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Cruise ship "arrested" in dispute over unpaid wages

Tampa, Florida — The cruise ship *Casino Royale* was "arrested" by the U.S. Marshals Office today in a suit employees brought to recover back wages totalling more than \$230,000.

U.S. District Court in Tampa ordered National Maritime Services Inc. to take charge of the ship, which will remain in its berth at the Port of Tampa until the dispute is resolved, said NMS spokesman Mark Brown.

There are only 19 employees still aboard the 400-ton cruise ship. That number may decline if NMS determines fewer hands are necessary to maintain the vessel, he said.

The owner of the ship, Ocean's 21 LLC of Treasure Island, now has to tell the court how it plans to pay the back wages. If it fails to, or the court disagrees, the ship could be sold at auction and the proceeds used to paid the debt.

Ocean's 21 LLC brought the ship to Tampa for repairs last April, and hoped to operate a floating casino in the Gulf of Mexico outside of waters regulated by the state of Florida.

Attempts by Tampa Bay's 10 News to get comment from Ocean's 12 LLC were not successful.