

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

*

KRISTIN ALEXIS/BARGE MR. ERVIN *

ALLISION WITH THE SUNSHINE BRIDGE * Accident No.: DCA19FM003

DONALDSONVILLE, LOUISIANA *

OCTOBER 12, 2018 *

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Interview of: JUDSON ADAMS
Ship Supervisor, Cooper Consolidated

Lamar Dixon Expo Center
Gonzales, Louisiana

Tuesday,
May 7, 2019

APPEARANCES:

CDR MATTHEW MESKUN, Lead Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

CWO4 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Hearing Recorder
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<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Judson Adams:		
By CDR Meskun		4
By Mr. [REDACTED]		6
By CDR Meskun		14
By Mr. [REDACTED]		15
By CDR Meskun		26
By Mr. Kucharski		29
By Mr. [REDACTED]		39
By CDR Meskun		41
By Mr. Reisman		44
By Mr. Wogan		45
By CDR Meskun		50
By Mr. Kucharski		52
By CDR Meskun		54
By Mr. Kucharski		55

P R O C E E D I N G S

(12:46 p.m.)

1
2
3 CDR MESKUN: Good afternoon. The time is now 12:46. We'll
4 go back on the record. We will now hear testimony from Mr. Judson
5 Adams.

6 Please come forward to the witness table and Lieutenant
7 [REDACTED] will administer your oath and ask you some preliminary
8 questions.

9 LT [REDACTED] Please stand and raise your right hand.
10 (Whereupon,

11 JUDSON ADAMS

12 was called as a witness and, after having been duly sworn, was
13 examined and testified as follows:

14 LT [REDACTED] Please be seated. Please state your name and
15 spell your last name for the microphone.

16 MR. ADAMS: My name's Judson Adams. Last name is A-d-a-m-s.

17 LT [REDACTED] Please identify counsel, and confirm
18 representation.

19 MR. WOGAN: Ford Wogan on behalf of Cooper Consolidated.

20 CDR MESKUN: Good afternoon, Mr. Adams, thank you for coming
21 today.

22 INTERVIEW OF JUDSON ADAMS

23 BY CDR MESKUN:

24 Q. Please describe to us who you work for, what your job is,
25 what the details and description is of what your responsibilities

1 are.

2 A. I work for Cooper Consolidated. My job occupation is a
3 supervisor, ship supervisor. So therefore, I maintain the loading
4 and unloading of cargo to ships or out of barges into hoppers and
5 so forth.

6 Q. What's your background? How many years have you worked on
7 the river and that sort of thing?

8 A. I've been on the river so far going on 6 years. In the
9 beginning, I was a utility hand. And then I was slowly moving up
10 to an oiler, and operated on a crane for a little while, so that
11 was about 2 years. And I've been a supervisor now for going on 4
12 years.

13 Q. Thank you. And all that time was with Cooper?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. We're going to ask you a series of detailed questions in a
16 few moments. But before we go into those questions, can you
17 please describe for us what -- if you were working on the day of
18 the accident of the Sunshine Bridge, and what you were doing
19 exactly leading up to -- all of that time on that day prior to the
20 *Mr. Ervin* departing.

21 A. All right. We were at CMT Dock. I was the supervisor on the
22 rig. I basically keep track of the start times/finish times on
23 barges, calling dispatch to order new barges to come towards us,
24 and we load the hopper on the LMO, which also has a hopper that
25 loads into CMT Dock. That's what we did prior to all of this.

1 Q. We will now proceed with our additional questions. If you
2 feel like you do not understand what we are asking, please ask us
3 to rephrase it and we will. Or if you don't know the answer to
4 the question, please just say so.

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 CDR MESKUN: And I'll turn it over to Mr. [REDACTED]

7 BY MR. [REDACTED]

8 Q. Good afternoon.

9 A. Good afternoon.

10 Q. Yeah, you kind of gave a generalized description of what you
11 do as supervisor and, you know, you oversee the rock barges. Can
12 you give a more detailed description of the whole process that
13 you're supervising to include people and what you do to manage
14 those people?

15 A. How can I put this? I make sure the loading and unloading is
16 safely and timely done. I make sure everybody's working in a
17 safely manner, make sure everything goes smoothly. Make sure
18 we're loading the right barges, unloading the right barges. I
19 also give them a hand with everything on the deck as needed to. I
20 want to say that's probably the best description I can give you.

21 Q. So are you the supervisor of the other workers? Do you
22 supervise other people?

23 A. The guys on the deck, yes. On the rigs or -- say, for
24 instance, if we were working a ship, I would be supervising the
25 guys that were also in the hold or any equipment operators,

1 anything like that, yes.

2 Q. And is there a supervisor over you?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. That's on scene during these evolutions as well?

5 A. On scene, no.

6 Q. Who would the supervisor be that you report to?

7 A. During that night or any time?

8 Q. That night?

9 A. That would be Jody Prejean.

10 Q. Were they there?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. So, on October 11th, when did your workday begin? Yours and
13 everybody else that was working on the *Mr. Ervin* that day.

14 A. 1800.

15 Q. And starting when you were -- at around, say, 11 in the
16 evening, can you give us a description of the chain of events that
17 took place when you were done working for the day and you called
18 for the boat to come get the *Mr. Ervin*?

19 A. Correct. Actually, I called them. It was around 8:30, 9
20 o'clock, gave them a 2-hour heads-up in order for them to start
21 setting up boats to come take apart the barges off of the rigs and
22 also taking the LMO off first, and then have the *Mr. Ervin* taken
23 off.

24 Q. Can you describe the evolution of the *Kristin Alexis* showing
25 up and getting underway with the *Mr. Ervin*?

1 A. When the *Kristin Alexis* arrived, they arrived on the port
2 side of the rig, which is -- I'm sure you know what the port side
3 is. When they came to the port side, I then -- we then have some
4 sort of communication with the boats to also let them know we need
5 deckhands to come on the rig as well. That way we have
6 communication of what all is fixing to take place.

7 During this time, we communicated that we would then shift
8 the rig up in order to take the cables off of the head of the rig,
9 and we would also shift the cable -- I mean, shift the rig down to
10 where we take the stern line off of the rig. Once that's taken
11 place, we would then put soft lines on from the rig going to CMT
12 dock, therefore, he could face up properly with no movement of the
13 rig itself.

14 Q. Okay. And that's what happened that night? Because you said
15 normally.

16 A. This is how we normally do the process, yes. And that's what
17 happened that night.

18 Q. Where were you at?

19 A. During this time, I was on the CMT dock.

20 Q. You were on the CMT dock?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Who was on the *Mr. Ervin* itself?

23 A. That would be Bart Lambert, Derrick Chung (ph.), Blake
24 Anderson, and Dana. I can't recall Dana's last name.

25 Q. Did you have communications with them?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. And could you see everything that was going on on the deck
3 clearly?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Was there anybody else on the deck besides your crew members?

6 A. There was the two deckhands.

7 Q. The two deckhands?

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. Did you see when the *Kristin Alexis* was faced off to stern of
10 the *Mr. Ervin*, and had its cables on and tightened up?

11 A. Did I see him once he did that? Yes.

12 Q. Were the lines on the *Mr. Ervin* attached to the CMT dock?

13 A. Yes, sir. The mooring lines, yes.

14 Q. The mooring lines were.

15 A. Yes. Not the cables.

16 Q. The cables were removed.

17 A. At this time, we've already taken the cables off.

18 Q. Did you hear any conversations between the *Kristin Alexis*
19 deckhands and your stevedores?

20 A. Before we departed or after? Before we departed, there was
21 conversation on the deck as far as what we were going to do, yes.

22 Q. Can you tell us what kind of conversations you heard or were
23 involved in?

24 A. Well, Derrick and Blake, at that time, were discussing with
25 them about how we were going to shift the rig -- well, that was

1 when they were on the stern, so I apologize for that. At this
2 time, they were already discussing when we were going to take the
3 mooring lines off of the rig. And we only do that -- well, from
4 their discussion was we're only going to do that once he's faced
5 up.

6 Q. And that discussion was just on the deck with the deckhands
7 and your stevedores?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Do you know if there was any discussion with the captain?

10 A. No, sir, I do not know.

11 Q. Was there any other discussions besides the lines?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. So did anybody ask for the bucket to be moved?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Were you guys in a hurry or a rush for anything?

16 A. No, sir. Not at this point, no, sir.

17 Q. After the -- after you left the crane, were you done for the
18 day or you still had to go somewhere else and work?

19 A. Once the crane departs, then I would report back to Darrow at
20 the office and wait for the crane to arrive.

21 Q. And then you would have kept working?

22 A. We would have done maintenance, yes.

23 Q. During or after, did you hear about any conversations of the
24 *Kristin Alexis* wanting the bucket to be moved?

25 A. That was after they departed from CMT dock.

1 Q. That was after they departed?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. What time do you think they departed?

4 A. That I don't know.

5 Q. So when was the mooring lines removed from the -- the soft
6 mooring lines removed from the dock?

7 A. Once the *Kristin Alexis* was faced up on the side of the rig.

8 Q. Okay. Who disconnected the mooring lines?

9 A. I did.

10 Q. You did?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Did the captain of the vessel tell you to take them off?

13 A. During this time, the deckhand said that they were ready to
14 take them off. Captain of the vessel, no.

15 Q. You heard the deckhand?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Do you remember which deckhand it was?

18 A. No, sir, I don't.

19 Q. Could you describe him, possibly?

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. How did the deckhand tell you?

22 A. He said that they were ready to go.

23 Q. Face to face?

24 A. Well, I'm on the dock. He's on the rig. So, well, yes, we
25 were staring at each other while they said they were ready to go,

1 for us to take the lines off, yes.

2 Q. Was there -- about how much distance was between you and
3 elevation?

4 A. Me and elevation, as far as me -- where I'm sitting at on the
5 dock and to the guys on the rig?

6 Q. Yes.

7 A. Maybe 6 feet.

8 Q. Six feet?

9 A. Uh-huh.

10 Q. So you could talk and hear clearly?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. There was no environmental factors like engines running?

13 A. No, sir.

14 Q. Horns blowing from ships?

15 A. No, sir.

16 Q. Back up. I don't think I -- so you don't think you could
17 describe what the deckhand looked like?

18 A. No, sir. I've seen a lot of them, so I don't really memorize
19 them.

20 Q. And that was 7 months ago, I understand.

21 CWO4 [REDACTED] Can we see Exhibit 53?

22 BY MR. [REDACTED]

23 Q. Have you seen this survey report from Kyle Smith?

24 A. No, sir.

25 CWO4 [REDACTED] Mr. [REDACTED] can you scroll down to where it

1 says the crane type? Actually, I think it's page 4.

2 BY MR. [REDACTED]

3 Q. Mr. Adams, is that an accurate description of the crane,
4 *Mr. Ervin?*

5 A. As far as the height goes?

6 Q. Yes.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Before this incident, what did you think the height of the
9 crane was?

10 A. I thought it was 130.

11 Q. You thought it was 130?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Had anybody ever asked you for that height?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Not just that day or any other day?

16 A. Any other day, no.

17 Q. No ship captains have ever asked you?

18 A. No, sir.

19 Q. Or deck hands?

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. Who calculates the air draft for the transits?

22 A. That I'm not sure.

23 Q. So when it goes from 175 down to like CMT, you don't know who
24 runs it?

25 A. No, sir, I don't.

1 Q. So after the accident, did you learn of the new height of the
2 crane?

3 A. Way after, yes.

4 Q. Way after?

5 CWO4 [REDACTED] Do you have any questions at this time?

6 BY CDR MESKUN:

7 Q. Do you have any responsibilities -- so, you said that they
8 were going to do maintenance, you guys were going to do
9 maintenance after you met the barge; is that accurate?

10 A. Once the rig got to Darrow, yes.

11 Q. Okay. So does that mean, like you're a general manager of
12 that barge?

13 A. Not of that barge, no. When there are men working on there,
14 I am the supervisor, just making sure that -- if we were doing
15 maintenance once we got to Darrow, I would just make sure all of
16 the maintenance was being done (indiscernible).

17 Q. What kind of maintenance would that be?

18 A. It would be servicing all of the equipment, servicing the
19 bucket, servicing the crane, servicing the boom, greasing all the
20 shivs, things of that nature.

21 Q. So they would follow some sort of checklist or schedule of
22 when things come due?

23 A. Checklist, no. They've all pretty much got it in their minds
24 what needs to be done. Or if they don't, I'll kind of run a few
25 things by them, we need to check this, we need to check that.

1 Q. Okay. Would anybody be responsible for checking the barge's
2 draft?

3 A. On the rig?

4 Q. On the barge, *Mr. Ervin*.

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. When you say the rig, are you referring to the *Mr. Ervin*?

7 A. I'm referring to the *Ervin*.

8 Q. Okay. What was the crane doing? Was it in service before
9 the *Kristin Alexis* came?

10 A. In service?

11 Q. Was it being used as a crane or was it just sitting?

12 A. At that time, we were just sitting.

13 Q. When was the last time it was used, employed?

14 A. About 2 hours before that when the LMO was on us and we were
15 loading the CMT hopper.

16 Q. Was it -- while you were doing that job, was it in the exact
17 same location as when the *Kristin Alexis* came to pick it up?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. How long is the transit normally to get to its destination?

20 A. That I can't really tell you on that one.

21 Q. That's okay. And you said there was no rush to get it up
22 there?

23 A. No, sir.

24 CDR MESKUN: I'm good.

25 BY MR. [REDACTED]

1 Q. Mr. Adams, I want to go back to the -- after you had the
2 cables off and you still had the soft lines connected, can you
3 remember how they were configured?

4 A. No, it was actually -- the cables were on. You said when the
5 cables were on before the soft lines were on?

6 Q. No, after the cables were removed, then it was only the soft
7 lines.

8 A. Right.

9 Q. Can you remember how they were configured?

10 A. Sure. On the down-river end, we had an up-river lead. On
11 the -- towards the bow of the barge, we had a down-river lead.
12 Does that make sense?

13 Q. Yes, it does. In the Coast Guard, we commonly call those the
14 surge lines.

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. So can you describe how they were connected from the dock to
17 the barge?

18 A. Sure. We have the eye of soft line, mooring line, on the CMT
19 dock. The other end of the soft line was now on the rig.

20 Q. Was it at an angle?

21 A. Yes, sir. On the stern of the rig, yes, that was our up-
22 river lead.

23 Q. Up-river?

24 A. Uh-huh.

25 Q. So it's connected to the stern and then it goes forward?

1 A. Right.

2 Q. About how far forward did it go?

3 A. I would say probably 10 feet or so.

4 Q. And the other line, where was it connected?

5 A. That was towards the head of the barge.

6 Q. Towards the head?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. And what angle --

9 A. It's probably the second cavel from the head, I would say,
10 yeah.

11 Q. And what angle was that?

12 A. That was at a down-river lead.

13 Q. That was at a down-river?

14 A. Uh-huh. Same thing with the eye of the soft line on the CMT
15 dock and the other end is on the barge.

16 Q. So, if the barge is right here, the lines are connected to
17 the pier like this?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Was that -- the way those lines connected, were they loose or
20 taut?

21 A. They were tight.

22 Q. They were tight?

23 A. As tight as we can get them.

24 Q. Was the barge shifting around or moving a little bit on
25 those?

1 A. No, not during this time, no.

2 Q. So it was -- how far off the dock do you think the barge was?

3 A. I'd say about 5 feet, 5 feet from the dock, maybe.

4 Q. Five feet?

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. Did you notice if the river current was affecting the barge
7 at all as far as movement?

8 A. No. I did not pay attention to that at that time.

9 Q. Could you describe everything you know about the barge and
10 the crane, like as far as dimensions, what's on it?

11 A. Dimensions, no. What's on it is -- I believe at that time,
12 we had two payloaders or front-end loaders, tractors, two buckets
13 on the head of the barge and one strung up. Of course, we have
14 our winches, one on port, one on starboard. Main engines are down
15 below the deck. That's pretty much what I can give you.

16 Q. So there's an engine room below the deck?

17 A. Yes, sir, below the deck, yes.

18 Q. Is there fuel on board?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. What's the fuel used for?

21 A. Diesel.

22 Q. Diesel?

23 A. For the generators.

24 Q. The generators? How many generators?

25 A. Two.

1 Q. About how much fuel do you think is on board?

2 A. That I can't tell you.

3 Q. Is there any ballast?

4 A. Yes. I believe that's what keeps the -- they ballast it
5 before it comes in I want to say.

6 Q. So you have fuel and generators. Can the vessel operate
7 without shore power?

8 A. Not this particular crane, no.

9 Q. What's the --

10 A. It has a certain type of -- I'm going to say it's a cooling
11 system, I believe. I've never got the full identification of what
12 it was. But once -- if you were in motion with this crane, the
13 generators will shut down. I'm not sure exactly what causes that.
14 We will have an auxiliary generator that is on there as well, and
15 that just gives it power as far as the tub, inside of the tub
16 where the microwaves are and things like that, like a sitting
17 area.

18 Q. Lights?

19 A. Yes. But that itself cannot operate the crane.

20 Q. How long have you been working on that tug -- I mean, not the
21 tug, the barge? How much experience do you have working with the
22 *Mr. Ervin* at that time?

23 A. At that time, not very long. I'm going to say only a few
24 months.

25 Q. A few months?

1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. Does Cooper -- did you get any training for your position?

3 A. For a supervision position?

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And you worked your way up to that position?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. So can you tell me all the training that you had for when you
9 first started working for them and any training you received to
10 get to your position?

11 A. Let's see, when I first started, this was before I was ship
12 supervisor, I was a utility hand. So then I was training on
13 knowing how to take care of the equipment, maintenance, maintain
14 all the equipment that was on deck, learning all of how to tie
15 bowlines and ropes, greasing up all the shivs in cables, planting
16 eyes in cables, up-river leads, down-river leads, drafting barges
17 as far as the cargo barges itself, drafting those barges.

18 When I was working my way to an oiler, I was then being
19 trained on how to service the crane, change oil in the crane,
20 change brakes when needed. When I became a shift supervisor, I
21 then learned how to do all of the figures, thinking ahead of time
22 on what shift I'm going to make next, the different types of
23 cargos, stowage factors, keeping an eye out for all personnel for
24 safety reasons, making sure they're doing everything properly,
25 making sure they're also following everything properly as far as

1 drafts on barges and such.

2 Q. Okay. When you said up-river leads, down-river leads, you
3 mean mooring configurations?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Line handling?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. So you had training on line handling and tying off ships?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Did they ever have -- give you training on, like which lines
10 go on first and which lines come off -- or go on first, which
11 lines go on last, when -- who's in charge and can give the order
12 for lines to come on or go off?

13 A. No. That's all kind of memorized and very repetitious, I
14 should say.

15 Q. Have you ever had a vessel with just -- seen a vessel with
16 just a stern line pointing up river?

17 A. Say that again?

18 Q. So when a vessel -- I'm sorry, I'll rephrase it completely.
19 When a vessel approaches a dock, comes to a dock, has anybody ever
20 told you what line has to be the first line to go on the vessel?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Which line is that?

23 A. That would be our head line.

24 Q. Your head line.

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. And which line goes on last?

2 A. Stern line.

3 Q. The stern line.

4 A. Uh-huh.

5 Q. And the breast line that you described or the surge lines
6 which you called up-river and down-river leads --

7 A. Right.

8 Q. -- when do they go on?

9 A. Once the barge is secured to the vessel and we are in place
10 wherever we're going to sit.

11 Q. So the -- was there any lines on that you would consider the
12 head line?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Which line was considered the head line?

15 A. That was our cable line.

16 Q. The cable line.

17 A. Coming from the winch, yes.

18 Q. Okay. And then we'll back up. When the *Kristin Alexis* got
19 there, you took the -- had already taken that line off?

20 A. No, sir. When the *Kristin Alexis* arrived, did we already
21 take that line off?

22 Q. Yes.

23 A. No, sir.

24 Q. So the *Kristin Alexis* was attached when you took the head
25 line off?

1 A. Correct. It'd have to be.

2 Q. Since you know that that's supposed to be the last line to
3 come off, did -- why did you take it off? The head line has to be
4 the first and the last line to attach to the pier.

5 A. Correct. Right.

6 Q. But you took that one off first.

7 A. Right. We were just going to shift him up because he was
8 already kind of facing in that direction, as it was. He was just
9 going to push us up some so we could take that line off.

10 Q. Before the stern line was disconnected?

11 A. Right. On CMT dock, it's such a short run to us it don't
12 really matter which one comes off first, versus say, if we're on a
13 vessel, on a ship. On a ship, the way it goes versus the stern
14 line would come off first, if we were departing. Then you would
15 shift all the way up to the head and then take the head and the
16 side line off.

17 Q. And then, vice versa, if you're mooring up, put the head line
18 on and then the stern line, and then the two breast lines. Is
19 that what happened -- when the *Kristin Alexis* was getting
20 underway, you didn't -- I'm taking it as that's not what happened.
21 You took the bowline off, the stern line and then left the two
22 breast lines attached.

23 A. I'm trying to understand. If you can rephrase that.

24 Q. Okay. I'll just back up even more. So when we were talking
25 about the training, you had training on the order of lines and how

1 they should go on and come off of a vessel, right?

2 A. Well, like I said, it was more just like a repetitious deal
3 on which ones we put on first and which ones we put on last, which
4 ones we take off first, which ones we take off last.

5 Q. So you just learned by memory and repetition?

6 A. Correct. But I've had -- the guys on the rig, like my oiler
7 and such, operator, those were the ones that pretty much kind of
8 say, hey, this is what goes on first; this one goes on last; this
9 one gets taken off first; this one gets taken off last.

10 Q. Okay, so you never had formal training on that?

11 A. No. You mean, like as in a class-type deal?

12 Q. A class or like a supervisor train you. Like when you're
13 working on the deck, if somebody senior, more experienced, took
14 you around and taught you anything like that.

15 A. A senior person on the deck would probably be my operator or
16 oiler. That would be the one above me during that time.

17 Q. Did anyone there have a nickname of Memphis?

18 A. That's me.

19 Q. That is you?

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 Q. But you -- and nobody ever asked you anything about the
22 bucket?

23 A. No, sir. Not at the time that they were connected to the CMT
24 dock, no.

25 Q. Okay, when you say connected --

1 A. When we were still -- when we still had our mooring lines
2 onto the CMT dock. When the rig has not -- they're still on the
3 dock, *Kristin Alexis* is facing them, nobody said anything to me
4 about buckets. The only time bucket got mentioned is when they
5 were already departed from CMT dock, about 60, roughly 80 yards
6 away from me.

7 Q. Sixty, 80 yards away?

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. And can you tell me everything that was discussed about the
10 bucket between -- from you to the crew, any conversations that you
11 heard or were involved in?

12 A. When that started was the captain was looking for the Cooper
13 supervisor. I answered him. He started saying something about
14 moving a bucket or he couldn't see or something like that. Fine.
15 I started trying to get in touch with the guys on the rig to see
16 what was going on. At this time, the deckhands are answering me.
17 Then the deckhands start telling me back and forth about moving a
18 bucket, moving a bucket, moving a bucket. They're never telling
19 me which bucket. So, at this time, I'm trying to call guys on the
20 deck to try and talk to the deckhands to figure out what's the
21 deal with the bucket. At this time, I'm thinking it's the one
22 strung up to the boom. I have no idea what bucket they're
23 talking, never been asked to move any bucket when a boat is taking
24 a rig up river, down river, in transit. Never been asked this.
25 So I'm just thinking it's the one strung up to the crane.

1 Chit-chatted a little bit back and forth with the deckhands.
2 Deckhands are now talking to the guys on the rig. No idea what
3 that conversation is about, don't even know how it's going. I'm
4 just patiently waiting for a radio call, hey, this is what we're
5 going to do. This is what we're going to do. Nothing.

6 Then I get a call from dispatch. Dispatch tells me something
7 about a bucket as well, why my guys won't move a bucket. I don't
8 know. I don't know why they won't move a bucket. Let me try to
9 call them again. Tried to call them again, no answer.

10 Let's see. From that point on, then it turned out I got
11 another phone call from Chad, dispatch. Told me that one of my
12 guys had said they're not moving that bucket, they're catching a
13 boat and they're leaving. I'm still trying to get in touch with
14 them. I'm trying to see what's going on, have no idea. There is
15 no more -- the guys on the deck nor the captain is speaking to me.
16 Then from that point on is when I called my boss. My boss then
17 called dispatch. They discussed what was going on. I received a
18 call back from my boss and received a call back from Chad saying
19 no bucket's being moved, the guys caught the boat, and that was
20 it.

21 CWO4 [REDACTED] Any other questions?

22 BY CDR MESKUN:

23 Q. I was hoping you could clarify a few things for me. So you
24 indicated you tried to call the guys on the deck, right?

25 A. Correct. First by radio, then by phone.

1 Q. Okay. Hand-held VHF radio?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. And you're on the dock, right?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. What deck are those guys on?

6 A. They're on the *Ervin*.

7 Q. So the -- correct me here. I'm just trying to make sure I
8 got the story accurate. So the *Kristin Alexis* secured to the
9 barge, got underway. They were about 60 to 80 yards offshore when
10 they started to call up and asked to move the bucket.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. While the *Kristin Alexis* was underway, 60 to 80 yards
13 offshore, you still had three or four Cooper employees on the
14 *Mr. Ervin*.

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Then a crew boat came out --

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. -- to get those guys off -- the Cooper employees off the
19 *Mr. Ervin*.

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. And they were headed back ashore.

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. And then, can you recap what happened again after the Cooper
24 employees started to go ashore on the crew boat?

25 A. Once they started going ashore on the crew boat, that was

1 pretty much the end of conversation of -- there was no buckets
2 that were going to be moved. That was it. And it wasn't until 2
3 in the morning is when I got the call from Chad asking me if I --
4 if we boomed the crane down. I was, like, yeah, that's the only
5 way we can move it. And then he -- that's when he told me that he
6 hit the bridge. And then my boss, Jody, calls me, tells me to get
7 my things, get the guys, we need to go meet up at the bridge.

8 Q. There was a lot of conversation about the lines on how the
9 *Mr. Ervin* was secured, right? Can you just sum it up really
10 quickly for me, how many lines was used to secure the *Mr. Ervin* to
11 the pier?

12 A. That would be two. That'd be the head line and the side
13 line.

14 Q. And then, when the *Kristin Alexis* came alongside and got
15 secured, how many lines was the *Mr. Ervin* attached to the pier by?

16 A. That was still two, the head line and the side line.

17 Q. And then, once they were made fast, they were faced up to the
18 barge, then they were --

19 A. This time, when the *Kristin Alexis* came to us, they were on
20 the port side of the rig and only put a mooring line from their
21 boat to the rig. We still had two cables on the dock.

22 Q. Okay. And when did you switch from cables to soft lines?

23 A. Once we took the head line and the stern line off, he held us
24 in place up against the dock. We put the soft lines on, so then
25 he could come on the stern of the rig and face up.

1 Q. And then, once he was faced up, then the deckhands instructed
2 you to remove soft lines?

3 A. Correct.

4 CDR MESKUN: That's all I have for now.

5 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

6 Q. Good afternoon, Mr. Adams.

7 A. Good afternoon.

8 Q. I'd like to go back to the beginning. Do you hold any
9 certifications, any type of certifications?

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. You mentioned you were an equipment utility man; is that
12 correct?

13 A. I was a utility man on the deck of whichever rig they needed
14 me on during that time.

15 Q. And did you ever work as a crane operator?

16 A. No. I just ran the crane a few times; That was it. No, sir.

17 Q. So do you supervise at all the people on board the crane?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And what sort of supervision do you provide to them?

20 A. Just making sure they're doing everything properly, safely.

21 Q. Do the crane people, operators, do they report to you?

22 A. On certain things, maybe when we need a loader, things like
23 that in the hold, when we're setting a loader in the barge and
24 things like that, what hold we're going to next, what cargo we're
25 working, little things like that.

1 Q. Okay. The people on board the crane, like the crane operator
2 and, let's see, the oilers, are they also the stevedores?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. And Jody Prejean is it?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. What is his or her title?

7 A. He is an operations manager.

8 Q. So about -- if I understand how this operation works, are you
9 given any orders about a next job, say, for the crane, for the
10 *Mr. Ervin*?

11 A. The next job?

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. What we would do next?

14 Q. Yeah, what you're going to do next, yeah.

15 A. During this night, no. On certain occasions, yes.

16 Q. And does that come from dispatch? Do they tell you what's
17 going to be going on next or who do you --

18 A. My boss tells me.

19 Q. Your boss, so Jody Prejean --

20 A. Prejean, yes.

21 Q. Do you travel with the crane?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. So you stay there at that facility there at -- do you go
24 from, let's say, Convent, it was supposed to go up to Darrow.
25 Would you have gone up to Darrow then?

1 A. Yes, I would have gone to Darrow after CMT, yes.

2 Q. And what do you -- you drive up there? Is that what you do?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. And the crane personnel, would they stay on board the barge?

5 A. No, sir. They catch the crew boat from there to go to Weber
6 dock, and then they catch their vehicles from Weber dock.

7 Q. So do you have any technical knowledge about this barge or
8 the crane itself?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. Have you ever seen a mooring diagram of the barge where the
11 cavels are?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. Do you know anything about the gangway on that barge?

14 A. Gangway, no. No, sir. Oh, hold on.

15 Q. There's like a gangway on the transom of the barge?

16 A. That we use from the rig going to the CMT dock?

17 Q. No.

18 MR. KUCHARSKI: And maybe we can pull up Exhibit 51,
19 please, so we can look at it. There's like a gangway that's
20 recessed. It should be about photo 16 or somewhere on there. We
21 should know this photo.

22 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

23 Q. You see the gangway picture there at the --

24 A. The stairs?

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. Yes. Oh, yes. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Okay. You're familiar with those?

3 A. Yes, sir, I am.

4 Q. You see the rails there?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Do those come out of the deck?

7 A. Come out of the deck, the top? No.

8 Q. Yeah, the --

9 A. On top of the deck?

10 Q. -- yellow rails, do they lift out?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. So those area permanently welded --

13 A. Yes, yes, those are welded onto the --

14 Q. Attached to the deck, okay. So I think you looked at the

15 survey report with the height of that -- of the crane?

16 A. Just now, yes.

17 Q. Yeah, just now. That's the first time you've looked at that?

18 A. First time I've looked at that.

19 Q. And it says about 135 feet; is that correct?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. So that's the first time -- is this the first time you were

22 aware that it was 135 feet?

23 A. I wasn't aware that it was 135 feet until after the bridge

24 incident. I was under the circumstance it was about 130 feet.

25 I've only found that out just because right before they bought it,

1 they were bragging how big they were. That was it.

2 Q. So who, then, is in charge of the actual operation of that
3 barge to make sure it's stable, it's ballasted properly? You said
4 you oversee safety.

5 A. Right. Safety in as far as loading and unloading. That -- I
6 can't tell you who's in charge of that one.

7 Q. We have other Cooper personnel to interview, so I guess
8 somebody will be able to tell us there.

9 Your shift on the night before, you came on at 5 p.m.; is
10 that correct?

11 A. I came on at 1800, 6.

12 Q. 1800, okay. And what time do you normally work till?

13 A. Till 6 a.m.

14 Q. So it's a 12-hour shift then?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Do you have any idea what it takes to move the big bucket if
17 you have to move that bucket?

18 A. Yes. That would be taking the cables off of the existing
19 bucket and hooking them up to the bucket that was on the front of
20 the rig.

21 Q. And you have to start up a -- do they have to start up a
22 generator? Do they have to do a bunch of things that --

23 A. Oh, yes. We have to start the whole crane back up again.

24 Q. Do you have any idea how long that process takes?

25 A. Starting the rig up until we finish, I would say around 3

1 hours, about 3 hours.

2 Q. Were you watching the *Kristin Alexis* face up to the barge?

3 A. On the port side or the stern of the rig? I watched both of
4 them.

5 Q. On the stern, right before they went to tow it down up river.

6 A. Yes, sir, I did.

7 Q. You did?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Did anyone speak to you about the possibility of mooring on
10 the starboard side instead of the port side, tying up, facing up?

11 A. No.

12 Q. How about after the accident? Did anybody speak to you about
13 that?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Did you have any conversations with Jody Prejean either the
16 evening before, you know, or around that time, say from --

17 A. Evening -- well, before shift, yes, right before shift. He
18 was just telling me once you got finished, make sure you call
19 dispatch, give the 2-hour heads-up, send them to Darrow, let them
20 do maintenance.

21 Q. And how about afterwards? Did you have any conversations
22 afterwards?

23 A. After 1800 or after the incident?

24 Q. After the incident.

25 A. No, not really. Only conversations we had was when we were

1 aboard the rig, but there really wasn't any conversations. It was
2 basically trying to just get the rig out from up underneath the
3 bridge.

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Could we look at Exhibit 74 please?

5 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

6 Q. And the paragraph that starts with "A few minutes later."

7 A. Uh-huh.

8 Q. Then the last sentence -- and I apologize. It looks like I'm
9 trying to blindside you on this, but I sort of got mixed up with
10 my people. You have easy names, not like mine, and -- Adams and
11 Nelson. So, it's -- I'm sorry, the -- it's the sentence right
12 before that. It said, "I then hung up with Chad and called Jody
13 Prejean."

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So you did have a conversation with Jody Prejean?

16 A. Well, yes, way before the incident. And that was when the
17 buckets conversation was being taken place.

18 Q. And Jody told you there was no need to --

19 A. Jody told me he was calling dispatch to speak with dispatch.
20 I told him there was confusion about the buckets, couldn't get in
21 touch with nobody, I'm not having any conversation with anybody on
22 the rig, I don't know what's going on. And then Jody spoke with
23 dispatch. Jody called me, told me we're not moving any bucket.

24 Q. Okay. You said you physically took off the soft lines?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Let's look at that same one, that same exhibit. I'm a
2 little bit confused here, so -- it's the second full paragraph.
3 And the last sentence is, "Some *Kristin Alexis* crew members."

4 Could you look at that sentence for me? And it says, "Some
5 *Kristin Alexis* crew members then came aboard the *Mr. Ervin* and
6 were assisting with getting the *Mr. Ervin* untied from the dock."

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Assisting is just having communication with what's going on.

10 Q. Okay. So they weren't assisting you with actually doing
11 it --

12 A. No. No, no, no.

13 Q. -- untying you?

14 A. No. They're just there to keep communication with their
15 captain, because if they're all on the boat, I can't do anything
16 if they're all on the boat. I can't tell him what to do, and he
17 needs eyes out there to know what's going on. They always have to
18 be on any rig when we're moving, shifting, anything like that.

19 Q. So by assisting he was just talking on their radios?

20 A. They're talking to the captain.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Let him know how many feet to go up, how many feet to drop
23 back, so forth.

24 Q. Did they have to move up so many feet or drop back or -- for
25 you to take the soft lines off?

1 A. When we took the stern line off, the stern soft line, when we
2 took that one off, he needed to come up a little bit because there
3 was tension on the one on the head.

4 Q. And did they maneuver -- did the boat move up to take the
5 tension off?

6 A. Yes, it just moved up about a couple feet in order for us --
7 the guys on the deck to tie that line off, take that line off.

8 Q. Then the next paragraph, the very first sentence, "While I
9 was standing on the CMT dock and watching the *Mr. Ervin* being
10 untied." So I guess I'm a little bit confused about that. Were
11 you watching or were you doing it? Were you untying it?

12 A. They're on the rig untying it. I'm on the CMT dock just
13 taking the eye off of the bit. That's all I'm doing.

14 Q. Okay. You take it off and then is somebody -- what happens
15 to those lines after you take the eye off? Does it stay on the
16 barge?

17 A. Yes, stays on -- yes.

18 Q. So then, after you take the eye off, somebody's pulling those
19 lines on board?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. Who is that?

22 A. That's Derrick, Blake Anderson, and Dana.

23 Q. That's your -- the stevedores?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. Okay. I think you said that you were not asked for the

1 height of the barge, correct -- or the *Mr. Ervin*? I'm sorry --

2 A. I was not asked.

3 Q. -- mean to call it a barge. And do you know afterwards, you
4 said you were in charge of safety -- or let me say before, is
5 there anywhere posted on there what the deck height is from the --
6 or the height, I'm sorry, of the highest part of that crane to the
7 deck?

8 A. Is there anywhere on the *Ervin* posted?

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. No?

12 A. Not that I'm aware of.

13 Q. Sometimes you see a crane shore side, it says, you know, has
14 a --

15 A. Right.

16 Q. But there was nothing on there?

17 A. No, sir.

18 Q. Since the accident, has it been posted on there?

19 A. Not that I'm aware of.

20 Q. After the accident, has any -- have any of the policies
21 relating to your job or the people that are under you, have any of
22 the policies changed?

23 A. As far as me, no. Anybody else, I can't answer for.

24 Q. But the people that are under you, none of their jobs -- I
25 mean, you supervise them, right?

1 A. Under me, as far as the stevedores? No. Not that I'm aware
2 of, no.

3 Q. Is it very difficult to put the height of that crane on there
4 somewhere on the pedestal or something like that?

5 A. Me answering this? I don't think it is.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: No further questions, thank you.

7 BY MR. [REDACTED]

8 Q. Mr. Adams, I got a couple more questions. We're going to go
9 back to when the deckhand told you to take the lines off.

10 A. Uh-huh.

11 Q. You didn't know who he was and can't remember what he looks
12 like.

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Was any of your other people on deck nearby?

15 A. Yes. That was my guys on the rig. That was Derrick, Blake,
16 and Dana.

17 Q. All three of them were standing right there with the
18 deckhand?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. And then, before this accident, you thought the crane was 130
21 feet?

22 A. Right.

23 Q. I think you might have told me, but I just want to verify.
24 Why did you think the crane was 130 feet?

25 A. Oh, that was just due to before we bought it and when they

1 were bringing it in, they were talking about how big it was and
2 things like that, because it's a very big crane compared to some
3 of the other ones that we had.

4 Q. So you overheard a conversation?

5 A. Yeah, just lately through -- let's see, I'm remembering there
6 was a guy named Blaine Petit (ph.) at the time. I think he was
7 involved in going up there and looking at it. And overheard them
8 speaking about how big it was, yeah.

9 Q. And you said nobody had ever asked you the height of the
10 crane?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. Had you ever been present when another tugboat captain or
13 deckhand had asked somebody else the height of the crane?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Never witnessed anybody else talking about the height of the
16 crane?

17 A. No, sir.

18 Q. Or possibly the *Hulk*?

19 A. No, sir.

20 Q. The way the dock configuration was, at the CMT dock, if the
21 captain said he had an emergency and he needed more backup for
22 some reason, would you have been able to accommodate that?

23 A. Me accommodate? I would --

24 Q. By accommodate, could you -- could he have moored back up?

25 A. Yes. Oh, yes.

1 Q. Easily? And if he --

2 A. Of putting him back on the dock?

3 Q. Yes.

4 A. Absolutely.

5 Q. Did he ever request that you do that?

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. Did any of the deckhands -- did anybody request that you moor
8 back up?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. And you would have if it was requested?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 CWO4 [REDACTED] Okay.

13 BY CDR MESKUN:

14 Q. What was the lifting capacity of the crane?

15 A. That I don't know.

16 Q. Do you know how big the buckets were?

17 A. They're a coal bucket. I believe that one was a, like a 30-
18 something yard bucket, I think, I believe. The one that we have
19 strung up or all three of them?

20 Q. How about all three of them?

21 A. We have a 55-yard bucket on there. We have a 12-yard bucket
22 or tray on there. And I believe that the one we were using at the
23 time, a coal bucket, like a 30, 30-something-yard bucket.

24 Q. Do you remember which bucket was on the port forward side of
25 the *Mr. Ervin* that night?

1 A. That was the 55-yard bucket.

2 Q. Do you know how tall that stands when it's affixed to the
3 deck?

4 A. No, sir.

5 Q. Do you know if the *Kristin Alexis* had ever moved the
6 *Mr. Ervin* before?

7 A. Yes. I recall, yes. They've moved us several times.

8 Q. Did you ever have any conversations with any of the pilots or
9 captains that were on board?

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. So you don't have any way of knowing if it was -- if one
12 specific wheelhouse person was ever at the wheel before?

13 A. No, sir.

14 Q. Do you know after the accident with the Sunshine Bridge, did
15 the *Mr. Ervin* sustain any damage?

16 A. I was told the -- there was antennas and things like that on
17 top of the A-frame that were damaged. I don't know anything else,
18 any technical things that were wrong with it, no.

19 Q. Was it ever put out of service? Did it lose time?

20 A. Yes. They brought that back to Darrow and put that -- yes,
21 they went on there and serviced some things. I believe they had
22 other people coming out and looking at it, engineers and stuff.

23 Q. Okay. Can you please just briefly describe what kind of work
24 happens at Darrow?

25 A. That I work at?

1 Q. Yeah. What does the crane do at Darrow?

2 A. We load and unload ships.

3 Q. And what is the facility? Is it a shore-side facility or is
4 it a mid-stream facility? Is it -- are ships anchored in the
5 middle of the river or --

6 A. Yes, anchored in the middle of the river.

7 Q. So I'm just trying to get a little bit of a better
8 understanding for how the crane functions. You said there's a
9 couple of engines on board, right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What do those engines power?

12 A. The drums, the draw works in order for the augurs to move up
13 and down, boom up and down.

14 Q. Are they hydraulically operated?

15 A. Yes, I believe that's -- there may be some on there that's
16 hydraulic. The rest of it's electric.

17 Q. Okay. So the generators that are on board, the diesel
18 engines that are on board power electricity and hydraulics to move
19 the crane and make the crane operate?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. So when a ship is at the anchorage and the *Mr. Ervin* is
22 alongside, is it safe to say that that is how that ship unloads or
23 loads?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. So it goes from a barge to the ship or the ship to the barge?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. And are they -- is the *Mr. Ervin* ever tethered off to the
3 shore?

4 A. What do you mean by tethered?

5 Q. Do they have any sort of power cables or anything like that?

6 A. I'm not understanding.

7 Q. Is the barge self-sustained? Does it need power from the
8 shore to operate?

9 A. Power from the shore? No.

10 CDR MESKUN: That's all the questions I have. I'll turn it
11 over to Marquette.

12 BY MR. REISMAN:

13 Q. Good afternoon, Mr. Adams. David Reisman. I represent
14 Marquette. I just have a couple of questions for you. You
15 testified earlier that your boss, Jody Prejean, and Chad Nelson
16 informed you that you would not be moving the buckets; is that
17 right?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Did you ever notify the captain of the *Kristin Alexis* that
20 nobody was going to be coming out to move the buckets?

21 A. No, sir.

22 Q. Do you know if anybody informed him that nobody would be
23 coming out to move the buckets?

24 A. I'm not sure if Chad spoke of that to him, but I'm not the
25 captain's boss.

1 MR. REISMAN: Thank you. That's all we got.

2 CDR MESKUN: Thank you. Cooper, Mr. Wogan?

3 BY MR. WOGAN:

4 Q. Just a few questions, Judson. I just want to make sure that
5 it's understood and it's clear that when the *Kristin Alexis*
6 arrived alongside the *Mr. Ervin* that night, what was holding the
7 *Mr. Ervin* to the CMT dock?

8 A. Our cables, our winch cables.

9 Q. And the *Mr.* -- I mean, the *Kristin Alexis* comes alongside to
10 where on the *Mr. Ervin*?

11 A. That was on the port side of the *Ervin*.

12 Q. And then, could you just briefly summarize the process that
13 happens once the *Kristin Alexis* comes alongside the port side of
14 the *Mr. Ervin*?

15 A. Once it comes along the port side of *Ervin*, then we request
16 the deckhands to come on board as far as coming onto the *Ervin*.
17 Then we discuss with them through communication radios where we're
18 talking to each other back and forth of how we were going to shift
19 the rig up, take the cable off, shift the rig down to take the
20 cable off. Hold us tightly up against the CMT dock, and then add
21 our soft lines on there, which therefore he can face up on the
22 stern safely without the rig just taking off in the middle of the
23 river.

24 Q. So the idea is for the soft lines to provide some stability
25 while he's facing up to the stern of the vessel?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. At some point during that night, did one of the lines break?

3 A. When we were going -- when the *Kristin Alexis* did face up to
4 the stern, we did push a little hard. The soft line did break,
5 but we quickly just threw another one up there real quick.

6 Q. How long did that process take?

7 A. Maybe a minute.

8 Q. Did that cause the *Mr. Ervin* to shift in some manner up or
9 down the dock?

10 A. No. Not really, no.

11 Q. You were asked some questions about the phone calls and the
12 radio calls regarding moving the bucket.

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. Did the captain or any of the deckhands ever specifically
15 reference the port side bucket to you?

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. What was your understanding of the bucket that you thought
18 they were talking about?

19 A. The one we were strung up to.

20 Q. Mr. [REDACTED] asked you some questions about the height of the
21 crane. You said it was 130 feet.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. What was your understanding how that's measured in terms of
24 how -- 130 feet from where to where?

25 A. That's from the deck to the A-frame.

1 Q. You're not a mariner, are you, sir?

2 A. No, sir.

3 Q. Did you factor in the air draft or would you have a reason to
4 factor in the air draft when you're thinking about height of the
5 crane?

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. So I just want to make sure that it's clear and it's
8 understood, because there was a question about when you learned
9 the new height, but on October 11th, prior to this incident, your
10 understanding of the height of the crane from the deck to the top
11 of the A-frame was 130 feet?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. There were some questions regarding calls and the back and
14 forth between you and Chad Nelson and Jody Prejean. I think you
15 testified that you received a call from Chad Nelson first.

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Chad was asking you about the bucket.

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Did Chad mention the port side bucket?

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. Your response to Chad was something along the lines of, okay,
22 I'm going to call my guys and try to figure this out, right?

23 A. Right.

24 Q. Your attempts to contact the crew members aboard the
25 *Mr. Ervin* were unsuccessful.

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. At some point do you then call Jody after that or do you call
3 Chad back or does Chad call you? Do you remember?

4 A. At this time, after all of that, that's when I called Jody
5 and told him what was going on about the discussion as far as
6 moving buckets, moving a bucket, or something, a bucket's in the
7 way, or something like that. And Chad's calling me. It seems to
8 be a confusion. So he was like, I'll call dispatch; I'll talk to
9 dispatch.

10 Q. Jody told you that he would call dispatch?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. And at that point during that conversation with Jody, do you
13 have an understanding that what the people aboard the *Mr. Ervin*
14 were apparently talking about was the port side bucket?

15 A. No, sir.

16 Q. Did you tell Jody, we're talking about the port side bucket
17 here?

18 A. No, sir.

19 Q. After you get done your call with Jody, who do you speak to?
20 Do you make another call back to Chad? Does Chad call you? Do
21 you call the guys back on the rig? What happens?

22 A. Jody called me back, let me know we were not moving a bucket.
23 Then I want to say Chad had called me back right after that to let
24 me know that he spoke with Jody, that the bucket thing's not --
25 we're not moving any bucket. So --

1 Q. Where is the *Mr. Ervin* and the *Kristin Alexis* when this whole
2 back and forth with Chad and Jody is happening?

3 A. At this time, yeah, they're about 80 or so yards away from
4 us.

5 Q. They're floating in the middle of the river?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Are the stevedores still on the *Mr. Ervin*.

8 A. Regarding the beginning of the conversations? Yes.

9 Q. At what point do they depart the *Mr. Ervin*?

10 A. I'm going to say that was right before I received my last
11 phone call from Chad saying that we're not moving a bucket.

12 Q. And at that point, *Kristin Alexis* along with the *Mr. Ervin*
13 begins heading up river.

14 A. Once the guys depart onto the crew boat, yes.

15 Q. There's some questions about you overseeing safety. And I
16 just want to clarify. You're responsible for the safety as it
17 relates to the stevedoring operations that are going on, on any
18 particular night?

19 A. Right.

20 Q. Okay. You're not a director of safety within the scope of
21 Cooper Consolidated?

22 A. No, sir. No, sir.

23 Q. How many buckets are kept on that *Mr. Ervin*?

24 A. Three.

25 Q. The location of the port side bucket, is that the place that

1 it is typically stored?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. How long, if you can recall, had it been in that location?

4 A. I can't really recall how long because we received a newer
5 bucket, so therefore, we put the older one on that side as a spare
6 bucket. I'd say a few months, maybe.

7 MR. WOGAN: Thank you, Judson.

8 BY CDR MESKUN:

9 Q. You just mentioned that there was a newer bucket and an older
10 bucket. A new one replaced the old one?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. Can you speak to the size differences between those buckets?

13 A. The size difference, the older bucket's 55. The newer bucket
14 that we had on there, the coal bucket, I want to say 15, 20-yard
15 difference, maybe.

16 Q. Bigger or smaller?

17 A. A little smaller. The one that was strung up to the crane is
18 a little smaller.

19 Q. And the older one was the 55-yard one that was on the deck?

20 A. On the port side, yes.

21 Q. How often is the *Mr. Ervin* moved?

22 A. Pretty often.

23 Q. Once a day? Once a week?

24 A. No, no, no. I would say probably maybe once every week, 2
25 weeks, maybe, depending on how long it takes to finish operation

1 on a ship or -- say, for instance, CMT dock, maybe once every 2
2 weeks, maybe.

3 Q. How long does it take to discharge one ship?

4 A. Depending on the cargo, I'd say, about a week.

5 Q. And are there multiple cranes working one ship or just one
6 crane?

7 A. Multiple cranes, depending on the size of the ship.

8 Q. I just want to touch bases on this soft line one more time.
9 Are you familiar with the term "junk line" or "leaving line"?

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. What was the quality of the soft line? Was it new line or
12 had it been in service for a long time?

13 A. The line that was on there, I'd say they're fairly new. They
14 weren't all frayed out or anything like that. I'd say they're
15 fairly new.

16 Q. Okay. And so you did indicate that when the *Kristin Alexis*
17 came alongside -- or they came around to face up, one of the soft
18 lines broke?

19 A. It was the stern line. That was the one that we had on the
20 up-river lead, but it happened so quick, we were able to just tie
21 another one off real quick.

22 Q. What size line is that soft line?

23 A. It's a 3-inch line.

24 Q. Is that standard industrywide for that kind of service?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Does it have any, like rated breaking strain that you're
2 aware of?

3 A. Not that I'm aware of, no.

4 CDR MESKUN: Mr. Kucharski?

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes, thank you.

6 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

7 Q. This may have already been asked, and I just want to be
8 clear. Has anyone on any of the towboats asked you for the height
9 previously to that?

10 A. No, sir, they did not.

11 Q. And this talk about the buckets, the new bucket and the old
12 bucket, is the new bucket was the one that was strung up?

13 A. Newer bucket, yes, sir.

14 Q. Newer, okay. And the old bucket is the one that -- the big
15 one that was on the port side there?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Okay. And so, before the new bucket, okay, came along, you
18 were using just the older bucket, the large bucket?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Did you ever transport -- was that ever transported with the
21 bucket strung up like the new bucket?

22 A. Was it ever transported with it already strung up to the
23 crane?

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. Yes, yes.

1 Q. It was?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. So there would be an occasion where that bucket is not
4 permanently there on that deck when it's moving?

5 A. Correct. Not in that position on the port side, no.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. It would then be strung up to the crane, which therefore it
8 would be in the middle of the deck.

9 Q. Right. We had some of the other -- the captain and the other
10 personnel said that when they moved it that bucket wasn't there
11 before. So --

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. Okay. So that may answer some of the -- if it was strung up
14 when it was being moved, then it wouldn't be on the port bow.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. Just so I'm clear, too, if you had to move that -- I know you
17 were looking at your statement here. It takes a few hours to move
18 that bucket, the large one --

19 A. Right.

20 Q. -- okay, that was on the port bow. So they got the other one
21 strung up there, right? They'd have to put that down somewhere
22 and then shift these -- yeah, that's a lot of work.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Is there somewhere where they could have put that big one on
25 the barge, if they had to move it somewhere else? I don't know

1 the -- you know, look at the pictures. I don't see an overhead.

2 A. At that time, due to the weight distribution on there, I
3 wouldn't think so. We had a few good bit of equipment. We had
4 equipment and plus that bucket on there, one or the other one
5 would be in each other's way. If I had to take it from the port
6 side and then put that in the middle of the deck, then I would
7 probably have taken one of them buckets and had to move -- the one
8 that was strung up, that one would be sitting on the side of one
9 another somewhere.

10 Q. So you mentioned weight distribution. That was some of the
11 technical questions I have.

12 A. Yeah, I wouldn't exactly put all them buckets on one side.

13 Q. On one side? You try to keep that -- is that barge trying to
14 be -- do they try to keep it even as far as the list goes?

15 A. Yes. I would imagine so. That's any rig we have.

16 MR. KUCHARSKI: I don't have any further questions. Very
17 helpful. Thank you.

18 CDR MESKUN: Mr. Adams, I just have one thing for you.

19 Mr. [REDACTED] can you go back to the bow view of the *Mr.*
20 *Ervin*?

21 BY CDR MESKUN:

22 Q. This is a picture looking at it from the bow.

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 Q. To the right -- can you see it clearly?

25 A. The bucket?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. So I just want to make sure I understand the new
4 bucket thing. This is a newer bucket. It's in place of -- or
5 it's the same bucket that's always been there?

6 A. The bucket that's on the right?

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. I believe that would be our older bucket. I don't know how
9 long ago this picture was taken.

10 Q. This was taken in October, right after.

11 A. Okay. That's our older bucket. That's the 55-yard bucket.

12 Q. Now, before that, was there ever a different bucket that was
13 normally stored there?

14 A. No.

15 Q. It was always that bucket? So it would have been the same
16 size and shape?

17 A. Right. Yes.

18 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

19 Q. Just a quick question here. This weight distribution thing.
20 Are you aware that they've ever shifted ballast or added water
21 ballast, changed the ballast on there to -- for weight
22 distribution?

23 A. No, sir. I'm not aware.

24 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, thank you.

25 CDR MESKUN: Thank you, Mr. Adams. You are now released as a

1 witness from this formal marine casualty investigation. Thank you
2 for your testimony and cooperation. If I later determine that
3 this joint investigation team needs additional information from
4 you, I will contact you through your counsel. If you have any
5 questions about this investigation, you may contact the recorder,
6 Lieutenant [REDACTED]

7 The time is now 2 o'clock. We will take a 15-minute
8 recess.

9 (Whereupon, at 2:00 p.m., the testimony was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: *KRISTIN ALEXIS/BARGE MR. ERVIN*
 ALLISION WITH THE SUNSHINE BRIDGE
 DONALDSONVILLE, LOUISIANA
 OCTOBER 12, 2018
 Interview of Judson Adams

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19FM003

PLACE: Gonzales, Louisiana

DATE: May 7, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Wendy C. Cutting
Transcriber