

Captain Russell C. Couture



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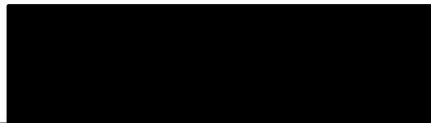
My name is Russell C. Couture. On May 11, 2013, I was sailing aboard the Str. Herbert C. Jackson in the position of Captain. The vessel was inbound the Rouge River with a load of taconite pellets bound for Severstal. As the vessel approached the Jefferson Street bridge shortly before 0200 local time, the weather was clear and visibility was good.

At approximately 0158, I sounded one long blast and one short blast on the ships whistle to request an opening of the Jefferson Street bridge. Shortly after I signaled, I saw the traffic control gates on the bridge come down to stop traffic from crossing the bridge. I continued to slow the vessel down by backing on its engine while waiting for the bridge to open, bringing the vessel nearly to a complete stop. At approximately 0205, the bridge began to open and it opened completely, coming to rest in the fully open position and displaying green lights on each bridge section. I then went ahead on the engine, and the vessel's speed began to increase. At approximately, 0211, I saw the south section of the bridge begin to come down quickly in front of the vessel, and then the north section started coming down quickly. I immediately placed the engine full astern, and ordered the mates on the bow and stern to drop their respective anchors. The stern anchor was deployed, but recognizing that our bow was going to allide with the bridge, I rang the general alarm and for their safety, the crew members on the bow quickly left the area before they were able to deploy the bow anchor.

At approximately 0212, the vessel's bow allided with the bridge. Shortly thereafter, the stern anchor was retrieved, I backed the vessel away from the bridge, and anchored the vessel

in the river. I contacted the United States Coast Guard to advise of the allision. All watch standers and others pertinent to the navigation of the vessel were promptly alcohol tested with negative results. Urine samples were promptly collected for drug testing.

At all times relevant to this incident all of the vessel's equipment was working properly.



Russell C. Couture  
Captain, Str. Herbert C. Jackson

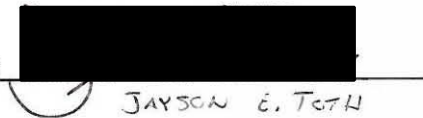
Date: 5-12-2013

Witness:



Robert F. Dorn

Witness:



JAYSON E. TOTH