Olympic* or *Titanic* were unable to arrive on Tuesday night because they were not fast enough to do so. One of the first things that must be pointed out in discussing this matter is the fact that although the *Olympic* and *Titanic* were designed to be 21-knot ships on paper, they proved to be quite a bit faster in practice than had been expected. Certainly, this testifies to the efficient design by Harland & Wolff.

For example, the *Lusitania* and *Mauretania* had been expressly built for a service speed of 25 knots. They were designed with slim, tapering hulls that were designed to push through oncoming waves rather than riding over them. They were given a quadruple-screw configuration, and sported four ahead-thrust turbine engines developing over 60,000 h.p.<sup>1</sup> They also managed to gobble an exorbitant amount of coal, although they proved somewhat more efficient than the early estimates of 1,000 tons used per day. The *Lusitania* took the Blue Riband in late 1907 at a speed of 23.993 knots (westbound), and the *Mauretania* had

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<sup>1</sup> According to tests done during the *Lusitania*'s trials in 1907, some 64,600 h.p. were being transmitted to her four screws at some 188 rpm's.

taken it by September of 1909 at an average speed of 26.06 knots. Of the two ships, the *Mauretania* was faster than the *Lusitania*.

The *Olympic* and *Titanic*, by comparison, had been designed to be some four knots slower. They were endowed with two reciprocating engines (good for some 15,000 h.p. each under normal conditions) and one low-pressure turbine run off excess steam from the reciprocating engines and good for some 16,000 h.p., for a total of 46,000 hp. Yet, the ship was capable of producing a maximum of some 59,000 h.p., and burned far less coal than the Cunard sisters<sup>2</sup>. Her hull had been designed for comfort, not for speed, and was wider for much more of her overall length than the Cunard sisters. Yet, even though she was only designed to run at 21 knots, the *Olympic* was far faster than that; her first two west-bound crossings were made at average speeds of 21.17 knots and 21.7 knots, with some of the daily averages coming in at 22 ½ knots. East-bound, aided by the current, she was able to turn out even faster speeds; during one east-bound crossing at the outset of World War One, she managed to average some 24 knots.

It is a sound conclusion to reason that the *Titanic* would have been *at least* as swift as her older sister. Unfortunately, a long-term study of their relative speeds in service was made impossible by the sinking. However, from the evidence on hand regarding the speed of the *Titanic* on her maiden voyage, it seems evident that she was somewhat faster than the *Olympic*. What evidence is this?

During the *Olympic's* maiden voyage, at no time were her five single-ended 'auxiliary' boilers online and in operation. By the time of the *Titanic's* collision with the iceberg on Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, she too was operating under steam from all 24 of her main boilers, without the assistance of her five 'auxiliary' boilers. If one compares the daily runs of the two maiden voyages, once the ships had departed Queenstown, Ireland and taken to the open sea, there is an interesting discovery to be made:

|          | <i>Olympic</i> | <i>Olympic</i><br>total | <i>Titanic</i> | <i>Titanic</i> total | <i>Titanic's</i><br>Lead Over<br><i>Olympic</i> |
|----------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---|
| Day 1-2  | 428 miles      | 428 miles               | 484 miles      | 484 miles            | 56 miles  |
| Day 2-3  | 534 miles      | 962 miles               | 519 miles      | 1,003 miles          | 41 miles  |
| Day 3-4  | 542 miles      | 1,504 miles             | 546 miles      | 1,549 miles          | 45 miles  |
| Day 4-5  | 525 miles      | 2,029 miles             | --             | --                   | --  |
| Day 5-6  | 548 miles      | 2,577 miles             | --             | --                   | --  |
| Day 5-NY | 317 miles      | 2,894 miles             | --             | --                   | --  |

Indeed, according to the daily runs of the two liners on their maiden voyages, the *Titanic* was making a better speed and consistently covering more miles than the *Olympic* without any more of her boilers in operation. It seems that, just as the *Mauretania* proved faster than the *Lusitania*, the *Titanic* was proving faster than her sister under very similar conditions.

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<sup>2</sup> According to figures worked out by Mark Chirnside in his book, *The Olympic-Class Ships: Olympic, Titanic, Britannic*, Appendix 11, the *Olympic* burned some 620 tons of coal in an average day of steaming. This was somewhat less than figures supplied by Harold Sanderson on the matter, but is more specifically calculated and referenced. It also agrees very closely with Bruce Ismay's estimates on the matter.

This is a little-known fact, since there was so little time to document the *Titanic* before she sank that many of her technical features as well as the differences between the two sisters are unknown to this day.

While Bruce Ismay was being examined at the British Inquiry, his testimony at the American Inquiry on the matter was brought up, and he was asked to confirm the statement. His comments are telling:

19051. But I see that you were able to tell the Court in America what the maximum speed you expected of the “Olympic” was. I just call your attention to it; you may not remember it. Senator Fletcher put to you this question: “You say you expected in the ‘Titanic’ the same speed that the ‘Olympic’ had, but you did not mention that speed?” And your answer was: “I should call the ‘Olympic’ a good 22-knot ship. She can do better under very favourable circumstances; I think she can work up to 22½ or perhaps 22¾ as a maximum”? – I think that is about right.

19052. And the “Titanic”? – We were hoping that she would do a little bit better than that.

19053. A quarter of a knot, do you mean? - Yes, something like that, a little bit better, so we were told by our shipbuilders.

From this it seems obvious that Ismay was expecting a slightly improved speed from the *Titanic* over her sister’s performance. It is also important to note that the *Olympic* herself was capable of arriving in New York on Tuesday night rather than Wednesday morning. On her second and fourth west-bound crossings, she arrived in New York early, so it was certainly possible for the *Titanic* to do so, as well.

There was something else that some argue could have prevented the *Titanic* from arriving in New York on Tuesday night, however: the amount of coal she had on board to feed her boilers. When she left Southampton, the *Titanic* carried some 5,892 tons of coal to feed her furnaces, somewhat less than her total carrying capacity<sup>3</sup> of coal<sup>4</sup>.

Herbert Pitman testified that he had been told by ‘an engineer’ that the *Titanic* did not have enough sufficient coal to “drive her full speed all the way across”. Perhaps not, but early on in the voyage, not all of her 24 main boilers had been on-line, and some coal had been saved during that period.

Bruce Ismay, on the other hand, testified that the ship had enough to reach New York with about “two days’ spare” reserve. Indeed, the *Olympic* had crossed on her maiden voyage with

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<sup>3</sup> The *Titanic*’s coal bunkers had a total capacity of 6,611 tons. An additional 1,092 tons of coal could be carried in the reserve coal bunker forward of Boiler Room No. 6.

<sup>4</sup> This was due to a coal strike that had been broken only just before the *Titanic* departed Southampton. Despite this strike-break, supplies of fresh coal were still short, and coal had to be pirated from other vessels in order to ensure that the *Titanic* sailed with enough coal to complete her maiden voyage.

about a thousand tons less than was to be found in the *Titanic's* bunkers on her maiden voyage, and she had finished the crossing with about 1,300 tons of coal left un-used. So it becomes clear, upon a detailed inspection that the *Titanic* was not short of coal on her maiden voyage at all.<sup>5</sup>

Now that it has been established that there was no physical impediment to a Tuesday night arrival, the question naturally arises: were all of the *Titanic's* boilers operational by the time she struck the iceberg?

Before we answer this question, it is important to understand completely the workings of the *Titanic's* powerplant; just because one of the *Titanic's* boilers was lit did not mean that it was feeding the engines and hence contributing to the ship's speed. Once the boilers' furnaces were lit, it took time for the steam pressure to build.<sup>6</sup> Now this question becomes a two-fold matter. First, how many of the *Titanic's* boilers were fired at the time of the collision? Second, how many of those boilers were actually providing steam to the engines and hence contributing to the speed of the liner?

At the British Inquiry, Leading Stoker Frederick Barrett testified that the last three 'main' boilers had been lit at approximately 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, and that the remaining five 'auxiliary' boilers in Boiler Room No. 1 were not lit.<sup>7</sup>

This seems relatively clear-cut. However, Fireman Alfred Shiers testified at the Limitation of Liability Hearings on the matter. Shiers had been working in Boiler Room No. 3 on the 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. watch, and seemed to indicate that not only were the last three main boilers connected to the engines at around 7:00 p.m., but also that the five 'auxiliary' boilers in Boiler Room No. 1 were lit that evening. However, he had gone off watch by the time of the collision, and had not been working in Boiler Room No. 1 directly.

Trimmer Thomas P. Dillon testified on the matter at the British Inquiry,<sup>8</sup> and his testimony seems to clear the air up quite nicely on this point. Dillon had been assigned to work in the "upper section of boilers", which were "not lit up" (Boiler Room No. 1), but because there was nothing to do with cold boilers, he was sent "to the [reciprocating] engine room to assist in cleaning the gear." After the collision, he went forward through Boiler Rooms Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4.

He was asked: "You went through a watertight compartment there into that place which is called boiler room No. 1 – is that right?"

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<sup>5</sup> For an in-depth consideration of the *Titanic's* alleged coal shortage, please see Appendix 11 of *The Olympic-Class Ships*, by Mark Chirnside.

<sup>6</sup> Thanks to Bruce Beveridge and Scott Andrews of the "Titanic Research & Modeling Association" for their assistance in this technical matter. Scott Andrews kindly provided the following information: "While it was possible to bring those boilers up to pressure in about eight hours from a dead start, with scotch boilers, it is always more desirable to do this over the course of 12 hours or more -- the slower it's done, the better it is for the longevity of the boilers."

<sup>7</sup> Questions 2202 to 2359. Frederick Barrett was on duty in Boiler Room No. 6 at the time of the collision.

<sup>8</sup> Questions 3708 to 3792. Thomas Dillon was on duty in the Reciprocating Engine Room at the time of the collision.

He responded: "Yes."

"And there were no fires lit there?"

Dillon responded: "No."

Dillon's testimony is especially worthy of consideration since he was a member of the crew that would have been working in Boiler Room No. 1 on the five 'auxiliary' boilers if they were lit up, and because he was on duty at the time of the collision. The very fact that he was still in the Reciprocating Engine Room, instead of Boiler Room No. 1, indicates that the five 'auxiliary' boilers had not, as yet, been lit.

Whether Shiers was accurate or Dillon was accurate is actually a moot point, since whether the five single-ended boilers were lit or not, they were for a certainty not connected up to the engines at the time of the collision, and were hence not contributing in any way to the speed of the ship that Sunday night.

The question naturally arises, however: would they have been lit at some point after the collision? The answer to that question is quite obvious: yes. The testimony on this matter came from Bruce Ismay himself, and because of its importance, it is reproduced verbatim below:

18378. Your intention was, was it not, before you reached New York, to get the maximum speed of 78<sup>9</sup>? - The intention was that if the weather should be found suitable on the Monday or the Tuesday that the ship would then have been driven at full speed.

18379. Which would be 78? - Yes, 78.

18380. So that your intention was to increase the speed at which she was travelling already on the Sunday of 75 revolutions, if the weather was satisfactory, to 78 on the Monday or the Tuesday? - Yes, to increase the speed to 78 if the conditions were all satisfactory.

18381. When she was proceeding at 75 revolutions were all her boilers on? - I believe not. I have no knowledge of that myself.

18382. Were the single-ended boilers on? - I have no knowledge of it myself. I was told they were not - at least, I have heard they were not.

18383. That none of the single-ended ones were on? - That is as far as I know.

18384. Then I will just refer you to what you said in America with regard to this? - As far as I know the single-ended boilers were not on on the Sunday.

18385. "The full speed of ship is 78 revolutions?" - Yes.

18386. "She worked up to 80. As far as I am aware she never exceeded 75 revolutions. She had not all her boilers on, none of the single-ended boilers were on. It was our intention if we had fine weather on Monday afternoon or Tuesday to drive the ship at full speed." Is that correct? - Yes, quite.

18387. With whom would you discuss this question of driving her at full speed on the Monday or Tuesday? - The only man I spoke to in regard to it was the Chief Engineer in my room when the ship was in Queenstown.

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<sup>9</sup> The revolutions per minute of the *Titanic's* reciprocating engines is the figure mentioned throughout this interchange. 75 rpm was *not* the maximum that they could achieve, as is later mentioned. In reality, they worked at even higher rpm's than the 80 mentioned in question 18386.

18388. Is that Mr. Bell? - Yes.

18389. The Chief Engineer? - Yes.

18390. Can you tell me on what day it was that she first made the 75 revolutions on this voyage? - I think it would be on the Saturday.

18391. And when was it that you discussed the question of putting her at full speed on the Monday or the Tuesday? - On the Thursday when the ship was at anchor in Queenstown Harbour.

18392. Will you explain that. It is not quite clear why you should discuss the question in Queenstown? - The reason why we discussed it at Queenstown was this, that Mr. Bell came into my room; I wanted to know how much coal we had on board the ship, because the ship left after the coal strike was on, and he told me. I then spoke to him about the ship and I said it is not possible for the ship to arrive in New York on Tuesday. Therefore there is no object in pushing her. We will arrive there at 5 o'clock on Wednesday morning, and it will be good landing for the passengers in New York, and we shall also be able to economise our coal. We did not want to burn any more coal than we needed.

18393. Never mind about that, that does not answer the question I was putting to you. I understand what you mean by that, that you did not want to get there till the Wednesday morning at 5 o'clock, and that therefore it was not necessary to drive her at full speed all the time? - No.

18394. But the question I am putting to you is this, when was it that you discussed putting her at full speed on the Monday or the Tuesday? - At the same time.

18395. You have not told us about that? - That was when Mr. Bell was in my room on Thursday afternoon, when the ship was at anchor at Queenstown.

18396. But what was said about putting her at full speed? - I said to him then, we may have an opportunity of driving her at full speed on Monday or Tuesday if the weather is entirely suitable.

18397. Then you did know on the Sunday morning that in the ordinary course of things between that and the Monday evening you might be increasing your speed to full speed? - I knew if the weather was suitable either on the Monday or the Tuesday the vessel would go at full speed for a few hours.

18398. And I suppose you knew that in order to get the full speed of the vessel, the maximum number of revolutions, it would be necessary, presumably, to light more boilers? - I presume the boilers would have been put on.

From this testimony, we learn that Ismay was fully expecting to have the ship make a full-speed run “for a few hours”, which would necessitate the lighting of all 29 boilers. Although we have already seen from Trimmer Dillon that the last five ‘auxiliary’ boilers were *not* lit up by the time of the collision, we must also remember that it would have taken about twelve hours for these boilers to be brought to operating pressure and applied to the engines.<sup>10</sup>

Since it was the desire of Mr. Ismay to have the ship run at full speed on Monday or Tuesday, depending on the weather, one must assume that these last boilers would probably have been lit not long after midnight on the night of April 14 – 15. This is obvious because the speed run so expressly desired by Ismay depended on the weather. Throughout the voyage, the weather had been extremely clear and fair, but with each passing day, the odds for a deterioration in the weather went up. Indeed, the area of the Atlantic right off the

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<sup>10</sup> According to the testimony of Frederick Barrett, the last three ‘main’ boilers had been lit at approximately 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. Trimmer Dillon was told by an undisclosed engineer that those boilers were applied to the engines at 7:00 p.m., a warm-up time of some 11 hours.

Grand Banks is notorious for rough weather and heavy fog. If Ismay was so intent on this speed run, then he would most certainly have wanted to try it out on Monday rather than wait until the last day of the voyage to try it.<sup>11</sup>

Since the ship's runs were calculated from noon to noon each day, it seems likely that this speed trial would have been carried out after the conclusion of the noon sighting on Monday, April 15. Waiting until after noon to do this would have allowed the *Titanic's* officers to calculate the speed trials with a fresh sighting of the sun having been made, and would also have given them some 15 hours of data on how fast the ship ran on all 24 of her 'main' boilers.

Seeing how fast the *Titanic* traveled under the maximum pressure from her 24 'main' boilers would have been very useful to the *Titanic's* officers, since they had still not completed the ship's slip table at the time of the sinking. Fifth Officer Harold Lowe testified at the American Inquiry: "As I told you, sir, we were working at our slip table, and that is a table based upon so many revolutions of engines and so much per cent slip; and you work that out, and that gives you so many miles per hour. This table extended from the rate of 30 revolutions a minute to the rate of 85 and from a percentage of 10 to 40 per cent slip; that is, minus. We were working it all out, and of course it was not finished."

Indeed, it is clearly obvious that the senior officers of the ship felt an excitement over seeing the results of this full speed trial. Second Officer Charles Lightoller has earned a well-deserved reputation for not divulging any information at the Inquiries unless it was absolutely necessary to do so. Even so, at the American Inquiry, Senator Smith asked:

Senator SMITH. Did you have any ambition of your own to see it [the ship's power] exhausted?

Mr. LIGHTOLLER. Yes, I dare say.

Senator SMITH. You wanted her to go as fast as she could?

Mr. LIGHTOLLER. At some time or other; yes.

Senator SMITH. Was that shared by your associates among the officers?

Mr. LIGHTOLLER. Oh, I could not say, sir.

Senator SMITH. Did they talk about it?

Mr. LIGHTOLLER. Naturally we talked; we wondered what her maximum speed would eventually be.

Senator SMITH. You were anxious to see it tested?

Mr. LIGHTOLLER. Not necessarily anxious.

Senator SMITH. Interested, however?

Mr. LIGHTOLLER. Interested; yes.

This speed trial on Monday or Tuesday is an important part of answering the question of whether or not the *Titanic* was trying to get into New York early. How is that the case? As

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<sup>11</sup> It must also be considered that Ismay was willing to admit to a long-standing plan for this speed trial on Monday or Tuesday (apparently planned out even before his conversation with Chief Engineer Bell at Queenstown) at the Inquiries. This was despite the fact that by that point, the speed of the *Titanic* and his involvement in that matter had come under such intense scrutiny. Considering the long-standing plan to carry this speed trial out, Ismay would most certainly have been *very* intent on seeing to it, and would perhaps even have shown a sense of growing anticipation as the voyage continued. This seems to be corroborated by a preponderance of the evidence, as will be discussed later.

has already been demonstrated, the *Titanic* was making a faster maiden voyage than the *Olympic* had. On her maiden voyage, the *Olympic* had reached the Ambrose Lightship – the entrance to New York Harbor and the calculated “end” of west-bound crossings – at 2:24 a.m. on Wednesday morning, June 21. If those in charge aboard the *Titanic* had merely wished to *match* that arrival time, they would have needed to slow the ship considerably during Monday and Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>12</sup>

Instead, the ship was going to speed up considerably.

The simple mathematics of the *Titanic*'s position and her distance to New York make this fact extremely obvious, and it would no doubt have been foremost in the minds of all of *Titanic*'s senior officers, as well as to Bruce Ismay, who was taking such an interest in the ship's speed by his own admission during that voyage.

This having been said, another question is raised: did Bruce Ismay feel one way or another about Tuesday night arrivals in New York on the part of either the *Olympic* or *Titanic*? The answer to that question is yes.

Among documents contained in the Merseyside Maritime Museum are a series of letters from the late summer of 1911 between Bruce Ismay and certain members of his team at IMM in New York.<sup>13</sup> They are an enlightening and fascinating study.

First comes a letter from J. Bruce Ismay to Phillip A. S. Franklin, the Vice-President and Director of the International Mercantile Marine group. It is dated 27 July 1911 (one month and six days after the conclusion of the *Olympic*'s maiden voyage), and reads:

“Your strong recommendation that the *Olympic*, on her next voyage, should be allowed to dock on Tuesday evening, will receive consideration, and I note you say that she could have done this easily on her last voyage. I do not quite gather whether your recommendation goes so far as to advocate our always attempting to land passengers on Tuesday; perhaps you will let me hear from you on this.

“I at once admit that docking on Tuesday evening would help you in turning the ship round, and give those on board a better chance of getting the ship in good shape for the Saturday sailing, and further, that if we could make it a practice to do this, it would please the passengers, but as I have repeatedly stated, I feel very strongly that passengers would be far more satisfied to know, when they left here, that they would not land until Wednesday morning, rather than be in a state of uncertainty in regard to this for the whole of the trip. I do not think you can have

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<sup>12</sup> An unpublished monograph by *Olympic*-class historian Mark Chirnside (“*I Am Sure It Would Please the Passengers*”) makes the following report: “[*Titanic*’s] lead of forty-five miles was equivalent to some two hours’ steaming at twenty-two knots and... if *Titanic* had *merely maintained* her average speed (between Saturday noon and Sunday noon) then she would have arrived at the Lightship half-an-hour after midnight on Tuesday,” night/Wednesday morning, April 16<sup>th</sup>-April 17<sup>th</sup>. My sincerest thanks to Mr. Chirnside for giving me exclusive [at the time of this writing] access to his paper on this subject.

<sup>13</sup> Merseyside Maritime Museum, DX/504/1/1-16. Also reproduced in *The White Star Line: An Illustrated History 1869 – 1934*, by Paul Loudon-Brown and quoted from in Mark Chirnside’s *The Olympic-Class Ships: Olympic Titanic & Britannic*.

ever experienced the miseries of a night landing in New York; had you done so, I think your views might be altered.”

Four days later, Ismay wrote to Franklin:

“As you are aware, I am not favourably disposed to trying to land passengers on Tuesday afternoon, but if, after talking the matter over with Lord Pirrie, Captain Smith and Mr. Bell, the consensus of opinion is in favour of this being done, you may rest assured that I will not allow my individual feeling to stand in the way.”

On August 4, a letter to Bruce Ismay was sent in the absence of Franklin, but the excitement on the part of its author is quite clear. It clarified Franklin’s request to have the *Olympic* arrive in New York “generally”. It then said: “We shall be very interested to hear the result of your deliberations with Lord Pirrie to-day on this subject...”

The consensus of opinion was quite clear, since on August 11 a letter was sent to Captain Smith of the *Olympic*. Harold Sanderson and Henry Concanon, the Director of the White Star Line and one of the Line’s joint managers, respectively, jointly signed it. It read:

“We confirm the verbal instructions given to you at Southampton last week that it will be right for you to go full speed when on the short track, subject to your considering it prudent and in the interests of safe navigation to do so.

“This instruction applies to both eastbound and westbound voyages when on the short track.”

The response to this decision from others within the White Star Line and IMM was enthusiastic. Frederick Toppin wrote to Ismay enthusiastically on August 18, saying that this decision would “certainly add materially to her attractiveness and popularity on this side.” On the next day, Franklin wrote to Ismay saying that he was “sorry the *Olympic* did not dock on Tuesday,” but that he was pleased with the bookings for her next east-bound crossing.

Ismay responded to Franklin on September 5 with an uncharacteristically unpleasant and sarcastic note:

“Your sorrow that the *Olympic* did not dock on Tuesday night last voyage will, I hope, be mitigated by her docking on Tuesday this voyage, as we have just received a cable that at 9 o’clock last night she was 271 miles east of Nantucket, which we calculate would make her due at Ambrose Channel at 6 o’clock to-night, and I presume she will get up to the dock at about 10 o’clock, which will make for an extremely comfortable (!!!) landing for her passengers, and I am sure they will much prefer this to dawdling away time and landing on Wednesday morning, to say nothing of their having had the pleasant uncertainty, from the time they left here, as to whether they would land on Tuesday evening, or not.”

From this, it is clearly obvious that in July, August and September of 1911 Ismay felt that regular Tuesday night arrivals in New York were something to be avoided. The reason he felt this way is also clearly obvious: he wanted to provide White Star’s passengers with the best service and the pleasantest of voyages all the way around. This was simple business

acumen, for happy passengers are more likely to be repeat customers. Almost all of those who argue against a Tuesday night arrival for the *Titanic* take the position that it simply could not have been in the works because it would have inconvenienced the passengers.

However, for those occasions when the *Olympic* or *Titanic* did arrive in New York on Tuesday night rather than Wednesday mornings, the White Star Line did have a provision at hand to ensure that the passengers were not put out. Upon boarding the ship, first class passengers found a small booklet of “Notes” in their staterooms or cabins. A March, 1910 copy of this small booklet makes the important point:

**“LANDING AT NEW YORK, BOSTON AND MONTREAL.**

“Should the steamer arrive at the Wharf after 8 p.m., passengers have the option of remaining on board overnight and landing after breakfast on the following morning.”

Thus, in such situations, the passengers had the option to do as they pleased. If they desired to depart the ship as soon as she tied up, they could do so. However, if they preferred to have another leisurely night aboard, they could stay and disembark as if the ship had not tied up early in the first place. Hence, the ‘inconvenience to passengers’ theory can not be used to argue against the evidence in favor of a potential Tuesday night arrival in New York by the *Titanic* on her maiden voyage.

Additionally, as we have already seen, Bruce Ismay and the *Titanic*’s officers must have been thoroughly aware that given their position on noon Sunday, their improved speed over the *Olympic*, and their admitted desire to speed the ship up for a full-speed run on Monday or Tuesday, they would have reached New York during the night of Tuesday April 16<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday April 17<sup>th</sup>. Indeed, the only way that they could have avoided such an early arrival was by slowing the ship down *considerably* after the full-speed trial.

Interestingly, it is worth noting that the phrase “arriving in New York” is not a single event or moment in time. Arriving in New York started when a west-bound liner such as the *Titanic* or *Olympic* arrived at the Ambrose Lightship, the official “end-point” of the trip. After stopping to take on the Harbor Pilot, the ship would slowly proceed to Quarantine, where it would anchor. After some time spent there, she would resume her course up the channel, proceed up the North River and tie up at her New York pier. How long could this take?

Let us take the *Olympic*’s second west-bound voyage as an example<sup>14</sup>. Carried out between July 12-18, 1911, the *Olympic* passed the Ambrose Lightship at 10:08 p.m. on Tuesday night. She did not leave Quarantine until 7:14 a.m. the following morning, and did not actually tie up at her dock until shortly after 8:00 a.m. Phillip Franklin noted that by 10:45 a.m., there “were very few cabin [or first class] passengers left” aboard. This shows that there were a full ten hours between the passing of the Ambrose Lightship and the tying up at her New York pier; during the course of three further hours the passengers disembarked.

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<sup>14</sup> Many thanks to Mark Chirside in allowing me to cite the pertinent information extracted from his unpublished monograph, “*I Am Sure It Would Please the Passengers.*” George Behe’s log abstract from that voyage, reproduced on page 30 of his book, *Titanic: Safety, Speed and Sacrifice* was also invaluable in putting this information together.

On her maiden voyage, the *Olympic* arrived at the Ambrose Lightship at 2:24 a.m. Even if the *Titanic* had arrived at the Ambrose Lightship as early as 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday night, April 16<sup>th</sup>,<sup>15</sup> that would mean that her passengers would probably not even have been able to depart the ship until something like 7:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning. So even a 9:00 p.m. arrival in New York would not necessarily have imposed any hardship on passengers even if they chose to disembark as soon as the ship tied up, even if there was no White Star Line provision allowing for them to remain on board right through breakfast.

From all of this, it seems clear that the difference in Ismay's mind must have been the distinction between a maiden voyage arrival – a one-time special event – and a regular Tuesday night arrival. On the *Titanic*'s maiden voyage, a Tuesday night arrival would have garnered valuable positive publicity and it would also later give the impression that the Line was deliberately holding her back so as not to arrive until Wednesday morning.

In the event, the *Olympic*'s Tuesday night arrivals did not last long. As a regularly scheduled event, it proved too fraught with difficulties all the way around. *Titanic* would, no doubt, also have continued her career arriving on Wednesday mornings. However, the simple mathematics of the situation on her maiden voyage show that she was almost certainly going to be arriving in New York far earlier than her originally scheduled 5 a.m. arrival.

Nor does it seem that Captain Smith had any problem with running his ship at top speed. There is no evidence to suggest that he protested his August 11, 1911 order to “go full speed when on the short track”. He had been sailing as a North Atlantic Captain for many years, and would not have found this order to be unusual, as it was usually in the best interests of all involved to make the shortest passage possible.

Another good question to consider would be this: did any of the *Titanic*'s passengers later report hearing anything about increasing the speed of the ship or about getting into New York on Tuesday night rather than Wednesday morning? Did any report that the ship's speed had showed improvement during Sunday? Considering the fact that roughly two-thirds of those aboard perished in the sinking, the remaining one-third who survived present a remarkably consistent picture on the matter.

Many passengers were keen to keep track of the daily runs as they were posted during voyages on Atlantic liners; this was not just due to an interest in the ship's performance, *per se*, but it also had to do with the nightly ship's pool that was taken. The person who most closely guessed the next day's run before it was posted would win the bet, and competition was eager. It was not unusual to find passengers moving about the ship, talking with as many officers, pursers or stewards as they could find, looking for information on what to expect

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<sup>15</sup> This is an estimate put together by Mark Chirnside in his paper, “*I Am Sure It Would Please the Passengers.*” This time is naturally speculative, but it is a reasonably thought through estimate, and the basic principles are these: assuming that the *Titanic* had, indeed reached a speed of 22 ½ knots over the ground by the time of the collision, she may have logged some 555 – 560 miles by noon on Monday. The run from noon Monday to noon Tuesday may have reached as high as 570 miles. At that point, only 210 miles would have remained to reach the Ambrose Light, which thus could have been achieved by shortly after 9:00 p.m.

from the next day's run before they placed their wager. As such, many of the passengers were remarkably well informed on the matter during the course of the voyage.

Lawrence Beesley wrote an account of his experiences aboard the *Titanic* and it was published in book form before 1912 had ended. Beesley, a second class passenger, had been seated at the table of Assistant Purser Reginald Barker in the Second Class Dining Saloon<sup>16</sup>. At lunch on Saturday and Sunday, the course of conversation at the table turned to the ship's speed. Beesley wrote:

“From 12 noon Thursday to 12 noon Friday we ran 386 miles, Friday to Saturday 519 miles, Saturday to Sunday 546 miles. The second day's run of 519 miles was, the purser told us, a disappointment, and we should not dock until Wednesday morning instead of Tuesday night as we had expected; however, on Sunday we were glad to see a longer run had been made, and it was thought we should make New York, after all, on Tuesday night. The purser remarked: ‘They are not pushing her this trip and don't intend to make any fast running; I don't suppose we shall do more than 546 now; it is not a bad day's run for the first trip.’”

There are several very important bits of information contained in this brief passage. First of all, it was extremely clear that Beesley had obtained information *prior to Saturday afternoon* that led him to expect to dock in New York on Tuesday night. Second, we can see that the second day's run of 519 miles (the run which had fallen short of the *Olympic's* run on the same day of her maiden voyage) had proven a disappointment. Based on that run, it was thought that the ship would “not dock until Wednesday morning instead”. However, when the higher, 546 mile run was posted shortly after noon on Sunday, those at the Assistant Purser's table “were glad... and it was thought we should make New York, after all, on Tuesday night.”

Another interesting point is that the Assistant Purser felt that they would not make a better run than 546 miles on either Monday or Tuesday. Although as we have already seen – from the statements made by more senior officers than Barker and by Bruce Ismay himself – this supposition was inaccurate, it does demonstrate an important point in our discussion. Barker felt that even if they only maintained their current speed (on Sunday afternoon), they would still be able to dock on Tuesday night. And yet instead of merely maintaining that speed, the *Titanic* was clearly speeding up.

From this we can see that at least some of the informed among second class passengers had been expecting a Tuesday night arrival in New York.

What about passengers in first class, who had closer access to higher-ranking members of the ship's officer core? Colonel Archibald Gracie was a first class passenger and, after the

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<sup>16</sup> Beesley later referred to Barker merely as “the purser,” which seems to have led some to believe that he was dining with Chief Purser McElroy. However, he was clearly dining in company with the Assistant Purser, Reginald Barker. As his account continues (pg. 22 in the reprint, *The Story of the Titanic As Told By Its Survivors*) this same “purser” conducted the service in the Dining Saloon for second class passengers, and helped to prepare the “hymn sing-song” that Sunday evening, also in the Dining Saloon. It is well established that it was Assistant Purser Barker who led the service and the “hymn sing-song”, and hence, Beesley was almost certainly dining with this same Assistant Purser, Reginald Barker. Barker, like the Chief Purser, perished in the sinking.

sinking, became the first authoritative *Titanic* historian. He compiled significant amounts of evidence, working tirelessly in the months immediately following the sinking. His work, *The Truth About the Titanic* was published in 1913. Gracie never saw it get to print; he died on December 4, 1912, never having fully recovered from his experiences on the night of the sinking. Indeed, he did not even have the opportunity to finish proofing the manuscript for his book before he died. He wrote:

“The Captain had each day improved upon the previous day’s speed, and prophesied that, with continued fair weather, we should make an early arrival record for this maiden trip... In the twenty-four hours’ run ending the 14<sup>th</sup>, according to the posted reckoning, the ship had covered 546 miles, and we were told that the next twenty-four hours would see even a better record made.

“Towards evening the report, which I heard, was spread that wireless messages from passing steamers had been received advising the officers of our ship of the presence of icebergs and ice-floes. The increasing cold and the necessity of being more warmly clad when appearing on deck were outward and visible signs in corroboration of these warnings. But despite them all no diminution of speed was indicated and the engines kept up their steady running...”

It is not at all unlikely to suppose that Gracie had heard Captain Smith himself speak on this subject, or at the very least that Gracie had spoken with another first class passenger who had. Gracie’s writing also seems to very closely agree with Ismay’s testimony about the upcoming speed trial that would, most likely, have been held on Monday. It also goes a long way toward proving that the ship’s senior officers and at least some among the first class passengers were well aware of the ship’s upcoming speed increase.

At least two other first class passengers gave clear and consistent testimony on the matter. The first survivor that we will consider is Mrs. Emily Ryerson, an extremely wealthy and prominent woman whose husband perished in the sinking.

Mrs. Ryerson’s recollections on this matter first came to light in the press. On Sunday, April 21, 1912, the *Washington Herald* published a story entitled: “Peuchen Comes Back At Ismay.” The article read:

**Charge of Negligence Preferred by Canadian Official Is Supported by Witness**

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**New York, April 20---**Although J. Bruce Ismay branded the story as “absurd,” Maj. Arthur Godfrey Peuchen, vice commodore of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club and an officer in the Queen's Rifles of Toronto, emphatically reiterated his charge that the managing director of the Steamship Trust was criminally negligent in not making an effort to avoid icebergs of whose imminence he had been warned.

“I cannot repeat too strongly that J. Bruce Ismay knew of the presence of icebergs, but deliberately ‘took a chance,’ for reasons which he can best explain,” said Maj. Peuchen before leaving for Canada.

“It will be easy to prove also that while the *Titanic* was in peril---in fact, within two hours of the actual collision---this man Ismay and Capt. Smith were members of a

dinner party in the first cabin saloon.”

Another witness has come forward to support the Canadian army officer in his contention that Ismay ordered faster speed after receiving a marconigram warning of the nearness of dangerous ice fields. She is Mrs. Walter D. Douglas, of Minneapolis, a first cabin passenger.

The major said that Mrs. Douglas was with him on the *Carpathia* when Mrs. Ryerson, of Philadelphia, who lost her husband and son on the *Titanic*, came up to them and told them that she had asked Ismay about the reported presence of icebergs. The exact words of Mrs. Ryerson as reported by Maj. Peuchen and later repeated privately to the Senatorial Investigating committee by Mrs. Douglas, were:

“Late Sunday afternoon (just a few hours before the collision), while the *Titanic* was proceeding at a very great speed, I went to Mr. Ismay and said: Oh, Mr. Ismay, I have heard that the wireless has reported a large number of icebergs in the path of our ship. Are you not going to order her to slow down?”

“He replied to me: ‘On the contrary, Mrs. Ryerson, we are going to go along faster than we have been going.’ And we did go faster.”

First of all, it must be recognized that this story, as published, did not come directly from Mrs. Ryerson. Instead, it came through Major Peuchen, who was obviously disgruntled at the ship’s navigation during the night in questions.

Although Peuchen’s broad swipe at Bruce Ismay and Captain Smith being at a party that evening was partially true (in that both men were enjoying the evening on Sunday), it was not entirely correct. Ismay had dined with the ship’s Surgeon, Dr. O’Loughlin in the First Class Restaurant. Captain Smith attended a dinner party in that same Restaurant which was given by some of the more socially prominent aboard in his honor.

Word of this report reached Senator William Alden Smith by the next morning<sup>17</sup>. He had already placed Mrs. Ryerson under subpoena, but she was ill at the time. In the event, Smith spoke with Mrs. Ryerson on the matter, and she refused to swear to this conversation in her affidavit. She said that it had been an “exaggeration.”

However, Mrs. Ryerson did give testimony on this matter at the later Limitation of Liability Hearings, and she was a bit more specific on the matter then – although she still could not remember the exact wording of the conversation. Before dinner on Sunday evening, Mrs. Thayer had asked Mrs. Ryerson to take a turn about the deck with her. Mrs. Ryerson was traveling to America because her son had just been killed in an automobile accident, and she had remained in her cabin during the voyage. In fact, Bruce Ismay had made specific arrangements for the Ryersons to ensure that their voyage was more comfortable than it would already have been.

Eventually, at around 6 p.m., the ladies stopped and sat down by the companionway on the Promenade Deck. Bruce Ismay approached and asked if their accommodations were

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<sup>17</sup> *The Titanic*, Wyn Craig Wade, (1986 softcover edition), pgs. 221, 222, 376 touches on this matter in detail.

comfortable. Eventually he changed the subject, mentioning: “We are in among the icebergs.” He showed her a telegram from the *Baltic* that Captain Smith had given him earlier that afternoon<sup>18</sup>, warning of the ice ahead. He then said: “We are not going very fast, twenty or twenty-one knots, but we are going to start up some extra boilers this evening.”<sup>19</sup> Mrs. Ryerson’s testimony on the matter picks up her impressions of the rest of the conversation:

Question: [Ismay] didn’t say anything to you about speeding the ship up to get out of the ice?

Answer: No, that was merely the impression that was left on my mind.

Question: My question is not whether he spoke about their putting on more boilers and going faster; but I am confining my question to whether he said, or suggested to you, anything that indicated that they were going to increase their speed in order to get out of the ice?

Answer: As I say, that was merely the impression left on my mind.

Question: Nothing was said?

Answer: No, not in so many words – that was the impression left on my mind.

Question: You don’t wish to be understood the Titanic was trying to make a speed record across the Atlantic?

Answer: I should say my impression was they were going to show – surprise us all by what she could do, on that voyage.

Question: As a matter of fact, was it discussed whether she should get in on Tuesday night, or Wednesday morning?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Among passengers?

Answer: Yes, and in this conversation with Mr. Ismay also, there was some question about it, because I discussed it with my husband after I got down to the cabin.

Question: You wouldn’t say Mr. Ismay said they were going to make a record?

Answer: No, I wouldn’t say he said those words – his attitude, or his language, we assumed that that was – that we were trying to make a record. I wouldn’t say he used those words.

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<sup>18</sup> This message from the *Baltic* read: “Have had moderate variable winds and clear fine weather since leaving. Greek steamer *Athenai* reports passing icebergs and large quantity of field ice today in lat 41.51N lone 49.52W. Last night we spoke German Oil Tanker *Deutschland* Stettin to Philadelphia not under control, short of coal lat 40 42 N long 55.11 wishes to be reported to New York and others steamers. Wish you and *Titanic* all success. Commander.” More information on the *Baltic* telegram will follow later in this article.

<sup>19</sup> As we have already seen, this estimate was not entirely accurate, and the ship was traveling at about 22½ knots later that night.

Many have scoffed at Mrs. Ryerson's testimony, taken here at the Limitation of Liability Hearings, because there was a lot of money involved in winning the case against the White Star Line. Charges of perjury have been leveled against her statements here. Certainly a lot of money *was* involved in this case. One can not dismiss this as a potential factor in making false testimony, but it is also impossible to reasonably conclude at this remove that *all* of the statements made at that Inquiry (those made by Mrs. Ryerson, those of Mrs. Elizabeth Lines, which we will soon consider, or those of any other witness) were false.

On the other hand, Major Peuchen intimated in the April 1912 newspaper article quoted above that Mrs. Ryerson had talked to him about this same conversation – and this at a time when there was no “Limitation of Liability” question, no pending court cases with a lot of money at stake. Although she was not willing to swear to the exact wording of the conversation in her 1912 affidavit to the Senate Hearings, she did not give a specific wording in her later testimony at the Limitation of Liability Hearings, either. It was merely an “impression”, and a conversation ensued with her husband about the possibility of arriving in New York on Tuesday night.

Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, Mrs. Ryerson's testimony does not contradict any of the known facts that we have already discussed in this article, nor does her testimony contradict any of the facts that we will discuss later on. In point of fact, it is Bruce Ismay's testimony on this conversation that is less believable:

18356. Then you spoke about it in the afternoon to two lady passengers? - Yes.

18357. Will you tell me to whom you spoke? - I spoke to Mrs. Thayer and Mrs. Ryerson. [Mrs. Marion Thayer and Mrs. Emily Ryerson.]

18358. Will you tell us what you said? - I cannot recollect what I said. I think I read part of the message to them about the ice and the derelict - not the derelict, but the steamer that was broken down; short of coal she was.

18359. Did you understand from that telegram that the ice which was reported was in your track? - I did not.

18360. Did you attribute any importance at all to the ice report? - I did not; no special importance at all.

18361. Why did you think the Captain handed you the Marconigram? - As a matter of information, I take it.

18362. Information of what? - About the contents of the message.

18363. The ice report? - About the contents of the message. He gave me the report of the ice and this steamer being short of coal.

18364. It conveyed to you at any rate that you were approaching within the region of ice, did it not? - Yes, certainly.

18365. Did Mrs. Ryerson say anything to you about slowing down in consequence of this ice report? - I have no recollection of it at all.

18366. Will you pledge yourself that she did not? - Yes, I think I can.

Although he was willing to admit that such a conversation had taken place, he claimed to have “no recollection” of the finer points of the conversation, which Mrs. Ryerson had already alluded to once and would again at the Limitation of Liability Hearings. At another point he claimed not to have had the conversation at all.

Yet another first class passenger testified at the Limitation of Liability Hearings about this matter, Mrs. Elizabeth Lines. She was traveling with her daughter, Mary, on that ill-fated voyage, and on the afternoon of Saturday, April 13, she recalled hearing an unusual conversation between Captain Smith and Bruce Ismay regarding the ship's speed and the possibility of arriving in New York on Tuesday night rather than Wednesday morning.

The conversation she heard transpired in the First Class Reception Room on D Deck, just after lunch, at around 1:30 p.m. Mrs. Lines was sitting at a table near the forward port corner of the room, and had ordered some coffee. Shortly afterward, she noticed Ismay and Smith coming into the room, at which point they sat down at a table very near to her. Indeed, Ismay and Smith seemed to be creatures of habit, for she had noticed them sitting at that same table on previous occasions during the voyage. According to her recollection, the two men had talked for 'at least two hours', although as she recalled it was more of a monologue on the part of Ismay than a conversation in the truest form of the term. Let us review her testimony of October 27, 1913 directly:

Question: Are you able to state from your recollection the words that you heard spoken between Mr. Ismay and Captain Smith on that occasion?

Mrs. Lines: We had a very good run. At first I did not pay any attention to what they were saying. They were simply talking and I was occupied, and then my attention was arrested by hearing the day's run discussed, which I already knew had been a very good one in the preceding twenty-four hours, and I heard Mr. Ismay – it was Mr. Ismay who did the talking – I heard him give the length of the run, and I heard him say, "Well, we did better today than we did yesterday, we made a better run today than we did yesterday, we will make a better run tomorrow. Things are working smoothly, the machinery is bearing the test, the boilers are working well." They went on discussing it, and then I heard him make the statement: "We will beat the *Olympic* and get into New York on Tuesday."

Question: In your last statement, Mrs. Lines, were you giving the substance of the conversation or the exact words which were used?

Mrs. Lines: I heard "We will beat the *Olympic* and get into New York on Tuesday" in those words.

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Question: Do you recall any conversation on that occasion between Mr. Ismay and Captain Smith as to the performance of another vessel of the line?

Mrs. Lines: No, excepting the comparison with the runs of the *Olympic*.

Question: And what runs of the *Olympic* were they using as a comparison?

Mrs. Lines: The trial trip.

Question: Do you mean the maiden voyage?

Mrs. Lines: Yes, the maiden voyage.

Question: And what was the substance, or the words if you can give them, of the conversation as regards the *Olympic*?

Mrs. Lines: It was comparison, and that the *Titanic* was doing equally well, and they seemed to think a little more pressure could be put on the boilers and the speed increased so that the maiden trip of the *Titanic* would exceed the maiden trip of the *Olympic* in speed.

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Question: What was it that Mr. Ismay said from which you say you drew the impression that they seemed to think that the *Titanic* would beat the *Olympic* or that the *Titanic* compared well with the *Olympic*?

Mrs. Lines: They made comparisons in numbers which I cannot repeat, the number of miles run in various days. Mr. Ismay gave the runs made on certain days by the *Olympic* on its maiden voyage and compared them with the runs made by the *Titanic* on the first days.

Question: You have stated several times, Mrs. Lines, that Mr. Ismay made assertions or statements as to what “we” would do, using the pronoun “we”. [i.e. “We will beat the *Olympic* and get into New York on Tuesday”.] Did he use any other pronoun that you know of in this conversation?

Mrs. Lines: No, Mr. Ismay said “we” and he asked no questions. He made assertions, he made statements. I did not hear him defer to Captain Smith at all.

Question: Won’t you describe as well as you can, the tone and gesture of Mr. Ismay in this conversation?

Mrs. Lines: It was very positive, one might almost say dictatorial. He asked no questions.<sup>20</sup>

Several interesting things come to light from Mrs. Lines’ testimony. First of all, she mentioned that she had noticed Mr. Ismay and Captain Smith speaking on other, previous occasions to this. She also noticed that Mr. Ismay was quite excited, for lack of a better word, on the subject. Although the word “dictatorial” may sound a bit excessive now – with Hitleresque impressions coming to mind – some synonyms to the word include: “dogmatic” or “bossy”, and these fit very well with Mr. Ismay’s reported conversation overall; apparently, Captain Smith did little or no talking.

Ismay flatly denied that this conversation ever took place. He also denied that he knew anything about anything regarding the ship’s navigation or about how many boilers were lit up.

Question: Did you know that they were firing up some of the boilers on the Sunday?

Answer: I had no knowledge at all as to what was being done down below.

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<sup>20</sup> This testimony can be found in the National Archives. It can also be found in George Behe’s book, *Titanic: Safety, Speed and Sacrifice*.

Despite that comment, he also testified:

18382. Were the single-ended boilers on? - I have no knowledge of it myself. I was told they were not - at least, I have heard they were not.

18383. That none of the single-ended ones were on? - That is as far as I know.

18384. Then I will just refer you to what you said in America with regard to this? - As far as I know the single-ended boilers were not on on the Sunday.

So when pressed on the matter, Bruce Ismay did admit that he had knowledge of what was going on below, even if he was able to say that he didn't know of it personally. Interestingly, he also stated:

Senator SMITH. Did you have occasion to consult with the captain about the movement of the ship?

Mr. ISMAY. Never.

Senator SMITH. Did he consult you about it?

Mr. ISMAY. Never. Perhaps I am wrong in saying that. I should like to say this: I do not know that it was quite a matter of consulting him about it, of his consulting me about it, but what we had arranged to do was that we would not attempt to arrive in New York at the lightship before 5 o'clock on Wednesday morning.

Senator SMITH. That was the understanding?

Mr. ISMAY. Yes. But that was arranged before we left Queenstown.

Senator SMITH. Was it supposed that you could reach New York at that time without putting the ship to its full running capacity?

Mr. ISMAY. Oh, yes, sir. There was nothing to be gained by arriving at New York any earlier than that.

In light of his own varying testimony on the matter – quite guarded when asked directly, but freely giving details of certain events and conversations when he was led around a bit – Ismay's denials of this conversation, certain aspects of his conversation with Mrs. Ryerson, and of knowing anything about the ship's operation simply can not be taken as wholly truthful.

Mrs. Lines, on the other hand, comes off as an honest witness. Her testimony seemed entirely un-coached and there was no apparent attempt to distort the facts.

Additionally, other passengers not only heard talk about arriving on Tuesday night. They had also *felt* the ship's speed increase as the evening of Sunday April 14 progressed. Mr. & Mrs. Walter Douglas were assigned to outside stateroom C86, which was positioned just forward of the aft First Class Grand Staircase, on the port side, just above the reciprocating engines. Mrs. Mahala Douglas gave an affidavit to the American Inquiry about their experiences on that Sunday. They had dined in the First Class Restaurant at around 8:00 o'clock, already well aware that "the time the boat was making was considered very good," and enjoyed a leisurely meal. She stated:

"We did not leave the tables until most of the others had left, including Mr. Ismay, Mr. and Mrs. Widener, and their guests, and the evening was passed very quietly. As we went to our stateroom - C-86 - we both remarked that the boat was going faster

than she ever had. The vibration as one passed the stairway in the center was very noticeable.”

Interestingly, the Douglasses were already comfortable in the knowledge that the ship had been making a “very good” speed before their meal. However, after their meal, very late in the evening of Sunday April 14, it was obvious to them that the *Titanic* had speeded up considerably since the last time they had passed through that area of the ship.

First class passenger Charles E. H. Stengel took a particular interest in the speed of the *Titanic* during her voyage, especially the last full run recorded between noon Saturday and noon Sunday. He testified at the American Inquiry as follows:

Senator SMITH. While you were on that voyage did you familiarize yourself with the speed of the *Titanic*?

Mr. STENGEL. I did, the last day; particularly the last day, I did.

Senator SMITH. Particularly the day of the accident?

Mr. STENGEL. The day of the accident; that is, from Saturday noon to Sunday noon.

Senator SMITH. Will you kindly tell the committee how you familiarized yourself with the speed, and what the speed was when you last informed yourself about it?

Mr. STENGEL. As is usual in these voyages, there were pools made to bet on the speed that the boat would make, and at 12 o'clock, after the whistle blew, the people who had bet went to the smoking room, and came out and reported she had made 546 knots. I figured then that at 24 hours to a day we made 22 3/4 knots; but I was told I was mistaken; that I should have figured 25 hours.

Senator SMITH. Twenty-five hours for the day?

Mr. STENGEL. Yes, on account of the elapsed time, I believe, which made it almost 22 knots an hour. At the same time a report came - this was the report that came from the engine room - that the engines were turning three revolutions faster than at any time on the voyage.

Senator SMITH. What time was that on Sunday?

Mr. STENGEL. I should say about between 1 and 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon.

Senator SMITH. Did you have occasion to consult with anyone as to, or did you familiarize yourself with, the speed of the ship after that time?

Mr. STENGEL. Not after that time, any more than I called my wife's attention to the fact that the engines were running very fast. That was when I retired, about 10 o'clock. I could hear the engines running when I retired, and I noticed that the engines were running fast. I said I noticed that they were running faster than at any other time during the trip.

Senator SMITH. How could you tell that?

Mr. STENGEL. Just through being familiar with engines in the manufacturing business. We have bought a great many engines in 28 or 29 years, and we generally take the speed of the engine. We want to buy an engine that will run a certain speed to do a certain amount of work. It was just natural instinct that was all.

Mr. Stengel's testimony is very insightful. Although he had difficulty in compensating for the ship's west-ward progression, he was very familiar with engines in the manufacturing business. Early in the afternoon on Sunday, it was reported that the ship's revolutions had been increased. By the time he had retired for the night at 10 o'clock, in his C Deck cabin

(No. 116, inside stateroom, amidships), he noticed that they were running faster still – and the difference was nothing if not obvious.

First class passengers George Rheims and Joseph Loring were traveling companions who also happened to be related by marriage. Mr. Rheims, who hailed from Paris, would survive the sinking, while his brother-in-law, an American, would not. The two men were in the First Class Smoking Room late on Sunday evening. Their conversation turned toward the speed of the ship, and they were trying to guess what the next day's run would be. A nearby steward overheard the exchange and suggested that it might be better to plan on a figure higher than the one they were already discussing. Rheims and Loring asked why he thought so.

The steward explained: "Because we are making faster speed than we were yesterday."

Loring was initially unconvinced. "What do you know about it?"

"I got it from the engine room," the steward replied.

"That doesn't mean anything."

The steward was obviously convinced of his correctness on the point, and he also had proof. "Gentlemen, come out and see for yourself. You notice that the vibration of the boat is much greater tonight than it has ever been." He led the two men to a passageway near the Smoking Room. "Now you will notice the vibration," he said.

Loring's own cabin was just below where they now stood. The evidence was clear, and Loring was now convinced. "I have never felt this vibration before. We are evidently making very good speed."

Rheims had been in the Smoking Room on every evening of the voyage, and had never felt this vibration, either.<sup>21</sup>

And evidence that the ship had increased its speed during Sunday evening is not limited to passengers alone. Trimmer George Cavell was on the 8:00 – 12:00 midnight watch in Boiler Room No. 4. His testimony at the British Inquiry is as follows:

4383. Perhaps I might just ask you this as there is a statement about it. Did you hear, or do you know at all from your No. 4 section what was the pressure of steam you were to get to? - 225 lbs. steam.

4384. Was that the order? - That was not the order. That is what steam there was.

4385. 225 lbs.? - Yes.

4386. You must explain it to me; how do you know that? - By the gauge.

4387. Do you mean you read the gauge yourself? - Yes.

4388. The gauge would be near the boiler? - Alongside the boiler.

4389. And when was it do you think that you read that gauge? - Just before I went into the bunker.

4390. You did? - Yes.

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<sup>21</sup> This information was previously presented in Don Lynch's *Titanic: An Illustrated History*.

4391. Is that your regular course to look at the gauge before you go into the bunker?

- No.

4392. But you think you remember that? - Yes.

4393. When was it that you went into the bunker; what was your watch? - 8 to 12 watch.

4394. You started work at 8, did you? - Yes.

4395. Do you remember about the gauge at any other time during this trip? - We had orders to keep 200 lbs. steam.

4396. You heard that those were the orders, to keep 200 lbs.? - Yes.

The Commissioner: Have you no better evidence on this point than this?

The Solicitor-General: I put the question because I saw there was a reference to it in the statement he had made, but I quite recognise it is not the best evidence.

The Attorney-General: All the engineers are drowned. We are getting the best evidence we can.

The Commissioner: Were there any engineers saved?

The Attorney-General: No, all the engineers were drowned. They all remained at the bottom of the vessel.

Examined by Mr. SCANLAN.

4397. Are you quite sure that you noticed on the gauge an indication of 225 lbs. steam? - Yes.

4398. Do you know that those engines are only designed for a working pressure of 215 lbs.? - No.

4399. The boilers, of course, you are referring to? - Yes.

This testimony makes it clear that the *Titanic* was traveling at her maximum speed under the steam from her 24 'main' boilers just prior to the collision.

Leading Fireman Frederick Barrett testified at the British Inquiry:

2211. Were you making 75 [revolutions]? - I could not tell you that because it is a long way to walk. I never used the passage to the engine room.

2212. You never heard a complaint? - No, I heard no complaints.

2213. Can you tell us, is 75 revolutions what you had been doing during that day, or ordered to? - I got the order the day before.

2214. You got the order the day before? - Yes.

2215. On the Saturday; and how many revolutions had you been doing before that? - Just the same, I think.

2216. Then, so far as you know, the order for the number of revolutions was the same up to the accident? - Yes.

2217. Then as far as you know there was no reduction in speed? - There were two main boilers lit up on the Sunday morning, but I could not tell you whether they were connected with the others or not.

2218. You mean two main boilers which had not been lit up before? - Yes, they were lit up.

2219. That is extra? - Yes.

2220. On the Sunday morning? - Yes.

It is interesting to note that Barrett demonstrated the following points in this testimony: first that an order had come through on *Saturday* for 75 revolutions; second that there was no reduction in that speed at any point after that; third, that more boilers had been lit up on Sunday morning (a point already discussed in this article).

Fireman John Thompson and Trimmer William McIntyre both were sure that the ship was making 77 revolutions during the day on Sunday. Thompson was even quoted in the *Worcestershire Chronicle* on Saturday, April 27, 1912:

“Down in the engine-room, we understood that they wanted the *Titanic* to make a record run. The orders to us were to fire up as hard as we could. At time the liner made 77 revolutions. All the men in the fireroom the moment we left Queenstown began talking about it. The whole of Sunday we were making 77.”

Although there is no chance that the *Titanic* was attempting for the Blue Riband, as we have already seen, it is possible that Thompson was here referring to the record of the *Olympic's* maiden voyage. And he was also quite clear about the ship's speed: 77 revolutions. The jump in speed noted by so many of the passengers must have been an increase from that already high figure.

Just how fast was the ship traveling? Quartermaster Robert Hichens testified at the British Inquiry with regard to the speed that the ship was making just before the collision:

Examined by Mr. LAING.

1378. With regard to the "Cherub" log, where was it put out? - I think it was put out shortly after we left Queenstown.

1379. Is it taken every watch? - It is taken every two hours by the quartermaster when he got on the poop at the time.

1380. What was the reading when you took it? - The reading for the last day had been 45 miles.

1381. That is the calculation. What was the reading on the log? - I do not know the exact reading on the log, Sir.

1382. It would show the distance run from Queenstown, I suppose? - Yes.

1383. And in order to get what you said it was, 45 miles in two hours, you must make a calculation? - No. We took it, you see. We used to take it, we Quartermasters, by the speed the ship was travelling. We used to talk about it ourselves in our cabin.

1384. I want to know what reading you got from this log at 10 o'clock? - I could not tell you.

1385. Unless you knew what it was at eight o'clock you could not make the calculation? - We could only make the calculation by the run for the day. She had been going by the log.

At the American Inquiry, he had been more specific about what time this measurement had been taken:

Mr. HICHENS. At 9.45 o'clock p. m., Sunday, the ship was traveling at that rate and going full speed when the log was taken at 10 o'clock.

Senator SMITH. You mean by full speed, 22 1/2 miles per hour.

Mr. HICHENS. Yes, sir.

Senator SMITH. Do you know whether she was running as fast as she could run?

Mr. HICHENS. I do not know, sir.

Others testified that the ship's speed was much lower. Bruce Ismay was convinced that "she never exceeded 75 revolutions".<sup>22</sup>

The ship's Barber, August Weikman, gave an affidavit to the American Inquiry in which he stated that Mr. Ismay had told him that the *Titanic* "was limited so 75 revolutions." However, this conversation had transpired "several days before" the accident, and it is apparent that the ship was going to be making far better revolutions than only 75 on Monday and Tuesday. It is also apparent that she was almost certainly already doing much better than that on Sunday night. Such a restriction was apparently no longer in effect.

Second Officer Charles Lightoller testified at the British Inquiry on the number of revolutions the ship was making during his last watch:

13511. When you say your recollection is that it was 75 revolutions, just help us. What is it you have in your mind? - I could not say where I got that from, but it is in my mind that it was about 75 revolutions.

13512. In the course of the voyage across the Atlantic, had the engines, as far as you know, exceeded 75 at any time? - On one occasion I have a recollection of one side turning 76, not necessarily both sides though.

13513. That would be one or other of the sets of reciprocating engines? - Port or starboard reciprocating, yes.

13514. Subject to that as far as you know, did she ever attain a greater number of revolutions than 75? - Not to my knowledge, and I think I should have heard of it if she had.

13515. And during your watch which extended from 6 till 10, did she maintain the same speed, as far as you know? - As far as I know.

Third Officer Pitman testified at the American Inquiry:

Senator SMITH. How many revolutions was the boat making at that time?

Mr. PITMAN. I think about 75.

Senator SMITH. And 75 revolutions would indicate that she was going about 21 1/2 knots?

Mr. PITMAN. Approximately, yes, sir.

Senator SMITH. Do you know whether she went any faster than that on that trip?

Mr. PITMAN. No; I do not think so. She never exceeded 76 revolutions at any part of the trip.

Senator SMITH. Did you not hear one of the officers say that she had made 80 revolutions per minute?

Mr. PITMAN. No; she never made 80 revolutions.

Senator SMITH. I may be in error about it, but my recollection is that either Mr. -

Mr. KIRLIN. That was a passenger, sir.

Mr. BURLINGHAM. That was Mr. Toppin, a passenger.

Fifth Officer Harold Lowe was asked to touch on the matter at the British Inquiry:

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<sup>22</sup> Ismay also testified that the ship's engines had a top speed of 78 revolutions, and that they 'could work' up to 80. However, Fifth Officer Lowe testified that they were working out a slip table up to 85 revolutions. Other evidence also points to the ship's engines as being able to work up to a higher speed than that to which Bruce Ismay was willing to admit after the disaster.

16005. When you were on the "Titanic" did you get the revolutions? - I did.

16006. What was the highest? - The highest I remember was 75 revolutions per minute.

16007. That was on the 14th April, was it? - I do not know that it was on the 14th; it may have been at any time as far as I know; but that is as far as I remember.

Seventy-five was the highest revolutions.

16008. On the voyage? - Yes.

Interestingly, we see from this testimony that Lowe was not sure that this 'highest number' of 75 was taken on Sunday or not; it was only the highest figure that he could recall during the voyage. As we have already seen, the ship's speed was increased noticeably on Sunday evening.

And, while Lightoller, Pitman and Lowe were only willing to testify to a speed of 20½ to 21½ knots being achieved that night, Fourth Officer Boxhall, who was in charge of the ship's navigation, felt sure that she was making 22 knots, a figure which is much more in harmony with Quartermaster Hichens' testimony on what the Cherub Log was telling him. He testified at the British Inquiry:

15643. Can you tell me what speed you assumed as between the 7.30 position and the time you struck? - Twenty-two knots.

15644. Twenty-two knots? - Yes.

The Commissioner: Is that right?

15645. (The Solicitor-General.) I will ask him, my Lord. (To the Witness.) Why did you take 22 knots? - I thought the ship was doing 22 knots.

15646. Was it an estimate you formed on any materials as to revolutions or as to the patent log? - No, I never depend on the patent log at all. It was an estimate that I had arrived at from the revolutions, although I had had no revolutions that watch; but, taking into consideration that it was smooth water and that there ought to have been a minimum of slip, I allowed 22 knots.

In fact, when asked again on the point, he responded that he felt "pretty easy on that" point.

Another question to consider is: would Captain Smith have felt forced to comply with Mr. Ismay's pressure, in whatever manner that was brought to bear? After all, at sea a Captain is the ultimate authority, and Ismay had no legal position to stand on if he was pressuring Smith to speed the ship up.

To find the answer that question, we might pose another question: would maintaining "top speed" – on Sunday night, meaning "top speed" with her 24 'main' boilers on-line – have been something that Captain Smith felt disinclined to do under normal circumstances? Many Atlantic Captains of the time had earned a reputation for showing extreme caution in their commands to the point of earning nicknames like "Iceberg" Charlie Bartlett or Captain "Fairweather" Dow. Captain Smith, however, never seemed to have a problem driving his ship at "full speed", if conditions were favorable for doing so. There is no record to show that he protested receiving orders the previous August to drive the *Olympic* at her best speed when on the short track. Based on his record, it would merely have been his usual custom to

drive the *Titanic* at her best speed on her maiden voyage, whether Bruce Ismay had been aboard or not.

However, the *Titanic's* maiden voyage was certainly not ordinary. Through the day on Saturday, but most especially on Sunday, numerous warnings of ice began to come through the Marconi Room. From their number and tone, it was very clear that the waters ahead were dangerous.

Did Captain Smith seem unusually worried about the conditions ahead? Why don't we let Bruce Ismay's testimony answer that question for us:

18323. (The Attorney-General)... Now on this day, on the 14th, did you get information from the Captain of ice reports? - The Captain handed me a Marconi message which he had received from the "Baltic" on the Sunday.

18324. He handed you the actual message as it was delivered to him from the "Baltic"? - Yes.

18325. Do you remember at what time it was? - I think it was just before lunch.

18326. On the Sunday? - Yes, on the Sunday.

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(To the Witness.) Now what I want to understand from you is this - that message was handed to you by Captain Smith, you say? - Yes.

18328. Handed to you because you were the managing director of the company? - I do not know; it was a matter of information.

18329. Information which he would not give to everybody, but which he gave to you. There is not the least doubt about it, is there? - No, I do not think so.

18330. He handed it to you, and you read it, I suppose? - Yes.

18331. Did he say anything to you about it? - Not a word.

18332. He merely handed it to you, and you put it in your pocket after you had read it? - Yes, I glanced at it very casually. I was on deck at the time.

18333. Had he handed any message to you before this one? - No.

18334. So that this was the first message he had handed to you on this voyage? - Yes.

18335. And when he handed this message to you, when the Captain of the ship came to you, the managing director, and put into your hands the Marconigram, it was for you to read? - Yes, and I read it.

18336. Because it was likely to be of some importance, was it not? - I have crossed with Captain Smith before, and he has handed me messages which have been of no importance at all.

18337. Surely he had had other reports which, as far as I follow from your evidence, he had not said anything about? - Not a word.

18338. He had had other Marconigrams during this voyage, at any rate? - I daresay he had, and I had no knowledge of them.

18339. So I understand. Therefore he singled out this one apparently to give to you for you to read it? - Yes.

18340. And, as I understand you, you took it from him and read it? - Yes.

18341. And you kept it for the time being? - Yes, I put it in my pocket.

18342. Where was the message handed to you by Captain Smith? - On deck.

18343. Were you alone? - No, I was not.

18344. Were there other passengers present? - There were.

18345. Did you read the message to them? - I did not.

18346. Did you say anything to the passengers about it? - I spoke to two passengers in the afternoon. At that time I did not speak to anybody.

18347. (The Commissioner.) When you say the afternoon, what time was it that the Captain handed you this message? - I think it was just before lunch.

So on Sunday afternoon, just prior to lunch, Captain Smith ran across Bruce Ismay and handed him the ice warning from the *Baltic*. Ismay also said that this was not an unusual thing for Captain Smith to have done. However the messages that Captain Smith gave Mr. Ismay were usually “of no importance at all,” and this telegram from the *Baltic* was nothing of the sort. It is possible, then, that in Captain Smith’s mind it was “of no importance”, perhaps just being more of a point of interest. Later in the evening, he retrieved the message from Ismay, explaining that he wanted to post it in the Chart Room for his officers to see.

On the other hand, we know that Captain Smith *was* concerned about the ice ahead. This much is clear since he deliberately “turned the corner” late. We know that his senior officers were also concerned about the ice ahead – First Officer Murdoch made sure that everything on the bow was completely blacked out to ensure that he and the lookouts had the best chance of sighting a berg in time to avoid a collision. There was talk between the Captain and Second Officer Lightoller on the matter at about 9:30 p.m. Lightoller and Murdoch discussed it when the watch changed at 10:00 p.m.

Is it thus possible that Smith singled out the *Baltic*’s ice warning to give to Bruce Ismay? Was he, perhaps, testing the water to see if Ismay felt that a reduction in speed might be warranted or not? When he received no comment from Ismay on the matter, is it possible that Smith decided merely to follow his usual custom and proceed at full speed? In all of his years of experience, Smith had never encountered a situation like the one he was about to encounter... is it possible that he felt that the odds were in his favor? Perhaps that he should just play things the way he always had, and that things would go as they had before?

We can not say at this point which of the two motives moved Captain Smith to present that particular telegram to Bruce Ismay. No matter what he felt, Captain Smith failed to reduce speed, and the consequences are now very well known.

It is also unlikely that any of the surviving officers or Bruce Ismay would have admitted to a real attempt to ‘push’ the *Titanic* after the fact, when the reputation of the White Star Line, and that of Bruce Ismay himself were both on the line. Lightoller clearly proved evasive at the Inquiries, and fudged much of his testimony when he was pinned down on certain matters of delicacy. As we have already proved, certain points of Ismay’s own testimony was evasive, stretched thinly, contradicted itself, or was downright untruthful. The fact that he had come under a strong personal attack would not have moved him to be overly forthcoming on his obvious involvement in matters during the maiden voyage, either.

After reviewing all of this testimony and evidence it is very clear that Bruce Ismay was far from an ordinary passenger during the *Titanic*’s maiden voyage, as he later wanted everyone to believe. It is also obvious that he was very interested in speeding the *Titanic* up from Saturday to Sunday, and later ensuring that her utmost speed was tested for at least a short period of time. It is also clear that the *Titanic* did speed up, and that unless she significantly

slowed down at a later point in the voyage, she would almost certainly have made New York late Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning.

Other important evidence that has come to light is that the *Titanic's* twenty-four 'main' boilers were all operating at their utmost capacity at the time of the collision, and that the ship was running faster at 11:40 p.m. Sunday April the 14 than she had traveled at any other point in the voyage.

So were the *Titanic's* officers trying to beat the *Olympic's* maiden voyage time and get into New York early to surprise everyone?

In the *New York Times* of April 15, 1912, the "Shipping & Mails" page showed that the *Titanic* was incoming, "Due Wednesday." Further down that same page, however, was information sent "By Wireless... Sandy Hook April 14<sup>th</sup> (Marconi)." In that section was a particularly interesting entry: "SS *Titanic*, Southampton to New York , 1,284 miles East at 2:15 a.m.; due 16<sup>th</sup> [Tuesday]. 4 p.m. White Star Line."<sup>23</sup>

Although this does not absolutely prove the point with finality – especially since it seems more likely that the *Titanic* would have arrived at the Ambrose Lightship after 9 p.m. – it does go so far as to show that in at least some quarters, the *Titanic* was expected on Tuesday, rather than at 5 a.m. Wednesday as originally scheduled.

A preponderance of the evidence shows it extremely likely that the *Titanic* was going to arrive in New York on Tuesday night/Wednesday morning, April 16/17, 1912. It also shows that Bruce Ismay was not being entirely truthful about the matter in his later testimony.

How responsible was Ismay for the speed of the ship and hence the resulting disaster? In the end, the responsibility really rested upon Captain Smith to ensure that the *Titanic* reached the New World in safety. That he did not was a tragedy for over 1,500 others. And yet, as the gentleman who had stoically done his duty and went down with his ship, he managed to retain a certain measure of dignity and respect in the eyes of the public. Ismay, on the other hand, managed to leave the ship safely – and this, more than anything else, was the "unforgivable sin" in the eyes of the press and public. Yet, if Bruce Ismay had remained on board the *Titanic* and also went down with the ship, his reputation may have been more intact after the fact, but he would only have added another life – namely his own – to the long list of those already doomed. No one else would have filled the seat in Collapsible C that he took.

For us historians, it is not so much a question of placing blame as it is one of getting to the truth of the matter and letting the evidence speak for itself. As we have seen, the evidence could not be clearer on the subject of the arrival that never took place.

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<sup>23</sup> Originally published in Diana Bristow's book *Titanic R.I.P.: Can Dead Men Tell Tales*; also reprinted in Mark Chirnside's unpublished monograph, "It Would Please the Passengers".

## Acknowledgments:

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There are a few people, in particular, that deserve special thanks for their assistance in the creation of this paper.

First of all, many thanks are due to Mark Chirnside for his extensive research on the myth that the *Titanic* was running short on coal. (Published as Appendix 11 of his book, *The Olympic-Class Ships: Olympic, Titanic & Britannic*.) Mr. Chirnside was also good enough to allow me exclusive access (at the time of this writing) to his unpublished monograph, “*I Am Sure It Would Please the Passengers*”, an excellent discussion of the subject of this paper. (Hopefully he will see fit to publish the paper at some future date.)

Many thanks are also due to George Behe, who was good enough to correspond with me on this matter despite other pressing engagements, and who advised me on some of the finer points of the evidence at hand.

Thanks are also due to Bruce Beveridge and Scott Andrews of the “Titanic Research & Modeling Association”; their expertise in technical matters of the *Titanic* is astonishing, and much of the information on the warm-up process of the ship’s boilers was very helpful. Many thanks to Mr. Beveridge for his support in my ongoing projects.

I would also like to thank Mr. Chirnside, Mr. Behe, and Mr. Beveridge for their proofreading of the finished text, and for offering their comments and suggestions. However, any mistakes made in this writing are to be considered mine and mine alone.