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Daniel T. Brown
January 29, 2002

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September 11, 2001
Oral History Documentation Project
Northeast Region, National Park Service

INTERVIEWEE: Daniel T. Brown
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Statue of Liberty National Monument
(Interview No. 22)

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INTERVIEW DATE: January 29, 2002

PLACE: Ellis Island
Statue of Liberty National Monument

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START OF TAPE

Mark Schoepfle: — which is from the moment you were aware of something happening of the events that occurred, as soon as you were aware that something was going on, what happened?

Daniel Brown: Well, that's a question that I knew something was going on. I didn't know exactly what was going on if that's what you're asking.

Mark Schoepfle: Yes, keep going.

Daniel Brown: I knew something was wrong, but I didn't know exactly what it was. I'm remembering coming in the park, driving in. I drive through from Staten Island over the Bayonne Bridge into New Jersey. I had to go through New Jersey State Park. At the beginning of the Park entrance, of New Jersey State, they weren't allowing vehicles to go through. So, I went around this circle and tried to come through on another end and they weren't allowing cars to go through.

Daniel Brown: It wasn't until I drove back around the circle, I noticed people with cameras out of their cars and standing almost on top of their cars, and I knew something was wrong. I didn't know what it was. It wasn't until I approached the — well, I had to show my credentials and got through the New Jersey State Park, and coming over the construction bridge I then noticed that one of the — at that time I thought it was one — one of the towers was on fire. I assumed that it was just a fire in one of the towers, still not knowing what had happened, because trying to call into the park all the cellular phone transmissions were down. So that's when I became aware of something was wrong and then I saw what people saw — what was wrong when I was coming over the construction bridge.

Mark Schoepfle: Keep going, then what?

Daniel Brown: Came into the park. Then it became quite clear after you came into the park — from the parking lot my office is pretty close. Dropped my bags off. I believe I might have went down to the management office, picked up my radio, and found — I don't know exactly — remember when I can recall when I found that the plane had hit the tower, which tied into what I saw over at the — one of the towers on fire. Not knowing at that time that it came later on in the day that I had found out that two planes had — one plane had hit each one of the towers.

Daniel Brown: I remember the radio communication from dispatch saying the towers were falling, you know. Tower one was falling. I decided — why, I don't know why at that time — but I decided to not watch the tower as was falling down.

- Daniel Brown: I don't know if it goes back to my premed school days or working in the emergency rooms at Harlem Hospital in pediatric surgery or pediatric emergency room, dealing with triage. I decided just not to watch the towers fall down, and I actually gave myself a different experience than other people had.
- Daniel Brown: During the course of the ensuing hours I found out what happened. I then figured out that an attack had occurred because it was kind of odd that two planes would hit the towers. Most of the rest of the hour to two hours — this was about 9 o'clock in the morning, just about 10 minutes to 9 before I came — when I came into the park knowing that — then everything just started speeding up after that. Fire engines, you could hear the sounds from New York City. People in a panic, you know. I would look at staff members being extremely affected by the events that happened that day.
- Mark Schoepfle: Keep going.
- Daniel Brown: What happened then, we prepared ourselves to deal with the expected onset of individuals that were affected with the devastation of 9/11. I remember management sending staff home. I was instructed to send nonessential staff home or at least got them off the island, which was a great idea at the time. To make sure that only essential staff and individuals that had any emergency medical or first responder training — as we were gearing up for a bigger event that day that I didn't even realize how traumatic it really was.
- Daniel Brown: Staff left. I remember making sure which staff of mine was getting on the boat, which staff was left that day. Find out where they were going. I believe that they were being let off at one of the piers in Brooklyn. Got the staff. We were preparing some of the triage, all of the time somewhat stunned, but I guess a mode of — I guess, I said — my emergency room experience, instead of not panicking. I don't recall panicking the whole time of the day during the course of the day.
- Daniel Brown: The staff that was left started preparing different areas for, I guess, the victims of the attack. Then I think the first boat arrived with victims. Then reality set in. You see people coming off the boat, gasping for air, coughing, looking like they had been through a snowstorm, a sugar factory, dust and everything covering their bodies. So, we're helping out, you know, setting up areas of chairs, again just sort of like a triage. Setting up the area for victims who were extremely wounded with broken arms, legs, things like that, and individuals that had respiratory problems.

- Daniel Brown: Basically, I wandered from area to area to see where I could help at, at the same time looking around and looking at the devastation that occurred to me, so I had some point of reality of what was going on that day. During the day helped out, preparing to arrive — for the arrival of, at that time, bodies. We were setting up a morgue in the back of Ellis Island, which really never occurred, to my knowledge.
- Daniel Brown: It was then when I went on the other side of the, I guess that's the north side of the island, saw the devastation of just the smoke and the sirens and just watching the smoke rise in the air. If there were two towers there, which I had known that they said that they both fell earlier during the day, that you couldn't see them anyway if they were still standing. But you knew that there was some devastation that had happened and trying in watching the people come off the boat, the victims come off the boat and watching that devastation and just it was horrific. I remember repeating that word through my mind all day. It was horrific. What a horrific sight to see.
- Daniel Brown: Later on, taking some time, going into the management office to see, to actually see a TV, finally saw it on TV what was going on, bits and pieces. Again, I systematically eased myself into what had happened instead of being — had this all thrown on me at one time. Saw the news reports, I think it was CNN then. And then, like I said, everything just kept speeding up during the whole day.
- Daniel Brown: It was, I think, maybe 6, 7 o'clock we had a caravan let out of the park to take us out of New Jersey State Park and into — the majority of us was going to Staten Island. Pretty lucky to have the park police working with the superintendent to have a caravan lead us out. Otherwise, we would've been stuck at Ellis Island all day, I guess maybe until the next morning. Watching people on the side of the road, almost like watching a parade, but we were in the parade, the traffic going by.
- Daniel Brown: Got home that day, that evening really. Then I really got to watch the news report and it was like, oh shit. This is what actually happened. I remember them showing over and over again the planes going into the towers and then I saw the flame which I recalled seeing earlier during the day, the towers on fire. So, I was able to make an association there. I think until maybe 11, 12 o'clock at night, I kept — I was lucky to be home and just thank God that I was home to be able to at least be with my family, still not knowing what to expect next.
- Daniel Brown: And so over and over again, I guess I was somewhat stunned watching it on TV over and over again, which allowed me to have a different experience watching it on TV than actually watching it live.

- Daniel Brown: And to this day, I don't know, I believe that was a good decision for me to not watch that actually happen. I just have a different experience. You talk to staff or individuals that do bring it up now. I have a different experience than they did.
- Daniel Brown: I know over the telephone talking with supervisors, my supervisors about what were the plan of action for the next couple of days, to make sure I stayed in touch with staff to let them — kept them apprised. So, we started working on different op and plans and had different angles how we wanted to approach dealing with this from the perspective of the staff.
- Mark Schoepfle: Before we get to that, I mean that's going to be very important, could I go back over some things that you mentioned?
- Daniel Brown: Sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay, one of the themes that you have been sort of bringing up again and again is that you eased yourself into this. There were certain things you didn't look at, like the flames. You didn't concentrate looking at the buildings themselves, I'm gathering. You therefore weren't going to bother with whether there was another plane coming in or when that did happen, anything like that, right? You just didn't look at it.
- Daniel Brown: Well, this — both the planes had already hit the tower.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, okay.
- Daniel Brown: So, it was just a matter of moments after I had actually arrived, I believe that — I can't remember recalling it, I think the towers went down at 9:10, 9:15. Again I'm just — it's like a matter of 20 minutes for me by the time I got into the office until the time that the towers actually went down. So, it's about 20, 25 minutes maybe, you know, somewhere in there that you just kept hearing the radio announcements. So, if your question was, I kept repeating the theme that I eased myself into it.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, that was — yeah. Could I get some more understanding of what you mean by that? Because that's exceedingly important because first of all you've mentioned that this — and track me if I'm wrong because I'm going off of a few notes and about what I'm listening to and I want to make sure I'm hearing things right. On the one hand it made you more effective to deal with what was going on. This was part of your EMS/EMT training, right?
- Daniel Brown: Yeah.

- Mark Schoepfle: And the second thing is as a result of that you got a very different experience from what other people got. Could I first of all go back and ask you what — how did this affect the way you operated? I mean, I think that was the first thing you kind of mentioned is how you operated that day that was a little different from other people, how it helped you or how it didn't or whatever.
- Daniel Brown: It helped me operate the rest of the day because I didn't get into a panic mode. I noticed a lot of others around me were extremely upset, panicking, frightened. And I just had this feeling that if I can never — I guess that's part of my training, like I say, working [in] an emergency room, that if you become panicked and unstable you can't help anyone else. I liken it to being on the airplane and they tell you that before you do anything else to make sure that you put the oxygen bag on yourself.
- Daniel Brown: So, if I can't keep myself in a stable mode, I can't help anybody else. So why I decided not to watch the towers, it doesn't directly correlate with me being stable for the rest of the day. I just decided not to watch that. Maybe I'm — subconsciously I didn't want to become as frightened and unstable by something that I didn't have any control over.
- Mark Schoepfle: When you were mentioning that other people were panicking and very upset, what were they doing? What was happening?
- Daniel Brown: Crying, stunned, and just running back and forth. Like I said, I somewhat like sat back and watched where I was at and what I was doing and what was going on around me. Not a majority, not a lot of people were, you know, extremely upset and crying, but the majority of us were, you know, effectively working. But you could see that people were nervously working. I'll put it that way.
- Mark Schoepfle: But nervously?
- Daniel Brown: Uh-huh.
- Mark Schoepfle: How did they indicate that kind of behavior?
- Daniel Brown: Well, if you work with individuals you know their personality. And they seemed to be more, for lack of a better word, I'll say erratic in terms of their running around and getting things — trying to help here and stay focused on something that we were all trying to help and deal with. You know, it's not something that we rehearsed. But it's something that here at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island we deal with so many different incidents and issues it was easy for us to handle those types of — that day — because we handle a lot of different incidents and accidents here.

- Daniel Brown: But working with some individuals, you know, that that's not their normal personality of, you know, rushing back and forth or sitting on the side and just looking stunned and crying or being erratic in their emotions. So that's what I noticed.
- Mark Schoepfle: Erratic. Could you give me an example of what you mean?
- Daniel Brown: No. Other than just visually in my mind I guess erratic meaning not something that I normally notice that they're doing, you know, pacing back and forth or running up and down.
- Mark Schoepfle: Or sitting there stunned, like you were mentioning before.
- Daniel Brown: Yeah, you know.
- Mark Schoepfle: Stuff that just isn't ordinarily —
- Daniel Brown: Yeah, out of the ordinary.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Now thanks for bearing with me on this to dig in. I want to get a good idea of what you mean by these things. And my meaning of them may be one thing and yours — even just everyday words are going to be different in experiences. I want to make sure I get yours, not what I think they are.
- Daniel Brown: Sure. No, I understand, because like I said, as opposed to me being here as opposed to you, and what's in my mind, what was going through my mind, I'm trying to recall, you know, certain parts of it.
- Mark Schoepfle: Sure. And when you were mentioning that, okay, as a result of it your experience throughout the day was different. How do you mean that?
- Daniel Brown: I guess reserved, not much reserved but just slightly reserved in terms of my emotions. I anticipated with the news reports, hearing the news reports that not only the twin towers were attacked, the Pentagon, you hear of forced rumors of the White House, a plane went down, so a lot of different rumors flying around and not knowing what to believe. And knowing that whatever happened, why it happened, this may not be the end, you know. There may still be more to come. So, I just wanted to somewhat be a little bit more reserved than I normally am. And people call me, say I'm laid back and I'm reserved, but I try to be a little bit more — keep my emotions a little bit more — constrained.
- Mark Schoepfle: Sure. So basically, it was so that you weren't constantly worried about what was going to happen next or was something going to, you know, like what, hitting the Statue of Liberty or something or rumors?

- Daniel Brown: Well, yes, that and also, I'm sensitive. I'm very sensitive. So, for me to watch people that I care about around me become affected by this and then see victims that I don't know affected by this, I could be extremely sensitized to what was going on and then possibly become unglued myself. So, I wanted to make sure I at least tried to keep my composure. I mean a lot was going on that day. And you can look at any area and see how devastating — and how horrific it was. One could actually lose their mind, literally lose their mind because you didn't know what was next.
- Daniel Brown: And it was difficult for me to try to not keep my composure and then watch my colleagues that I know and the people that I don't know. You know, we all work together so it's like a family here. And you're seeing people affected by this and you begin — for at least me, I became very sensitive to it and I just wanted to make sure I have some composure, which like I said, people always say I'm laid back anyway. But you know, how can you become so laid back and so reserved when you know it could be the end of the world.
- Mark Schoepfle: You mean, when people looking at that kind of thing may look at you, how can you be this way when all this stuff is happening? I mean, that was kind of like a reaction.
- Daniel Brown: No, it wasn't their reaction. That's a thought that passed through my mind.
- Mark Schoepfle: I see. Yeah, thanks for your patience on that. That's what I was kind of thinking was going — you know, how can you be this way when all of this stuff is going on that way around it and you desperately just want to keep control of what's going on in your own mind.
- Daniel Brown: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: So that you can be effective and not just come unglued.
- Daniel Brown: Right. You know, because you can make mistakes. And like I said, in an emergency capacity —
- Mark Schoepfle: Very critical ones.
- Daniel Brown: — yeah. You had to think about it because there was one particular incident, which made me even realize you need to be more careful, when they threw some water on an individual, I guess, to wipe the dust off, and he started screaming and panicking because he started burning up.
- Mark Schoepfle: Ouch. Yeah, with that ash and stuff on there. Yeah.

Daniel Brown: Yeah. My background is biology and mathematics. So, I know how certain chemical reactions can occur and you just look at dust on somebody. Well, what's in that dust was probably some volatile or some acidic chemicals that reacted with the water. So it made me understand that, you know, you just can't react to someone needing help because the first reaction I guess is when somebody's on fire, you know, to run over and throw water on them, you know. Well, you don't know what you're — you could be increasing the problem a little bit more. Or you want to move somebody, make them feel more comfortable and they've got a — which I saw, you know — bone sticking out of their legs. You are going to do more damage by what you believe is making it comfortable for the person, but what you're doing is you're creating a — you could be creating a traumatic situation where the person would go into panic. They can — you know, they can have a heart attack there.

Mark Schoepfle: Sure.

Daniel Brown: So, you know, sometimes I believe individuals can't think rationally if you're reacting. You're not thinking about what you're doing before you do it, regardless of — it's hard to say regardless because nobody would expect this to happen — regardless of how horrific that day was, you know. You can really make a bad, bad mistake.

Mark Schoepfle: You gave this example of the person with the water on them and then another example. I mean, did these things happen?

Daniel Brown: Yeah.

Mark Schoepfle: And like the person with the bone sticking out of them, was that a — these things happened? You saw that when you were bringing in particularly that first boatload of individuals?

Daniel Brown: Right. And what I did was — it's just like bedside manners and, you know, working in an emergency room, you try to keep people calm. I remember talking with the one individual and he asked me, hey, was it — he's laying on a gurney, asked me was it broke. Does it look bad? You know, nicely for me being honest with him and let him know that, you know, things will be okay. It's like bedside manners that you have. And you don't want anybody to panic because it's like, yeah, your leg is cut off, but it's not as bad as it could be, but you'll live through it. Things like that, you try to comfort them.

- Daniel Brown: And that's what I — most of the time — I was walking around trying to — I decided to go around with tape and put individual's name and social security number on their wrists. Again, almost like in a triage situation because people, could become — in my mind — hey, you know, you transport somebody. Somebody comes in unconscious. You don't know who this person is. There's no ID in anybody's pocket.
- Daniel Brown: So, I was just walking around discussing that with individuals and getting their name and putting — writing the name on the tape and taping it to their wrist, not tight where you wouldn't be able to —
- Mark Schoepfle: Right, so it was like the hospital bracelet-type of thing.
- Daniel Brown: Right. You know, I guess that's the training — you know — trying to at least identify somebody if something happened to them. I remember one particular; it was a female lieutenant in the New York Police Department. She couldn't use her cell phone. She was stunned. She asked — her worry was that she wanted her sister to know that she was okay. Her sister lived in Long Island. She gave me the number. I took the number. I went into the office and I called to her sister or her brother-in-law or whatever it was, I think it was her sister, and let her know that — I can't remember the name — lieutenant, anyway she was a lieutenant, and told her that I was just outside talking to her sister, that she's okay. She just wanted her to know.
- Daniel Brown: And the relief on the other end of the telephone knowing that, irregardless this devastation was going on, you made somebody feel comfortable. You know, so she was thankful. Let her know where she was, and she probably was going to be transported. I came back out and talked to the lieutenant and she grabbed me, hugged me, told me thanks. I said, don't worry about it, and went on to the next person to see who I could help.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, a lot — am I following right — that a lot of what you were doing was possibly providing some basic CPR, first aid to some people, just comforting other people? Going around and seeing where — what you could do that was needed?
- Daniel Brown: Yeah, right. Not CPR, but yeah, basic comfort, to see where I can help out if needed to be, to give CPR as an EMT and as CPR I could. But you had the EMTs there.
- Daniel Brown: You had the trained people that do this all the time. So yeah, you're right. I was just walking around trying to comfort people to see wherever I could fit in to help out.

- Mark Schoepfle: And suddenly if you saw that these people needed to get banded, get a name on them, you know, get the tape band on them, that that was what to do?
- Daniel Brown: Yep.
- Mark Schoepfle: Any other examples like that?
- Daniel Brown: Not that has come to my mind right now. But there were a lot of things that I just, like I said, I just jumped in. Just like they needed some people to go and help move the bodies off the — I guess the boat was coming and they said that you know, body parts, bodies, which is gruesome in itself. But it didn't happen, but you know, I was prepared to help out to do that, you know, get my mask, blue gloves, and everything to help out, any way I could help out. It didn't matter, because I felt comfortable enough at that time instead of, I get not in that panic mode of freaking out. It's like holy shit, you know, what am I going to do?
- Mark Schoepfle: Yes. Well, moving on then to what you had just also mentioned was what happened in the days after that? I mean, you got home. You watched on the TV you were mentioning. You then finally had a chance to look at things and go, oh good grief, right. Sort of just let it all — what you had been sort of shutting down for the rest of the day, you just sort of let it all flow through and flow in? I mean — let me rephrase it.
- Mark Schoepfle: You were watching TV and then you allowed yourself to think about what was going on, what had really gone on?
- Daniel Brown: Yeah, what actually happened.
- Mark Schoepfle: What was your reaction then on TV?
- Daniel Brown: Horrific. The same terms, horrific. This is horrific. This is insane. I was maybe — it reminded me of a movie that I saw I think maybe a couple of months ago, "The Siege" with Denzel Washington and the FBI. The same thing happened, but more devastating because this was real. I mean, you know, I know what TV is and what reality is. I mean this was reality but, in a sense, I'm watching it on TV. So, the days following that I periodically was always watching the TV, not that you could watch much else. Anything else, you know, I think two or three days in a row that was the TV. It was on TV all day. You had —
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah. It was the same old, same old, over and over.
- Daniel Brown: Right, yeah, you had — yeah, overload. You didn't have a choice in, you know, what you can see or watch. And I just stayed with my wife and children and stayed close to them, you know. We talked. You never know what was next. You never know what was next, you know.

- Mark Schoepfle: What were some of the things that could have been next?
- Daniel Brown: In my mind or —
- Mark Schoepfle: At that time, yeah, in your mind.
- Daniel Brown: A nuclear bomb, more, you know, missiles. You name it, Armageddon.
- Mark Schoepfle: And you stayed close to your family and talked to them about that. What was going on in your family's mind? I mean, they must have been worried a bit about you when you were down here on the island?
- Daniel Brown: Yes. Well, what I did also do during the day I was calling my wife to find out, you know, what she was doing. She didn't go to work that day. She's an assistant district attorney in Brooklyn, so she didn't go to work that day. She was mostly worried about me, but I did call earlier in the day. If I recall, I called before I left out of the office just to let her know what was going on. And she was basically watching the TV and seeing what was going on. Again, I didn't have a TV in the office so I'm viewing a lot of stuff through her eyes while she was watching it on TV.
- Daniel Brown: I can't particularly remember, you know, the ensuing days with the family. But you know, we were I guess emotionally, you know, attached to each other during the day and still to today. You know, life's too short. You think about all — especially knowing the number of individuals that were reported lost that day. They went to work like I did, you know, just maybe was going to look for a job or leaving work and their life was over. So, you never — you know, life is too short. So, you just took every moment — I was taking every moment with my family, again, never knowing what was happening. Could have been another missile, nuclear bomb, who knows. And it's something that you don't have any control over.
- Daniel Brown: So that's kind of a paradox of being where it's a situation where you don't have any control over it. So, you just have to not, you know, panic and just try to — it's kind of tough, too, to try to live that moment as if it could be your last moment because you never know, because you don't have any control over that. Sounds kind of philosophical, but it's — for my mind it's reality. You don't have any control.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right. So, part of it was just this admission or acknowledgment that you had no control.
- Daniel Brown: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: That all these things were going to happen.

- Daniel Brown: Again, if you knew me, you'd know that was my personality around here. People say that I'm so — seem to be so laid back. Things — a lot of — you know, a lot of even here every day putting out, quote, fires, unquote, with staff issues I just try not to become unglued. That way I can think things out. I guess trying to be maybe too analytical. But that's what math helps you — reasoning.
- Mark Schoepfle: Good. Well, you had mentioned beforehand that some of the people did a lot — basically did sort of take it all on, take that whole experience on. Did — I mean allowed it to get to them. There was a certain amount of, I think you were calling it, erratic behavior on their part. Did this affect them differently in the days ensuing? Because, you know, you're saying that you pretty much kept an even keel. You kept philosophical about it. You basically looked at things and just said, man, I'm going to appreciate what I've got right now and work with people that I've got right now. Did others do the same thing? Were there other people — did other people react differently? How did that work?
- Daniel Brown: Well, individuals that did probably focus on, they seemed to be — for the majority they were pretty much holding it together. Again, I liken that to the fact that we deal with so many different emergency issues or issues around here in terms of dealing of visitors and the number of the visitors that we deal with every day, that for the most part we did keep our composure.
- Daniel Brown: Following the days that we all came back to work, I did notice a personality change with a lot of the staff, the majority of the staff. Supervising, like myself, supervising about over 35, almost 40 individuals, the day that we came back, the first day we came back to work for training. We went to different workshops and debriefing. I again made up my mind that somewhat I guess as a division chief need to be strong as a leader. If I'm back here working, I'm coming unglued, would the staff pick that up? And I mean it's quirky in my mind just to be a leader and be there for them, because I know that they had emotions that they had to deal with. And I had to try to work them through their emotions by just being strong. I guess that's a quirky way of thinking, but —
- Mark Schoepfle: Lead by example. If you come unglued, everybody else will too?
- Daniel Brown: Yeah. You know, I didn't want to say lead by example, but you know, I guess it's just to know that they had a lot of emotion or things that happened to them that day and listening to them later on that how a lot of them were here and actually saw these things happen.

Daniel Brown: And you know, as we go through — went through the debriefing and talk like, just notice this solemn and laid — well, not laid back, just I guess a quiet nervousness in these emotions that they were building up.

Daniel Brown: And I had to be there for them if they ever wanted to talk about it, which some of them did, and try to work them through the emotion and understand that they had personalities, strong personalities before this. And then they were going through emotions and depending which one was wavering back and forth, was it their personality or their emotion? You know, sometimes you couldn't see it. It was one straight line and then you could see the different personalities, and there's some strong personalities here too. So, I just felt that I needed to be I guess an anchor.

Mark Schoepfle: Did you have to do that in situations?

Daniel Brown: Yeah. Yeah, there were a couple of employees that I sat and talked with and they become very emotional, very emotional. I think, you know, if I look back it was a big help. You know, it was a help for me too. I mean, it was — we were helping each other. I felt better because I was helping somebody, and they felt better because they were talking to somebody. So, it was a symbiotic relationship there.

Mark Schoepfle: When you were mentioning people became emotional, did they cry? Did they snap at each other? Were there arguments? Any of that kind of thing or just what?

Daniel Brown: All of the above.

Mark Schoepfle: All of the above.

Daniel Brown: Snapping, crying. I noticed a lot of tightness in the staff. Again, some of the individual's personalities were the same and then some of their personalities changed. And I attribute it to emotional things that they were dealing with from that day, but then I could be wrong too. That's just an emotional — a personality side that I see with them anyway, almost like children. But yeah, some of them did break down and cry.

Mark Schoepfle: But what you had to try to do was to sort of sort out as best you could between what was personality, meaning sort of like what they were normally like, versus emotion, which is how this affected them?

Daniel Brown: Yes, correct.

Mark Schoepfle: Got it. Well, what else went on as the days went by?

- Daniel Brown: I noticed the information that we were given from the different workshops, it helped. And you think about it, in a work environment you're working with individuals 10 — you know, we work 10-hour shifts — 8 to 10 hours a day. You spend more time with the people that you work with than your own family sometimes. So, in a sense I guess that was a support system there for — I noticed the support system.
- Daniel Brown: A lot of people were happy to see each other. People were walking around hugging each other. And it was kind of ironic. There was one of the employees, female, she walked up to me and gave me a hug and said, oh, I'm sorry, you know, can I do that? I guess, you know, this sexual harassment. It's like I said it's okay. It's okay. You know, it's not my — you know, treat it as if it's my birthday or something like that, you know, just try to keep a lighter side of things.
- Daniel Brown: But I noticed a lot of people being more jovial as the days went on. Me keeping my eyes on individuals that weren't themselves that I, you know, I noticed that really weren't — there's a real change in individuals. I think they were really wanted to — that I had discussed with the briefing team and I was right on point with them. They really had some issues to deal with.
- Mark Schoepfle: Were these specific issues with the events or how the events —
- Daniel Brown: Yes, with the event. Yeah, with the event, which their personalities — it triggered some other issues in their personalities.
- Mark Schoepfle: That's what I was wondering. Okay. So, you sort of kept an eye on people as the days went by, and a lot of people sort of returned to more of a normal jovial kind of attitude. And those that didn't, you really kept your eyes on them and got counseling for them.
- Daniel Brown: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: And I gather this counseling and a lot of the training you were mentioning was a considerable help.
- Daniel Brown: Yes.
- Mark Schoepfle: What kinds of counseling and training were available?
- Daniel Brown: Peer counseling. Training was — if I can remember that day, you know, operations, what [was] going to happen in terms of are we opening, not opening. Being able to have joint sessions with all the divisions and then separate sessions with your co-workers. Peter and I had lunch. Then we followed different types of training that — how to be more aware of what was going — basically security and those types of training. I can't recall right now, but there was different training.

- Mark Schoepfle: No. That's all right. No. I was just curious as to what some of them might have stuck out that really, really worked well or were really timely. It sounds like the peer counseling certainly didn't do any harm.
- Daniel Brown: Yeah, the peer counseling I saw as — and again, my staff is so big that I had to go to both the peer counseling sessions because they had to split it up, like 15 staff, 15 employees at a time. You know, having 30 employees you have to split it up, so I went to both sessions just to make sure I had — I just wanted to see, you know, how this was affecting each one of the staff. And I did, you know, so I had a better idea how I could or if I could or if I should or not assist or just leave them alone, you know, depending on — and after a while, working with individuals and I guess as a supervisor — I don't want to say if you're a good supervisor — if you're a supervisor you should be able to read — I like to read people. If you can read people, you can pick it out when they're having a, you know, difficult time.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah. Well, and also now as far as you yourself as a supervisor, what were some of the sorts of things you needed at that point?
- Daniel Brown: I needed to sit down with the peer counseling and make sure that what I was doing was correct in terms of involving myself in these individual's personal, emotional life and sit down with the peer counseling and let them know what — how I could help them and what should I do or not do and the same things that we're discussing, you know, my feelings about what happened. And I was assured that everything I was doing was good and was appropriate. So at least I knew I had a — some ammunition of how to deal with what was going on knowing that, okay, I'm not doing anything wrong.
- Daniel Brown: So, I think I remember immediately going to peer counseling for myself. But it wasn't for myself, it was for how I could help my staff. And I was assured that what I was doing, what I was feeling was correct. And what I was trying to help them with is — the one thing that they come off, of course, is that I can't change their emotion, their attitude. I can only help them get through it, you know, by talking with them, you know, and allowing them — not pushing them and allowing them that my — and I always have — I have an open-door policy anyway, you know, so people know they can talk with me. If they want to talk about sports, they get two minutes. If they want to talk about their supervisor or their jobs, they have more time.

Mark Schoepfle: Well, you were also mentioning that some people were certainly prepared for some of the stresses on this day because they were used to dealing with the public as a normal part of their operations. Could you go into that a little bit? How did that prepare people? First of all, just what was going on? I mean, how does one — what are some of the challenges of dealing with people here at Ellis Island?

Daniel Brown: Well, if you're talking about sometimes in the summer, you're dealing with 25,000 people a day and you're dealing with attitudes. People will come in; visitors will come in misinformed. They may have a bad, cranky day, and they see a person in uniform and they're going to take it out on you, you know, whether they're going to spit on you or scream at you or holler at you or they want to see your supervisor. You know they only have an hour to do this, or they lost their kid, or they lost their camera. You know, they cut their foot. They fell down the steps. You know, a lot of different things that we deal with here. And I guess that's something that we get used to.

Mark Schoepfle: Was that 25,000 visitors?

Daniel Brown: On average of 24, 25,000 visitors, sometime in the summer we can get sometimes 22. It fluctuates on the weekends in the summer we get those many visitors. In the winter it's not as many, but maybe 15 to 17,000 visitors on the weekends in the winter. So, it's — we get a lot of visitors here, and with those visitors come issues. And I guess I was saying that those are issues that we deal with. Maybe not to that magnitude, but there are issues that we deal with. You're dealing with people's personalities.

Mark Schoepfle: What are some of the examples? I mean, you've mentioned just some of the things such as people getting their — cutting a — getting cuts, sort of where are the kids, kind of thing. Are there any things special here that you wouldn't see in another place?

Daniel Brown: Not that comes to mind. I mean, you can see a heart attack anywhere. You can see somebody fall down the escalator, not anything that like, you know, sticks out.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Well, in the — okay, these are sort of the things that were occurring in the days immediately afterwards, the peer counseling and just keeping your eye on the staff. What happened then further down the road?

Daniel Brown: I'm not clear. Further down the road?

Mark Schoepfle: Well, okay, maybe another way of asking this is — okay, we're dealing — I'm assuming that this was in the first couple of weeks after what was going on. We had the counseling, you know, keeping an eye on what people were doing.

- Mark Schoepfle: Is this still going on or have things begun to sort of level off? Is there a return to what might be called normalcy? What happened in — okay, we're talking about the days and weeks immediately after that.
- Daniel Brown: Okay. I follow you.
- Mark Schoepfle: What happened the months after?
- Daniel Brown: Well, what — the weeks after, what happened was we were closed. And then you have friends of concessionaires, friends that staff are friends of — well, basically the concessionaires that were losing their jobs. I guess the one thing that kept us busy was keeping the staff busy. You got a number of staff and anybody wanted to take annual leave. Some people didn't have annual leave to take so they had to come to work. We had to keep them busy. We put on different training courses. The supervisors and I set up — well, mostly supervisors set up orientation courses, refresher courses in terms of training. We took the opportunity to try to train the staff and bring them up to speed.
- Daniel Brown: The tough part was trying to keep the staff busy. Try to keep their minds active. Other than just sitting in an office all day, you know, chewing at each other, which was happening anyway. People were pretty upset because their new normalcy was about to occur. Nothing was normal. Where there's something, new normalcy where you were coming to work every day and there's no visitors here, you know. When you're used to thousands of visitors a day and it's quiet around here, you're seeing people — your staff every day that you don't normally see every day. So just trying to keep them active and busy and trying to send them to other parks to keep their minds busy and off of, you know, some issues, I guess. I don't know why.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, there was more training, sending to other parks. What was happening — I mean, I know the concessionaires were losing their jobs and things of that sort. What were some of the effects there that you were seeing?
- Daniel Brown: Well, we didn't see too many of the concessionaires. I mean, just the staff that worked for the concessionaires, they weren't around. But you hear rumors of — and you know, they're going to have lay — concessionaires had to lay off individuals, and I guess in the back of their mind the staff is like wow, am I next? You know, you're dealing with seasonals and terms and permanents. You know, they start worrying about RIF.

- Daniel Brown: Every day, it allowed me every day to have a briefing in the morning and a debriefing in the evening and allow us to sit and talk about issues or things that happened during the day, what they were doing during the day, you know, information that they needed from management. You know, trying to keep them up-to-date with what was going on. I always like to try to keep people in the loop, so at least they know during the day what was going on. And me, myself trying to get — trying to find out what was going on in the loop. Things were changing day to day, you know, with management, you know, whether the park was opening or was it going to be closed.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, finally I guess — so you had sort of this downtime in between?
- Daniel Brown: Uh-huh.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. What happened when things opened again?
- Daniel Brown: I believe the staff was eager to get at the — I remember, when was it? Okay. We had a joint briefing from the superintendent and management, and we had some visitors, I think, from one of the local museums, I think three or four or five. This was — showed me how eager the staff was to get back to work. They were basically almost — well, we needed to give them a tour. We had 10 people. We needed to give them a tour. Everybody wanted to give that tour because they wanted to be busy. We split the tour up, you know, to two or three groups.
- Daniel Brown: To me it was a joy to know that they were eager to get back to work. Once we got back to work, I think they were prepared in terms of the time that was utilized well. As I reflect back on the time, the downtime we had, I probably would've utilized it differently. I think I would've given them a lot — additional training.
- Mark Schoepfle: What in?
- Daniel Brown: Right off the top of my mind — off the top of my head, you know, like National Park Service fundamentals, history, you know, things like that, projects that were on the back burner for a while. But the hard part was not knowing when we were going to open, you know, sort of start something and then stop it again. So, you know, in my mind a reflection — I hope it never happens that we have that much downtime because it is — but you know, if I did, I think I could use this experience to come up with a better plan of operation of how to keep people busy.
- Mark Schoepfle: Sure.
- Daniel Brown: Trying to keep 35 people busy every day is not — you know, when they're normally dealing with a routine, it's kind of tedious sometimes.

Mark Schoepfle: Yes. Sure.

Daniel Brown: And then you're dealing with emotion and personality.

Mark Schoepfle: I can understand that. Yeah. I was just curious, sort of if you had it to do over again. How's the time doing on you, because we have —

Daniel Brown: We're doing okay.

Mark Schoepfle: Everything's okay?

Daniel Brown: Uh-huh.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Fine. So has there been any kind of a return to normalcy?

Daniel Brown: Yeah, some normalcy.

Mark Schoepfle: How so?

Daniel Brown: Personalities are starting to appear again, the same old personalities. I guess you give — the attitude you give to staff, for a dollar, they want a dollar and they want a dollar and a penny. You know, they're still complaining. So, it's like okay, they're back.

Mark Schoepfle: No. I can't let you down on that.

Daniel Brown: Yeah, they're up to their old tricks of whining and you know, but they are — they're doing their jobs though. So those things are back.

Daniel Brown: What's not back are the number of visitors that we would expect. Some of the operations have changed. We now have to deal with lines and crowd control outside of the park now, you know, with the magnetometers and the security. We — the division is taking more and more responsibilities in terms of now we're responsible in the last couple of weeks for the emergency medical system here. The responsibilities are growing, so that's — those are changes — some changes that we are dealing with on a day-to-day basis right now.

Daniel Brown: But I keep hearing from different entities in the park that the morale in the park — well, at least in my division, interpretation — is changing. I don't see that. I know something's brewing, but I don't — again, it could still be remnants of the emotions that people are going through because we're not getting the number of visitors that we're used to, but we are getting visitors and people are keeping busy. Maybe I'm not as tuned into them as I was. I don't have the opportunity as much as I had in the past to get up from my desk and go to the front desk and talk, you know, chat with them, and see what's going on. So that's a change for all of us.

Mark Schoepfle: Going to the front desk?

- Daniel Brown: The visitor information desk.
- Mark Schoepfle: Just a minute. We're just about at the end of a tape, so he's going to change that.
- Daniel Brown: Okay. A number of times, you know, I remember reading this to participate in this. The superintendent asked us a number of times to make sure we had a list to provide to Diana Pardue. You know, is this something that — you know, it's not the, okay, you do this. You have to do this. I say so.
- Daniel Brown: You know, you're dealing with people's emotions so you couldn't, but I know that there are a number of individuals that have some real emotions about this that you get a real gut-wrenching, realistic view of what happened that day. But I'm more than certain a lot of them chose not to participate, you know. I mentioned it enough. Didn't get any feelers. I even told her, I said, listen, I plan to do the same thing. You know, you want to follow me? But I know there are probably a number of individuals that probably just decided enough is enough.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, I got to note that. I mean, that's an important fact. And of course, our rule always is in this if you don't want to, don't. You know, it's not something we can tell people they've got to do. It's not a fulfillment of duty. This is just getting knowledge and understanding.
- Daniel Brown: Yes.
- Mark Schoepfle: And people have a basic right not — they have a right to talk about it and be heard, and they have just as equal right to refuse to talk about it.
- Daniel Brown: Yeah. That's true. It's their emotions. You know, you can't require someone to share their emotions. You know, that's like trying to steal somebody's diary or force them to open their diary.
- Mark Schoepfle: Exactly.
- Daniel Brown: You know, you don't have a right to do that.
- Mark Schoepfle: No. That's exactly the truth. And that's — hopefully we will continue along the idea that that's a people's right to — a basic right to have.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, it's pretty much getting to the end of the interview. A couple of more questions or just — First of all, what have we learned from this, from this whole experience? I mean, you've mentioned a couple of things such as some of the training you would've liked to have had, had you had a chance to do it. What are some things that if heaven forbid something like this happens again what should we do? What could be done differently?

- Daniel Brown: I don't know. I don't want to propose because everything is not going to happen the same way. So, we can prepare people, or I believe you can prepare people, but when the act comes, they're probably not going to react to the way that they were trained and prepared. So, you can have all the plans and operations, and a number of people are not — and they could be critical to the operations — are not going to act accordingly to what was planned. So, I don't know, that's a question I really can't — I can't see any common-sense answer.
- Mark Schoepfle: No, I understand. Sort of the concern that no matter what we do, we'd always be studying for last week's lesson.
- Daniel Brown: Yeah, yep.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay.
- Daniel Brown: That's a good way to put it.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, that very much ends the main questions that I have, and I very much appreciate your time. Is there anything that I have failed to ask for that I should have thought about?
- Daniel Brown: No. I just try to light spin on things. I say, yeah, you can give me time off for what — no.
- Mark Schoepfle: I'll work on it, but I won't promise what I can't deliver.
- Daniel Brown: I lost a hundred hours last year so. I don't hardly ever take any time off. No, not — of course, there's something going to, you know, come up and it's like, wow, you know, I should have said that or maybe this would've been a good question. I don't know, nothing — it was my foresight, what I saw that day so —
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, one of the things being that, you know, obviously if anything comes to your mind where you go, yeah, I should've talked that over with him, you're welcome to give me a call and we can talk anytime.
- Daniel Brown: Okay.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, I mean there's nothing wrong with contacting me later on. Is there anything else you'd like to — that I have — in my talking about us in the beginning, is there anything else you'd like to know about what we're doing?
- Daniel Brown: No, but I guess I can say that management here really showed us, and I'm particularly talking about the superintendent, what a leader is; coming in, taking over, stepping up to the plate, and being sensitive to the staff's need and emotions. The US Park Police putting on the training that they felt, and I guess with management, that was necessary.

- Daniel Brown: I guess what I'm saying is management and leadership here in the park helped the park return to some new normalcy, even though we may have opened up quicker than we should have. And you can take that either way. You know the staff, half the staff feels one way, the other half feels the other way. We should. We shouldn't open. But at least we were prepared, and I think it was because the confidence that management has shown us that they were going to worry about the staff here, resources, human resources before the physical resources.
- Mark Schoepfle: No. I gathered there was some kind of an issue on that, that some people really did feel very uncertain about that we were opening too quickly, hadn't quite touched all the bases.
- Daniel Brown: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: I think was kind of the way it went. Yeah.
- Daniel Brown: Yeah. My staff, they always had concerns about that, but they always wanted to get back to work too.
- Mark Schoepfle: It's sort of an inherent conflict even sometimes within the same individual maybe?
- Daniel Brown: Yeah, or individuals, yeah. Children, I call them children of the corn. You've seen that movie, yeah.
- Daniel Brown: No, nothing. Your questions were — gave me the ability to think. You didn't push me in any one direction. I felt comfortable.
- Mark Schoepfle: The point of the interview is to structure things around your knowledge.
- Daniel Brown: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: Not what I think we ought to know.
- Daniel Brown: Yeah, and you said, well, how do you feel, what do you think? You know, you weren't like in a courtroom leading the witness in a sense.
- Mark Schoepfle: I wasn't? I mean, I didn't?
- Daniel Brown: No, you didn't.
- Mark Schoepfle: Good. Well, thank you.
- Daniel Brown: I mean, you did — I felt comfortable. I just — I don't know if it was a mental block or some things that I just can't remember you know what happened. I'm pretty sure they'll come up later on.
- Mark Schoepfle: Uh-oh, sounds like we're human.
- Daniel Brown: Okay. You don't think about that. Yeah, we are.

Mark Schoepfle: If we don't know — and I guess the other ground rule we have for interviews like this is, well, if you don't know, you don't know. That's all.

Daniel Brown: Yeah, can't make it up.

Mark Schoepfle: Yep.

Daniel Brown: Well, okay. Well, I'm going to run.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Well, thanks very much for your time. It's really been great meeting you.

END OF TAPE