

# British Wreck Commissioner's Inquiry

## Day 9

### Testimony of Edward Brown

Source : <http://www.titanicinquiry.org/BOTInq/BOTIndx01.php#a>

*Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.*

10498. Were you serving as a first class steward on the "[Titanic](#)" on the occasion of this casualty?  
- Yes.

10499. Have you served in liners before?  
- Yes.

10500. In what ships?  
- The "[Cedric](#)," the "[Teutonic](#)," the "[Oceanic](#)," the "[Adriatic](#)," and the "[Olympic](#)."

10501. All White Star boats?  
- Yes, all White Star boats.

10502. Do you know what your boat was?  
- The boat that I was assigned to was number 5.

10503. Had you seen the list?  
- Yes, I saw the list on the Friday.

10504. At the time of the accident were you asleep?  
- At the time of the accident I was asleep.

10505. Were you awakened by the shock?  
- Yes.

10506. I do not intend to take you in great detail through the earlier part of your story, because we have heard it many times from other people, but did you at first think that there was no danger?  
- I never thought there was any danger.

10507. And then after some 20 minutes had passed were you told that you were wanted on the boat deck to help with the boats?  
- That was the time I thought it was. You cannot judge time very well. I thought it was 20 or 25 minutes.

10508. Did you go on the boat deck, and do what you were told?  
- Yes.

10509. To take this matter quite shortly, did you first help with boat No. 5?  
- Yes.

10510. Did you help the women and children into the boat?  
- Yes.

10511. Those were the orders?  
- Those were the orders.

10512. Then did you go from that boat to No. 3?  
- Yes.

10513. And help there again with women and children?  
- Yes.

10514. Then did you go from boat No. 3 to boat No. 1?  
- Yes, I went from boat No. 3 to boat No. 1.

10515. And helped with women and children?  
- Yes.

10516. Having done that, did you then go and help with a collapsible boat?  
- Yes.

10517. I want you to tell me which collapsible boat that was, the one on the port side or the one on the

starboard side?

- The starboard side - the one that was under number 1 boat.

26 10518. Did you get that collapsible boat to the davits?

- We did, Sir.

27 10519. Did you then proceed to fill it up with women and children?

- Yes.

28 10520. Was [Mr. Bruce Ismay](#) taking any part in connection with that boat?

- Yes, he was calling out for the women and children first. He helped to get them into that boat and he went into it himself to receive the women and children.

29 10521. Was that boat filled?

- It was filled.

30 10522. What was done with that boat?

- Filled up and lowered over the side.

31 10523. Was it then lowered down to the water?

- As far as I can say. I saw it going over the side from the boat deck.

32 10524. Up to the time that that boat was filled and lowered away was Mr. Ismay there doing what you have told us?

- Yes.

33 10525. Did you see any more of Mr. Ismay yourself after that?

- Not after that.

34 10526. After you had finished with that boat where did you next go to?

- We turned our attention to another collapsible boat that was on top of the Officers' house on the same side of the ship.

35 10527. That was a boat which lay on the top of the Officers' quarters?

- Yes.

36 10528. You tried to get that boat down to the deck?

- Yes.

37 10529. Did you get it down?

- Yes; we got two planks on the bow-end of the boat, and we slid it down on to the boat deck.

38 10530. Having got it down, the next thing, I suppose, would be to get it to the davits?

- We tried that, and we got it about halfway and then the ship got a list to port, and we had great difficulty. We could not get it right up to the davits, so we had to slacken the falls. The ship took a list to port, and we could not get it up the incline right up to the davits.

39 10531. Did you do your best?

- We did our best. We slackened the falls and made it fast.

40 10532. You did make it fast?

- Yes, we did make it fast by slackening the falls, but we could not haul it away any further.

41 10533. Were you ever able to get it outboard so as to lower it?

- No.

42 10534. Were there any women there whilst you were dealing with this boat that had come from the top of the Officers' quarters?

- There were four or five women that I could see there waiting to get into this boat if we got it under the davits.

43 10535. Whilst you were trying to get this boat up the hill, as it were, to the davits, did anything happen to the ship?

- Yes, she put the bridge under then.

44 10536. She put the bridge right under water?

- Yes, she put the bridge right under water.

45 10537. You spoke of a list to port, I think?

- Yes.

- 46 10538. At the time that she put the bridge under water was the list considerable?  
- Yes.
- 47 10539. She was, of course, well down by the head then?  
- Very well down then, Sir.
- 48 10540. What happened to you when she put the bridge under water?  
- I found the water come right up to my legs here, and I jumped into the collapsible boat then. I cut the after fall, and I called out to the man on the forward end of the boat to cut her loose; she would float if we got the falls loose.
- 49 10541. Did this other man do that?  
- I could not say.
- 50 10542. Did she float?  
- I cut the ropes and then I was washed right out of her.
- 51 10543. You cut both falls?  
- No, only the after fall.
- 52 10544. What happened to the forward fall?  
- I could not say. I was washed out of the boat then.
- 53 10545. You were washed out of the boat, were you?  
- Yes.
- 54 10546. Did you notice what happened to these three or four women who had been standing there?  
- The last I saw of them they were in the water struggling.
- 55 10547. You could not help them, I suppose?  
- No.
- 56 10548. Then did you go down - did you sink?  
- When I got in the water I was in a whirlpool going round like this. (*Showing.*)
- 57 10549. Did you come up to the top?  
- Yes, I came up to the top.
- 58 10550. Had you got your lifebelt on?  
- Yes.
- 59 10551. Did you hear any noise from the ship as she went down under you - any explosions?  
- What I took to be an explosion, Sir - a great noise, a great report.
- 60 10552. When you came to the top of the water, what did you see round you? Did you see anything round you - wreckage or people?  
- Not then. There was no wreckage, but a lot of people in the water.
- 61 10553. Could you help me with regard to this; if you did not notice say so: Did you notice whether the bow broke off?  
- With the first report of that explosion I saw the afterpart of the ship giving a tremble like this (*Showing.*), and I thought by the afterpart going up like this (*Showing.*), and giving a bit of a tremble that the bow had fallen off. I might be wrong.
- 62 10554. But that was your conclusion from it?  
- Yes.
- 63 10556. I suppose your opportunities for observation were not very good at this time?  
- No. That part was practically under water then.
- 64 10557. When the afterpart gave this tremble, where were you then?  
- In the water; right before the forward funnel.
- 65 10558. Did you notice whether the lights of this afterpart were still lighted or not?  
- There were lights burning then.
- 66 10559. Could you see that?  
- Yes.
- 67 10560. After you had been in the water for some time did you see a black object?

- Yes, I saw a black object.
- 68 10561. How long do you think you were in the water before you saw that?  
- It seemed a very long time.
- 69 10562. Was it a long time?  
- It seemed a lifetime to me.
- 70 10563. Did you swim towards it?  
- I did my best. I never swam in my life; but I kept myself up with the lifebelt, and I made my way the best I could towards it.
- 71 10564. Do you mean you cannot swim?  
- Yes.
- 72 10565. Then the lifebelt saved you?  
- The lifebelt saved me.
- 73 10566. Did that black object prove to be a collapsible boat?  
- Yes.
- 74 10567. I think it was half submerged, was it not?  
- Yes, submerged with the weight of men on it.
- 75 10568. How many people were there on it?  
- I should say there were 16 or 17 on it.
- 76 10569. You used the expression "with the weight of men on it." Were they men or were they some women?  
- They were all men then, Sir. The women we had on it were picked up after I got aboard of it.
- 77 10570. Did you get on to that collapsible boat?  
- I did.
- 78 10571. Did you remain on it?  
- I remained on it.
- 79 10572. Did you pick anybody up in that boat?  
- When I was there I saw them pick two up, a woman and a gentleman - a very big gentleman.
- 80 10573. You have spoken of the men on this boat. Were they passengers, or were they crew of the ship, or staff of the ship?  
- They were mixed up; there were some stewards, some firemen, and the rest passengers.
- 81 10574. Could you tell me how many were passengers out of the 16 men?  
- There was one fireman that I knew. I do not know whether there were any more or not.
- 82 10575. Do you know how many were passengers?  
- I know there were three stewards, and I know there was one fireman. I do not know how many more.
- 83 10576. (*The Commissioner.*) Do you know whether any of the 16 that you saw were passengers?  
- Oh, yes, Sir.
- 84 10577. How many?  
- You could not very well pick them out. I should say 10 or 12 of them were passengers.
- 85 10578. (*Mr. Butler Aspinall.*) I believe next day, to go on a little further, you first of all were picked up by No. 14 boat?  
- Yes.
- 86 10579. And taken to the "[Carpathia](#)," were you not?  
- Yes.
- 87 10580. Do you know a man called [Joughin](#), the Chief Baker of the "Titanic"?  
- Yes, I do.
- 88 10581. He has been here, and he has told us that he swam to a collapsible boat that was in trouble, after he had been in the water for some time, and they refused to take him in. Do you remember that incident happening?  
- That is another collapsible boat altogether.
- 89 Mr. Butler Aspinall:

That is not your collapsible boat?

90 The Commissioner:  
You gave me, Mr. Aspinall, or the Witness did, the number of the boat that picked them up; what was it?

91 10582. (*Mr. Butler Aspinall.*) Boat 14. (*To the Witness.*) You were picked up by boat 14?  
- Yes.

92 10583. And we have heard it was the Fifth Officer, Mr. Lowe, who was in charge of that boat?  
- Yes.

93 The Solicitor-General:  
That boat is the one that Scarrott and Morris have given evidence about already.

94 10584. (*Mr. Butler Aspinall.*) Do you know if on your collapsible boat there was a man - a cook I think he was - from the cook's department by the name of Maynard?  
- No. He was on the upturned collapsible boat.

95 10585. That clears it up. Then you were taken on board the "Carpathia." I want you to tell me these two other matters which I think you can speak about. Whilst you were working down the last collapsible boat from the top of the Officer's quarters to the deck, did you notice Captain Smith?  
- Yes, the Captain came past us while we were trying to get this boat away with a megaphone in his hand, and he spoke to us.

96 10586. What did he say?  
- He said, "Well, boys, do your best for the women and children, and look out for yourselves." He walked on the bridge.

97 10587. He returned then to the bridge?  
- Yes.

98 10588. And about that moment of time the ship took her last plunge?  
- Yes, a very few seconds after that.

99 10589. There is one other matter I want you to tell us about as you were on the ship to the end. Do you know what the Band were doing at the last?  
- I do not remember hearing the band stop playing. They were playing for a long time, but I do not remember hearing them stop.

100 10590. Where would the band be gathered; where would they play, do you know?  
- Right on the forward companion on the very top - on the boat deck forward companion.

101 The Solicitor-General:  
Between the first and second funnels.

102 10591. (*Mr. Butler Aspinall.*) Were they playing at the time when you were dealing with this collapsible boat from the top of the Officers' quarters?  
- Yes.

103 10592. Up to as late as that your memory serves you?  
- Yes, they were playing then.

104 10593. (*The Commissioner.*) Do you mean up to the time when the Captain called out to you to look after the women and children?  
- Yes, they were playing a few seconds before that, Sir.

105 10594. (*Mr. Butler Aspinall.*) Just in order to get the names, if I can, of some of the people in your collapsible boat, do you know the names of any member of the crew that was in that collapsible boat?  
- Two besides myself.

106 10595. You know the names of two?  
- Yes.

107 10596. Will you give me their names?  
- Gus Whiteman, [August Weikman] the Chief Barber, the First class Barber, and W. Lucas, a First class Steward.

108 10597. (*The Attorney-General.*) You say Lucas was a steward?  
- Yes, a first class steward.

109 (After a short adjournment.)

110 Examined by Mr. SCANLAN.

111 10598. I believe that this collapsible boat which you failed to get into the water was practically a new collapsible boat the same as the others?  
- Yes, as far as I know, it was.

112 10599. And would have been serviceable if you had succeeded in getting it launched?  
- Yes.

113 10600. Did the fact that this boat was on the top of the Officers' quarters make it difficult to get her near the davits?  
- No, Sir; not if the ship had been on an even keel; but when we got it down on to the boat deck the ship had a list to port.

114 10601. I know that was against you, of course. The other collapsibles were under the davits, were not they - under other boats?  
- They lie just behind the No. 1 davit.

115 10602. And I suppose if this boat had been placed under one of the ordinary lifeboats it would have been quite an easy matter, even with a list, to have launched it?  
- If it was right under the davits - Yes.

116 10603. As you were one of the last to leave the boat before she sank, I want to ask you this question: Did you observe just at that time the lights of any ship in your vicinity?  
- I never saw any, Sir.

117 10604. Or even when you got into the water and on to the raft?  
- Only the lights of our own boats.

118 Examined by Mr. COTTER.

119 10605. How long have you been going to sea?  
- Eight years.

120 10606. Have you been in any other company except the White Star Line?  
- My two first voyages to sea were in the Dominion Line.

121 10607. Do you know what boat drill is?  
- I do.

122 10608. What was the number of your boat on the "Titanic"?  
- No. 5.

123 10609. You saw that on the list?  
- I saw that on the list.

124 10610. In the pantry?  
- In the pantry.

125 10611. Had you any bulkhead door allotted to you?  
- No.

126 10612. Do you know anything about the bulkhead doors on the "Titanic"?  
- Which way do you mean?

127 10613. Where they were situated?  
- Of course, down below in the engine room department. I do not know anything about them; our department a little.

128 10614. Tell us what you know about the bulkhead doors and where they were situated?  
- On E deck, I know there are four there; that is on the port side. On the starboard side I know of two.

129 10615. Did you take any part in any bulkhead door drill?  
- No.

130 10616. You do not know whether the bulkhead doors were closed during the voyage, as far as it went, of the "Titanic"?  
- Not so far as I know.

- 131 10617. Now, I will take you up to the boats. When you got on deck you went to No. 5 boat, you stated?  
- Yes, I went to No. 5. That was my boat.
- 132 10618. And from there to No. 3?  
- Yes, No. 3.
- 133 10619. When you got to No. 1 did you receive any orders?  
- When I got as far as No. 1 boat I heard an order called out to cut the collapsible boat loose that was lying under No. 1 boat.
- 134 10620. You heard an order?  
- I heard an order given; I do not know who by. It might have been one of the Officers, I do not know. I heard an order given to cut the collapsible boat loose.
- 135 10621. Did you go to the collapsible boat?  
- I did, and got my knife out and cut it loose.
- 136 10622. Did you see No. 1 launched?  
- No. My attention was on the collapsible boat, and I could not see what was going on in No. 1. I was that close to it (*Showing.*), but I could not see what went away in it or anything else.
- 137 10623. You never heard the order to launch No. 1?  
- No, I was working down below the collapsible.
- 138 10624. Did you see the first collapsible boat go away?  
- I did, off the starboard side.
- 139 10625. Was it launched from the davits?  
- Right from the davits, yes.
- 140 10626. Did you see Mr. Ismay about?  
- Yes, he was standing in the boat receiving women and children.
- 141 10627. He was standing in the boat?  
- He was receiving women and children in the collapsible boat when it was hanging over the side on the davits.
- 142 10628. Were there any women about after it had been launched?  
- I saw four or five women when we were trying to get the boat away.
- 143 10629. When you were launching?  
- When the first collapsible boat went there were no more women there to get in the boat and it was practically full then.
- 144 10630. How long from the launching of that collapsible boat with Mr. Bruce Ismay in it, was it that you saw the women?  
- I suppose it took us about 10 or 12 minutes to get the other boat down.
- 145 10631. That is when you were getting the boat off the house?  
- Yes, off the Officers' house, and those women were waiting to get into the boat if we could have got it away.
- 146 10632. They came along after the first collapsible boat had gone?  
- Yes.
- 147 10633. How many men did it take to get that collapsible boat off the house?  
- I could not tell you the number; there were seven or eight on the top deck and two or three down below receiving it.
- 148 10634. Where did you get the planks from to put against the house to get the collapsible boat down?  
- Where they came from I cannot say, but they were there ready.
- 149 10635. Were they planks or masts or oars out of some of the other boats?  
- That I did not take much notice of, whether they were masts or what. I think they were the planks that held the awnings on the other boats.
- 150 10636. You mean the fore-and-aft?  
- Yes.
- 151 10637. You had two fore-and-afters and put them there?

- Yes.

152 10638. Was anybody hurt?  
- No.

153 10639. Had you any difficulty in sliding that boat off the house?  
- We put the bow of it on the planks and let it slide down.

154 Mr. Cotter:  
With your permission, my Lord, could we have the model canted over?

155 The Commissioner:  
Certainly.

156 10640. (*Mr. Cotter - To the Witness.*) Will you show us how far she had a list? Say when to stop. (*The model was moved.*)  
- That will do.

157 10641. She had a list to port?  
- Yes.

158 10642. And the bow down that way?  
- Yes.

159 10643. It was a cant on that way and a list to port?  
- Yes.

160 10644. When you started to bring the Englehardt boat off the house?  
- Yes.

161 10645. Did you land it down to the deck next to the house or near the davit?  
- Right alongside to the house, the length of the planks; we put them half-way between the house and the davits.

162 10646. You would have to pull your falls over from the davits, loose your falls and drag them over and fix them on the boat?  
- Yes, we did that when we found we could not push it up the incline. We had to slacken the falls.

163 10647. Suppose you had got them on the davits, with the list she had on, could you have launched her?  
- We should have launched it. We should have got it out, swung the davits out first and then put the people in. It would have been a little difficult, but I think we could have managed it.

164 10648. With a ship with a list like that?  
- Yes.

165 10649. With a 70 feet drop?  
- Yes, because the weight in the boat would slide it along the side of the ship.

166 10650. The water was well up then, was it not? You might have been able to?  
- She had her nose pretty low down then.

167 10651. You could not get the forward end or afterend of the falls cut away?  
- I cut the afterend myself; I do not know about the forward. I shouted for them to be cut away and that the boat would float then, but I do not know whether they were cut or not. I know the afterend was cut.

168 10652. Was there anybody in there?  
- There was a lot scrambled into it then; when the sea came on to the deck they all scrambled into the boat.

169 10653. How many? Can you give us an idea?  
- I have no idea - practically full. The boat was practically full, when the sea came into it, and washed them all out.

170 10654. Washed everybody out?  
- Washed everybody out of the boat.

171 10655. Washed the boat away?  
- No, it left the boat there. I do not know where it went to then. We were washed out of it; that is all I know.

172 10656. Was there anybody around you when you were in the water?  
- Yes, and well I know it, because they tore my clothing away from me with struggling in the water.



173 10657. Can you give us any idea when you were picked up? Was it dawn or daylight, or dark?  
- When I was picked up by our lifeboat?

174 10658. By the collapsible?  
- It was a good while after daylight.

175 10659. So you must have been in the water say about two hours and a half?  
- A long time I know.

176 10660. When you got in the boat were there many men in that boat?  
- Yes. I suppose there would be 12 or 14 men in it.

177 10661. Were they passengers or crew?  
- Mixed up.

178 10662. Could you give us any idea how many of the crew?  
- I really could not say; I could not pick them all out at that time.

179 Can you give us any idea?

180 The Commissioner:  
He has told us there were 10 to 12 passengers. He has already said it: "I got on to the boat and was saved. We picked up a woman and a man; 10 or 12 were passengers."

181 10663. (*Mr. Cotter.*) How many were pulling when you got into the boat?  
- There was nobody pulling then because the boat was under sail when I got into it.

182 10664. Did they put out oars afterwards?  
- Yes, the Officer asked for volunteers to row.

183 10665. Did you take an oar?  
- I did. There were three oars put out on the starboard side of the boat, and I took one on the port side.

184 10666. What condition were you in? - Were your feet or hands swollen?  
- My feet had burst my boots and my hands were all swollen up like this (*Demonstrating.*)

185 10667. And you volunteered to take an oar?  
- Yes.

186 10668. And you took an oar?  
- Yes.

187 Examined by Sir ROBERT FINLAY.

188 10669. Only one question. Did you hear an order given in the alleyway about the watertight doors?  
- That was the first order I heard after I was woke by the shock.

189 10670. Just tell us what you heard?  
- Who gave it I do not know, but I heard an order in the alleyway outside our quarters to close all watertight doors.

190 10671. There are watertight doors in the alleyway?  
- Yes, lower down, further aft than our quarters are.

191 10672. And you heard that order given?  
- Yes.

192 (The Witness withdrew.)