It was approaching blue hour in the north Atlantic: that early twilight when the sky is livid and the sun is threatening to rise. Slowly, great black shadows began to emerge from the blue – the looming silhouettes of icebergs, and smaller chunks of glacial ice known as growlers and bergy bits.

It was around 4:00 am on April 15th, 1912 aboard the ocean liner *RMS Carpathia*. Her captain, Arthur Rostron, scanned the dark horizon, looking for the red and green port and starboard lights of a ship, for flares, shadows, for any sign of a foundering vessel. *Carpathia's* wireless operator, Harold Cottam, had received distress signals from White Star Line's newest ship, the *RMS Titanic,* at these very coordinates shortly after midnight, but now there was no sign of her.

They were too late.

With great haste and urgency, the *Carpathia* had raced the nearly 60 nautical miles to *Titanic's* aid. Rostron ordered that all the ships heating be shut off so that the steam could be redirected to her boilers, as *Carpathia* was driven harder and faster than she ever had been before or ever would be again. Lookouts were posted all over the ship, as she sped into the same ice field that had doomed the *Titanic*. Some of *Carpathia's* passengers were awoken as she strained and shuddered and shook, reaching an alleged speed of 17 knots. She'd only been built to reach 14. As one of her crewman would later say: "The old boat was as excited as any of us."

But they had been too late.

There was no sign of the great White Star liner. Not even any debris.

Suddenly, a green spark of light ignited in the near distance. About a quarter mile off, *Titanic's* Fourth Officer, Joseph Boxhall had lit a flare aboard Lifeboat 2.

Captain Rostron rang down to the engine room: "Slow Ahead", and began pulling the *Carpathia* round to pick up the first of *Titanic*'s surviving passengers.

This is where most retellings of the *Titanic* narrative end. The harrowed but triumphant survivors are rescued in the nick of time. We fade to black as The Unsinkable Molly Brown and Madeleine Astor shed a single tear and a throng of elegantly dressed Edwardians sing "Nearer My God To Thee". Everyone claps. But here's the thing - *Titanic* doesn't really become *Titanic* until the aftermath of the disaster. The ensuing events that occurred in the hours and weeks and months immediately after the tragedy are what transformed it from a tragedy to a cultural touchstone.

Let me clarify.

My name is Amanda Hootman. Most of my friends call me Hoots but that's not actually very important right now, what is important is that I… am a millennial. The defining event of my childhood is the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and, to a lesser extent, also the Pentagon but we tend to forget about that a lot. And because I grew up in the shadow of two

very Twin Towers, I'm also fascinated with the way an event, a world tragedy, can be apotheosized almost to this point where it becomes this sort of mythic thing in the culture. I mean, *Titanic* straddles this line in the culture between incredibly accessible pop cultural reference and modern fable. And, like 9/11, most of *Titanic*'s cultural cache is really built up in the aftermath of the disaster, in the public reaction and the reaction to the reaction and the political reaction to the public reaction and the backlash to that reaction and so on and so forth.

And that is what this podcast is hopefully going to be "about". I want to talk about everything that happened after 2:21 am on April 15th, 1912, because we all know the sordid details of that night: monument to Man's hubris hits an iceberg and sinks on its maiden voyage, women and children first, captain goes down with his ship, Jack couldn't have fit on the door, actually, because it was a matter of buoyancy and not surface area, and so on and so forth. But I think that the story of the aftermath of the sinking is interesting and often overlooked, *and* I think (or at least want to make the case that) the real reason we all continue to remember the *Titanic* isn't because of the tragedy itself but because of the immediate and long term aftermath of the disaster. At least, I hope that's what's sort of revealed in the metanarrative of this podcast… See, I'm using words like "metanarrative" because I'm hoping that a thesis will ultimately just be implied and that I don't actually have to do any additional work coming up with one.

Anyway, join me, a woman in her 30s with a Shure SM7B, an internet connection, and a secret account for posting on the r/titanic subreddit, as we explore everything that happened After *Titanic*.

The survivors were half frozen and their hands were so blistered and bloodied from the hours of rowing that they could hardly sidle themselves up to the little Cunarder. Mary Lowell, a passenger aboard the *Carpathia*, who'd been awoken by the commotion on deck, wrote of the survivors huddled aboard Lifeboat 2: "Until I saw their faces I never knew what the word 'haggard' meant."

The children were brought aboard first, hoisted up in little sacks. Then the women on what basically amounted to swings - wooden boards fixed with rope. They were hoisted up to the decks or through open crew portholes. Then followed the men, who likewise rode up on swings if they were injured or weak, or climbed up rope ladders if they had the ability to do so.

A number of *Carpathia*'s passengers described, in letters to loved ones back home, or in interviews in the press, being awoken by the noise of the rescue. Throwing on dressing gowns and overcoats, rubbing sleep out of their eyes, and stumbling out on deck, many of them recalled the shock of the news, relayed by a fellow passenger or crew member: "White Star Line's *Titanic* has struck an iceberg and gone down. We're rescuing her passengers."

Another common refrain from witnesses aboard the *Carpathia* was the horrifying beauty of sunrise, as the grey-blue twilight gave way to a brilliant pink-hued dawn, revealing towering icebergs in every conceivable direction.

Passenger Eleanor Danforth stated in an interview in a Boston newspaper: “The east was drenched with rose color, and as the light caught each of the bergs it turned their peaks to crimson and suffused them with delicate shades of pink and carmine.”

Meta Fowler called it “an indescribably beautiful scene.”

Robert Vaughn, a steward aboard *Carpathia*, summed it up: “The absolute beauty of that sunrise, the absolute beauty of it, and then to turn your head downward into the sea and see those lifeboats and the people that spent a night of horror. It seemed to be such a terrible contrast.”

At first there was some confusion as to where the great ocean liner had gone. *Titanic*’s rescuers expected to at least see some wreckage, some sign of her at all. But there was none, until the sun had risen, revealing a great, ugly brown gash in the sea, marking the very spot where she’d gone down. This freakish stain upon the Atlantic was all that was left of her - comprised of hundreds of floating deck chairs, splintered planks of what remained of her decks, silk couches and mattresses, fine mahogany furniture, and, somewhat obscured by the debris, the thousand or so sleeping heads floating in their lifejackets.

Passengers set to work helping the crew with the survivors. All of them willingly gave up their staterooms and slept in smoking and dining rooms for their unexpected return trip to New York.

Many of the survivors pulled aboard were inadequately dressed, wearing only their nightgowns or evening dresses, one woman was dressed in only a Turkish towel and an evening wrap. *Carpathia’*s passengers set to work emptying their own trunks of clothes for the survivors, and when they ran out of those, the women began sewing clothes for them out of their steamer rugs.

Some of the survivors were so frost-bitten, they could barely stand when they were brought aboard the *Carpathia*. Some walked off the trauma of the evening like it was nothing. Some hit the decks of the *Carpathia* and absolutely lost their shit - just began wailing and tearing out their hair. Some of the women started laughing uncontrollably. Mary Lowell recalled:

“I was helping one girl when she was hoisted out of a boat, and she turned her face towards me with a smile and said in a perfectly un-emotional, conversational tone, 'My husband's drowned, isn't it awful?' There was as much expression in her face and voice as if she had said, I've forgotten my handkerchief. Isn't it terrible?' The children could not appreciate what they had been through, of course. When the first sack was hoisted on deck we all crowded around it while it was first being opened. When the mouth was finally undone, a little four-year-old boy was blinking at me. We pushed the bag down around his feet, and then we saw that he had a wooden soldier in his hand.
He put the head of the wooden soldier in his mouth and sucked it, and didn't make a sound. Poor little boy. He'd lost his father and mother.”

One of the survivors, a banker, named Daniels wandered the upper decks insisting that he was a doctor. The following day he had no memory of the incident. A *Carpathia* passenger named Bernice Palmer recognized one of the survivors, Arthur Peuchen, the father of one of her sorority sisters. When she ran to him, he apologized to her for surviving and explained that it was only because he had been ordered to take charge of one of the lifeboats. He then wandered the decks apologizing to anyone else who would listen.

Second-class passenger aboard the *Carpathia*, Maurice McKenna recalled he and his wife meeting a woman who survived with her two very young children. Her husband had been denied a seat on the lifeboat.

“The elder of the two children of the lady, to whom I have just referred, was a bright little girl about four years of age. Her mother being indisposed, we took her up on deck with us to give her the benefit of the air. Soon after we were there, the little child asked me for a lead pencil and paper, on which to write. I asked her whom she wished to write to. She said she wanted to write to 'my daddy'. I let her take my pencil and gave her paper, and I asked her what she wanted to say.
She addressed the
letter 'Daddy' and started to write: 'We don't know what is keeping you. We are on this boat. We arrived before you and want you to come here.’
Pretty soon her little hand got tired of making the zig-zag marks upon the paper on which she was writing and she asked me to take her hand and steady it.”

But trauma can do funny things to you, too. Whether out of callousness or denial, or the realization that, over the course of a mere two hours and forty minutes, they’d gone from rich to penniless, some of the survivors mourned only for the loss of their clothing and their jewels. One woman fixated on the loss of the “beautiful goose liver and cheese” she hadn’t been permitted to bring aboard a lifeboat with her. Relatable.

There were three doctors crewed aboard *Carpathia*: an English doctor, who Captain Rostron stationed in the First Class Saloon, an Italian doctor, who he stationed in the Second Class Saloon, and a Hungarian doctor who he stationed in the Third Class Saloon. Rostron also ordered that hot coffee, tea, and consomme be prepared and administered to the survivors. There were surprisingly few instances of illness, but around 40 injuries - mostly broken bones from leaping into the lifeboats. The Hungarian doctor, Dr. Arpad Lengyel, reported that in the days following the rescue there were also - perhaps obviously - some pretty extreme cases of mental illness including episodes of delirium and attempted suicide. He also said that a lot of the women had premature menstruation… which suuucks, dude. Like, imagine: it’s so cold, you lost all of your shit, you’re wearing a rug some lady sewed into a dress, and now you and like forty other ladies just started your period? I’d riot.

Of the dozen dogs aboard the *Titanic*, three survived, and the reaction to the survival of these three dogs really varied depending on if the person talking about it was an animal person or not. Some of the *Carpathia* passengers writing home about it were delighted, others, like Elizabeth

Tarkington, felt it was somewhat distasteful that a dog should live when so many humans perished. “The women just clung to them like babies. I think it would have been better if they had found babies to cling to.”

Of the three surviving lapdogs, Mrs. Charles M. Hutchison stated, simply: “I have an insane desire to kick them.”

When the last lifeboat to be rescued by *Carpathia*, Lifeboat 12, was cleared at around 8:30 am, another tremendous, agonized wail emanated from the survivors on deck as many of the rescued realized that their worst fears had been confirmed; that their loved ones had gone down with the doomed ship.

As the last remaining survivors were being rescued from Lifeboat 12, the *Carpathia* encountered the Leyland Line *Californian*. The *Californian* had been stopped most likely somewhere between 17 and 30 miles from *Titanic*’s last recorded position, all night. Many of the *Californian’s* crewmen would later go on record to say that they’d seen *Titanic’s* distress rockets and had been ordered by their captain, Stanley Lord, not to respond. Captain Lord and the crew of the *Californian* were under no legal responsibility at the time to respond to *Titanic*’s distress calls, and if we’re to take Stanley Lord’s defense of his actions that night at face value there seems to be some confusion over whether they were even considered by the crew to be distress rockets. Nonetheless, while Captain Stanley Lord was never officially charged with anything, his inaction on the evening of April 14th and early hours of April 15th, 1912, haunted him for the rest of his life. And while *Carpathia’*s Arthur Rostron was hailed a hero, Stanley Lord’s reputation was stained with whispers of cowardice and villainy for the rest of his days. Even now, more than half a century after Captain Lord’s death, amateur and expert titanicologists alike argue over whether Captain Lord shirked his duty that night, and whether the *Californian* could have reached *Titanic* in time to save any of the 1500 souls that were lost.

When the *Californian* finally sidled up to the *Carpathia*, they passed on a message saying that they’d stay on to look for more survivors. This seemed to kindle some small hope in some of the survivors that their loved ones might still be out there on some undiscovered lifeboat. But many knew the truth: the 700-odd souls aboard *Carpathia* were all that remained.

Captain Rostron gave Harold Cottam express orders not to waste airspace communicating with journalists or relaying personal messages from *Carpathia*, only to convey the official list of survivors, followed by personal messages from *Titanic’s* survivors as and when he was able. *Carpathia’s* passengers could write their letters and their accounts of the following days and wait until they were ashore to send them. The newspapers could wait for the breathless tales of drama and sacrifice relayed by *Titanic’s* survivors. For now it was imperative to collect and relay the names of each of those 700 or so aboard. The most important information the papers could publish were the names of people’s mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, friends.

Captain Rostron then conferred with J. Bruce Ismay on their next move. J. Bruce Ismay was the chairman and managing director of the White Star Line. He was also the highest ranking official

to survive the disaster, and aside from Madeleine Astor, the only survivor occupying a private stateroom. There are rumors repeated in letters and interviews that the first thing Ismay did when he was rescued from his lifeboat was demand to be taken to the dining room, where he ate an extravagant meal and tipped the *Carpathia* stewards two whole dollars, before shoving off to his private stateroom with a sign on the door that read “KEEP OUT” in huge letters. He did keep himself to himself in a private stateroom, but I somewhat doubt that he had much of an appetite or behaved so poorly under the circumstances - given that the *Carpathia’s* doctors were keeping him pretty heavily sedated on opiates for the entire time he was on board.

People were angry at J. Bruce Ismay. They were angry at what he represented: White Star Line, the company that built an “unsinkable” ship that sank at the first opportunity and didn’t carry enough lifeboats to save everyone on board. They were angry that Ismay had the audacity to survive while his paying customers perished. Nevermind that the *Titanic* crewmen who were with Ismay throughout that evening testified to the fact that he did everything in his power to ensure that the boats were loaded safely and only boarded a collapsible lifeboat himself, during her final plunge. Never mind that there were no other passengers around to take the seat that he took, and that if he had nobly gone down with the ship, his would have remained another unfilled seat aboard a lifeboat; another life pointlessly wasted in service of the brittle Edwardian constructs of masculinity and duty.

But *Titanic* was an incomprehensible tragedy and the thing about those is they suck. Comprehensible tragedies are way better, especially if the thing you’re comprehending is that it’s That Guy’s fault. So, that’s why people were immediately making up weird rumors about J. Bruce Ismay’s hungies, and that’s why James Cameron was giving his character all the slimy lines in the 1997 film. I’m not really trying to defend chairmen of turn-of-the-century shipping lines, here, but I do think that history - and more pointedly Willaim Randolph Hearst - did Ismay dirty. But I digress. That’s a subject for a later episode.

Captain Rostron came to visit a very shaken, very sedated J. Bruce Ismay to discuss what to do. The *Carpathia* had been bound for the Mediterranean. They could continue vaguely en route - they had planned on making their first port in Gibraltar, but they could stop in the Azores? They could head to the nearest port - Halifax - but that would take them on a treacherous route through even more ice. Alternatively, White Star had offered to send one of its own ships to transfer *Titanic*’s passengers to, so that they may carry en route to New York as planned – *Titanic*’s sister ship, the RMS *Olympic*. Ismay shuddered at the idea. The survivors were already all half-crazed from their ordeal. Imagine loading them all back on to lifeboats and ferrying them over to board *Titanic*’s virtual twin. No, that was a terrible idea. Fucking White Star executives. Ghoulish idiots, the lot of them. Rostron and Ismay knew what they had to do: *Carpathia* would return to New York. She would complete the final leg of *Titanic*’s unfinished maiden voyage for her, and continue on to Gibraltar and Naples and Croatia as planned when those 705 wretched souls were safe and warm on dry land. It was settled.

That afternoon, a service for the dead and a service of thanksgiving for the living was read by Father Roger Anderson. According to the *Carpathia’s* physician, Dr. J.F. Kemp, there were

“thirty widows in attendance of the service of whom twenty were under 23 years of age and most of them brides for a few weeks or months.” There were four dead aboard *Carpathia* who were buried at sea at this service. I’ll talk more about them in a later episode.

As *Carpathia* sailed past the last of the great expanses of ice on Monday, April 15th, a pod of whales were sighted, spouting great sprays of sea water like geysers.

On Tuesday afternoon, a meeting was called in the main saloon. The purpose of this was two-fold: financially assist the people who had lost everything in the disaster, and also devise a reward for the officers of *Carpathia* and the surviving officers of *Titanic*. First Class passenger Isaac Frauenthal was made Chairman of the Committee of Subscriptions, and First Class passengers Emma Bucknell, Martha Stone, and Margaret Brown (a.k.a. The Unsinkable Molly Brown) were left in charge of collections for the destitute. Margaret never went by the name Molly, by the way, which was the mildly irritating (to her) invention of a Denver newspaper reporter. Her legendary “unsinkability” speaks to her bravery during and in the immediate aftermath of the sinking; helping others into lifeboats up until she was all but forced onto Lifeboat 6, and then doing her best to keep her lifeboat companions in good spirits until rescue finally arrived. But it ultimately belies the most important work she did aboard the *Carpathia:* advocating for the most vulnerable survivors, and conducting interviews with them in English, French, German, and Russian in order to ascertain their losses and needs. She was a hero not because of her bravery in the face of calamity, but because of her empathy and tenacity in its aftermath.

The Committee also demanded to speak with J. Bruce Ismay on behalf of the survivors. As Emma Bucknell later recalled:

"After being taken aboard the Carpathia, J.Bruce Ismay went to a cabin and remained closeted until waited upon by a committee of the survivors, who demanded that they be permitted to see him. One of the questions that was put to him was as to what the White Star and the International Mercantile Marine Co.'s intended doing in the way of reparation. To this Mr. Ismay replied that the company would do all in its power to make a partial repayment for the suffering of the survivors. Further than this he would say nothing."

Chief wireless operator Jack Phillips had perished in the sinking, but his assistant, wireless operator Harold Bride, survived, albeit with two sprained ankles. By Wednesday, Bride had recovered enough from the cold and shock of spending the night on the overturned Collapsible B that he had *Carpathia’s* crewmen carry him to their wireless room, where he sat down next to Harold Cottam and got to work transmitting the names of survivors.

The night and morning following the sinking, the sea in the North Atlantic was calm and as smooth as glass. If it had been otherwise, there might have been no survivors that night. The wreckage and boats scattered and torn to pieces in rough seas, *Carpathia* may have answered her distress call only to find no trace of *Titanic* in her last recorded position. The only evidence

of her fate would have been the odd scrap of wood or emptied lifevest washing ashore in Halifax or Greenland or Ireland months after the fact, if not for those unusually calm mid-April seas. But as the *Carpathia* continued on her return journey to New York, the water and skies began to change. Inclement weather marked a great deal of the return journey, and many of *Carpathia*'s passengers and *Titanic's* survivors were bed bound by sea sickness.

For the others there was nothing else to do but talk to their new neighbors; the traumatized, bedraggled 705 pulled aboard on the morning of the 15th. And after they talked, they wrote. *Carpathia* passengers and *Titanic* survivors, alike, scribbled down accounts and memories of that night - in letters addressed to loved ones and to newspapers awaiting the dramatic accounts of that night. Rostron's near-embargo on communication, however, would hold fast. Nothing, aside from the names of survivors, would be transmitted from the ship until she reached New York. The outside world waited with baited breath.

It's incredible how much of what we know - and how many myths - stem from this four day journey aboard *Carpathia*. Two reports are undeniably consistent in accounts from *Carpathia's* passengers of the interviews they conducted with survivors: that the ship split in half, and that *Titanic's* officers brandished and fired pistols to prevent the lifeboats from being swamped.

The ship breaking in half may seem like a foregone conclusion in 2026, but it was a subject of intense debate and scrutiny for years. The sinking happened in the middle of the night, when visibility was so reduced that many of the witnesses who attested to the ship's breaking did so not because they saw it, but because they *heard* it.

Major Arthur Peuchen - the father of the sorority sister - testified to seeing the barber's pole from *Titanic's* barber shop floating in the wreckage as *Carpathia* steamed away on the morning of the 15th. The barber shop was located within the ship, on C Deck. Based on this, Major Peuchen surmised that there must have been a "tremendous explosion" to have ripped the pole out from within the ship.

It's also believed that the break occurred mostly or entirely below the waterline, so very few people would have been at a vantage point where they could have seen it. And even for those that were, the moonless night and early 20th century electrical lighting were working against them. Survivors testified that the ship's 10,000 light bulbs remained mostly on until the sounds of what was described as either the ship breaking or an explosion, but that they had mostly faded to a dim red glow by that point. After they went out, everyone was plunged into near-darkness, *Titanic's* rising stern only visible as a black void that blotted out the stars.

Basically… it didn't look anything like the Cameron movie. But, like, also if the Cameron movie were accurate, it would be really frustrating to watch like that one episode in the last season of *Game of Thrones*. What I'm saying is films should go back to taking a little artistic license instead of committing to realistic lighting. I wanna see what's happening on the damn screen! But I digress.

The White Star Line, incentivized to quash any reports that could even give the impression that their ships might be structurally unsound, fervently denied the Ship Break Theory and had many seafaring and ship building experts testify to the fact that *Titanic* must have sunk in one piece. The eye-witnesses to the disaster, overwhelmingly women and children, were repeatedly told that they must have been mistaken, and for decades the accepted theory was that *Titanic* was laying on the bottom of the Atlantic in one piece. Only Robert Ballard's discovery of the wreck in 1985 revealed that the survivors who claimed that the ship had broken in two were correct. And by that time almost everyone involved was dead.

That officers brandished pistols and at least one officer fired a warning shot seems almost certainly true. It's one of the most consistent early reports from that night, and Fifth Officer Harold Lowe would later admit to having fired three warning shots into the sea when passengers attempted to swarm the boats. In fact, the ship's officers weren't the only people packing heat that night. At least one First Class passenger, Norman Chambers, claimed in sworn testimony that when he got the order to put on lifebelts and proceed to the deck that he'd also brought an automatic pistol with him. Wild that you could just have those in your carry-on luggage back then.

But many accounts repeated aboard the *Carpathia* also suggest that some passengers attempting to board a lifeboat were shot or even that an officer aboard *Titanic*, or maybe even Captain Smith, may have died by suicide using a pistol. Many reports claim an officer took his own life after shooting one or more Third Class passengers. This version of the story is repeated in the Cameron adaptation with Officer Murdoch filling in the tragic role. (This was a controversial decision, but we'll talk about that when we talk about the film adaptations of *Titanic*.) Other reports claim that Captain Smith was seen taking his own life via pistol shortly before the final plunge. *Carpathia's* printer, Mr. H.H. Lee even claimed, in a very dramatic account, that Chief Officer Wilde discovered Captain Smith on the bridge of *Titanic* with the revolver aimed at his head, snatched the revolver and used it on himself. Huge if true. Still many other accounts testify to the fact that Captain Smith was last seen leaping from the decks of *Titanic* during her final plunge, and this is largely accepted to be his most likely fate today. Contrary to popular belief, there wasn't an expectation that a captain "go down with his ship" or otherwise sacrifice himself in a shipwreck. Rather, it was expected that a captain do everything he can to ensure the safety of passengers and crew before seeing to himself. Captain Smith leaping from the decks of *Titanic* during her final plunge, perhaps to make an attempt at swimming for a lifeboat, seems like the most likely move a seasoned captain might make under these circumstances.

Many of the early accounts from the passengers of *Carpathia* mention that *Titanic's* band stayed on until the end, and that the final song they played was "Nearer My God To Thee". There's no mention of the other major contender for Last Song, Archibald Joyce's "Autumn", as recalled by survivors like Harold Bride. Harold Bride, like First Class passenger Archibald Gracie, was among the last of the survivors to leave the ship, and spent the night on the overturned Collapsible B. Gracie would later deny that the band played anything but upbeat tunes until the

end and that a mournful hymn like “Nearer My God To Thee” would have inspired panic among those trapped on the sinking ship.

As early as this rescue mission aboard *Carpathia,* there is also speculation from surviving officers that a head-on collision with the iceberg, as opposed to the side swipe *Titanic* endured, would have resulted in her staying afloat. This is still a popular theory today, with modern computer simulations supporting the theory. One of the most recent head-on theory simulations was run for a 2025 National Geographic documentary titled *Titanic: The Digital Resurrection.* This simulation still results in a crash that would have crushed about the front third of the ship and killed hundreds of people, but she does stay afloat. Just goes to show how knowledgeable *Titanic’s* officers really were about physics and engineering.

A great deal of the myths surrounding *Titanic* also seem to have their genesis in this short and isolated journey to New York. There’s the myth that J. Bruce Ismay ordered the *Titanic* to carry on in dangerous conditions at full speed in an effort to break speed records (*Titanic* was going too fast, but was not at full speed when she navigated the ice field, and *Titanic* and her sister ships were built for luxury, not speed, in the first place. Furthermore, there is no evidence than Ismay ordered Captain Smith to speed up); the myth, as passenger Carlos Hurd implied in his sensationalized account for a newspaper, that *Titanic* may have been the victim of a mummy’s curse (this later became further sensationalized through urban legends which claimed that *Titanic* was even carrying a mummy in her cargo hold… she was not); even the myths that some men survived through deception or physical force began as rumors aboard the *Carpathia*. Although urban legend would eventually have it that a man or several men dressed as women to board lifeboats, there were no claims of crossdressing in these early accounts. However we can see the seeds of this myth in the contemporary rumors that a man or some men either managed to sneak onto and hide themselves on a lifeboat, or forced their way aboard with a weapon. In every one of these accounts, the perpetrator is unspecified and unnamed, and each account reveals the teller's own biases. Sometimes the villain is a racialized foreigner: an “Italian”, a “Jap”, an “Armenian”, or a “Chinaman”. Those terms are Edwardian-speak for “swarthy and ethnically ambiguous” and “east Asian”, respectively, not necessarily an accurate description of the subject’s nation of origin. “Italian” and “Chinese” were also ethnic identities frequently ascribed to the men accused of trying to swamp the boats and getting shot by *Titanic’s* officers in the process.

But sometimes the villain accused of forcing his way onto a lifeboat is an unnamed “baron” or “American millionaire” or simply “a dapperly dressed young fellow”. The journey aboard *Carpathia* is also where the story of *Titanic* begins to be understood as a story of class struggle, and whether the true heroes of the tragedy were the underserved lower classes in Third Class, or the self-sacrificing high society and nobility up in First Class was a matter of the perspective of the narrator. As usual, those in the middle, Second Class, were mostly omitted from the conversation.

Edwardian society is viewed through a modern lens as this sort of last period of gentility and aristocratic values before Europe started feeding young men through the meat grinders of

modern warfare. But it's important to remember that it also stretched through the second half of the Industrial Revolution. The *Titanic* sunk a mere 27 years after Marx and Engels published *Capital*, and only a little over half a century after the revolutionary period came to a close in Europe. The tensions between classes were ever present and the relative survival rates between *Titanic's* Haves and Have-Nots did not go unnoticed.

On Captain Rostron's orders, the *Carpathia's* wireless operator, Harold Cottam with *Titanic's* Harold Bride now working at his side, released no news but the names of confirmed survivors via the ship's Marconi system. But even with such little information to go by, a damning picture began to emerge as the updated lists of survivors were printed on the front pages of the daily news – around two-thirds of *Titanic's* First Class passengers had survived as compared to a little under half of her Second Class passengers, and only around a quarter of her Third Class Passengers and crew.

Aboard *Carpathia*, where breathless stories were being swapped (and, at times, exaggerated) much was made of the alleged sacrifices of the First Class gentlemen, standing aside and dying with bravery, while their counterparts in steerage rushed the boats like animals. Likewise, the First Class women were depicted as stoic and calm, in contrast to the hysterical women in Third:

"The steerage survivors told me that often the women from the upper decks were the only cool persons in the lifeboats, and they tried to quiet the steerage women, who were nearly all half crazy."

No acknowledgement of the fact that a large percentage of those Third Class women couldn't speak any English, and therefore couldn't communicate with most of the other survivors, nor the fact that many of them were traveling with whole families and experienced far greater losses than the First Class women, but okay.

Still, when rumors spread of an interloper, an undeserved survivor, he was almost always described as a racial minority or a wealthy gentleman.
The scapegoat, or the privileged coward. Edwardian society was defined by deference to one's "betters", but those "betters" were expected to adhere to a code of chivalry that demanded they die when the situation called for it.

Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon, a famous aristocrat and Olympian, was even accused of bribing a crewman aboard Lifeboat 1 (the infamous Lifeboat only carrying 12 people) not to return to pick up any people in the water that night. Duff Gordon testified that, while he did give the sailors aboard his boat £5 and some cigars, it was not a bribe, rather a reward for having brought him and his wife, Lady Duff Gordon, to safety. Regardless, his survival and the exchange of money and presents became a scandal that forever tarnished the reputations of both Lord and Lady Duff Gordon.

Soon it became clear to the survivors, to the witnesses aboard *Carpathia,* and to the general public that *Titanic* never carried enough boats to rescue all of her passengers; that she was

advertised to be “virtually unsinkable”, and yet she sank. And so, resentment and outrage turned to those titans of Industry - to White Star and to J. Bruce Ismay - who allowed innocent thousands to die in the name of capital.

The weather worsened as *Carpathia* approached New York on Thursday April 18th, 1912.

Journalist Carlos Hurd, who’d recorded his interviews on toilet paper, threw his report of the disaster to his editors who’d pulled a tugboat alongside. Another journalist allegedly snuck aboard *Carpathia* and was taken immediately to the bridge, where he was implored to remain and not disturb any of the passengers.

By the time the rescue ship pulled into Pier 59 to unload the first of *Titanic’s* survivors, it was dark save for the hectic shimmer of flashlights and gaslamps ashore. Newspaper reporters waited alongside anxious family members and curious onlookers. New York’s Chelsea Piers were packed to the gills.

Standing in the crowd, almost unnoticed among the throng, was a bright-eyed man in his early fifties, clean shaven and huddled against the grey weather. Senator William Alden Smith of Michigan, upon hearing of the disaster the morning of the 15th, had moved quickly to launch an official inquiry into the disaster. He’d previously championed sweeping safety reforms to the American railroad industry and, with the sinking of the *RMS Titanic*, he suspected another case of Big Business playing fast and loose with human lives. The surviving White Star employees and witnesses had to be headed off before disappearing into the fog of history - or worse, bribed or threatened into silence by White Star executives. So, as the new Chair of the Subcommittee on the Disaster Hearings, Senator Smith went to greet them at the docks himself.

Before any of the passengers would be permitted to leave the ship, to fall into the embrace of frightened loved ones, Senator Smith would board the ship and issue subpoenas to J. Bruce Ismay and each of *Titanic’s* surviving officers.

The Official Senate Inquiry into the sinking of the *RMS Titanic* would commence the following afternoon at New York’s Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Next time, on “After *Titanic”…*

“After *Titanic*” is a podcast by Bash Back Productions. Written, recorded, and edited by Amanda Hootman. Theme music by Neilly Farrell. Artwork by Paul Scott Canavan. Voice acting in this episode provided by Amanda Hootman, Stephanie Crothers, Lyle Friederichs, David Melville, Daniel DeYoung, Bukola Ogunmola, and Laura Lineback. Full cast list, transcripts and sources are available on aftertitanic.com. “After *Titanic*” is supported by our generous Indiegogo backers and patrons. Help support the podcast by heading to Patreon.com/AfterTitanic where you’ll get exclusive access to our Discord server, and join an entire community of fellow Titanophiles to hang out with between episodes. I’ve been your host, Amanda Hootman. Thanks for listening.

Voices from the Carpathia: Rescuing RMS Titanic, George Behe, The History Press, 2015.

The Other Side of the Night, Daniel Allen Butler, Casemate, 2011.

Titanic Inquiry Project

Encyclopedia Titanica