

Lloyd's List

News

Stakes are high with Casino Royale arrest.

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327 words

30 October 2006

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English

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DRAMATIC developments were afoot in Tampa on Friday concerning the notorious gambling ship Casino Royale, with its mainly Filipino crew moving a US court to have the ship arrested over unpaid wages and dues.

The claimed arrears amount to around \$225,000 and counting, crew attorney Michael Black told Lloyd's List.

National Maritime Services, a division of **National Liquidators** of Fort Lauderdale, was poised to take over as the substitute custodian after the arrest which had been scheduled for around noon, US time.

The new development came after an out-of-court settlement reached with the owners last month came unstuck, even after the crew was paid part of their dues.

The 32-man crew had moved to arrest the 1974-built, 9,511 gt ship, claiming wage default by defendants Ocean's 21 LLC and Tenmark Marine, owners and operators.

While the original arrears of around \$275,000 were paid, averting that arrest, the crew again moved the US District Court in Tampa last week for wage arrears for September and beyond.

The lawsuit details arrears totalling some \$223,400, including dues owed to crew members who left the ship prior to the expiration of their contracts.

In addition, the lawsuit claims penalty wages under US statutes, food and drink expenses, legal fees and other costs.

Mr Black estimated that arrears for October, assuming the case drags on, would tag a further \$80,000 on to the basic wage claim.

The new twist adds another layer of notoriety to the Casino Royale, until recently called the St Tropez.

The St Tropez was subject to months of legal wrangling in 2005, after its previous owner filed for bankruptcy, leaving the crew and a slew of creditors in the lurch.

The list of parties claiming a share of the sale proceeds included mortgage holder Nordea Bank, as well as the bankruptcy trustee.

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