

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

SUSAN K COLLIDES WITH MISSISSIPPI *

RIVER BRIDGE IN NATCHEZ, *

MISSISSIPPI ON APRIL 23, 2023 *

Accident No.: DCA23FM030

* * * * *

Interview of: DONALD SCOTT SPRENGER, Master
Susan K

On Board Towboat *Susan K*
Natchez, Mississippi

Wednesday,
April 26, 2023

APPEARANCES:

ANDREW EHLERS, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LT. [REDACTED], Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

ERIK KNUTSON, Claims Manager
SCF Marine, Inc.

JACOB CURTIS, Esq.
Counsel for SCF Marine, Inc.

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I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Donald Scott Sprenger:	
By Mr. Ehlers	4
By Lt. [REDACTED]	12
By Mr. Ehlers	12
By Lt. [REDACTED]	21
By Mr. Ehlers	22
By Lt. [REDACTED]	23
By Mr. Ehlers	25

I N T E R V I E W

(11:36 a.m. CDT)

MR. EHLERS: Good morning. It is 11:36 Central Daylight Time, on April 26th, 2023. We are on board the towboat, *Susan K*, and this is the interview of the captain of the towboat.

Captain, do you mind if we record this interview?

CAPT. SPRENGER: No, I don't mind.

INTERVIEW OF DONALD SCOTT SPRENGER

BY MR. EHLERS:

Q. Okay. Could you state your name for the recording?

A. Donald Scott Sprenger.

Q. And Sprenger's spelled?

A. S-p-r-e-n-g-e-r.

Q. All right. Thanks, Captain. So, Captain, if you could, just give me a summary of your background in maritime industry, towboats, how long you've been a captain, that kind of thing.

A. Okay. I started July 9th, 1976. Got my pilot's license in 1978, and got my intercoastal endorsement in 1980. I've been a captain or a master for probably 33 years.

Q. Okay. What kind of -- was all of your training on-the-job training?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. I started out as a deckhand, got the books to study for my pilot's exam in 1978, and then again in 1980 for the intercoastal.

- 1 Q. Okay. How long have you worked SCF?
- 2 A. Thirteen years.
- 3 Q. Thirteen years. Okay. And was that all as master or
4 captain?
- 5 A. No.
- 6 Q. How long have you been a captain?
- 7 A. Since -- maybe since 2015.
- 8 Q. Okay. About that time?
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. Okay. Has that all been on line boats?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. Okay. All right. And, how long have you been on the *Susan*
13 *K*?
- 14 A. Two and a half years.
- 15 Q. Okay. As captain?
- 16 A. Um-hum.
- 17 Q. Okay. Tell me a little bit about the *Susan K.* Horsepower,
18 number of engines, rudders, that kind of thing.
- 19 A. 6200, has a follow-up rudder system. It's 160 by 48 feet --
20 42 feet wide, 880 gross tons, fully founded (ph.).
- 21 Q. Twin screw?
- 22 A. Twin screw, yes.
- 23 Q. Are they --
- 24 A. Kort nozzles.
- 25 Q. Okay. Thank you.

1 A. It has two steering rudders and behind the Kort nozzles and
2 you have four what we call flanking rudders in front of the Kort
3 nozzles, two on each side.

4 Q. The throttles, are they pneumatic, electric --

5 A. They are electric. They were changed to electric several
6 years ago during repowering of the boat.

7 Q. In the -- during this transit or in the last -- let me do it
8 this way. In the last 3 months, have there been any issues with
9 the engines, rudders, mechanical-wise, electrical?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. And during this voyage, was there any issues with the
12 rudders --

13 A. No.

14 Q. -- engines.

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay. All right. How many barges were you pushing?

17 A. Twenty-five.

18 Q. Okay. All loaded.

19 A. All loaded.

20 Q. Okay. Besides engines, rudders, any other issues with the
21 vessel as far as how it handled, how it operated?

22 A. No.

23 Q. I think a little later I'd like to take a look -- a trip up
24 the wheelhouse, but can you tell me a little bit about how the
25 equipment is laid out in the wheelhouse, where your -- do you use

1 Rose Point?

2 A. We use Rose Point.

3 Q. Okay. So you have display screens --

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. -- computers, can you kind of explain how it's laid out?

6 A. We have, we have a radar to the right of me and to the left
7 of me. So we have two radars, and we usually set one at the 2
8 mile range and one at the 1 1/2 mile range. We have -- then next
9 to the radar on the right-hand side, starboard side, is the
10 display screen for the river chart for Rose Point. And then after
11 that, to the right and left of me are the screens for the depth
12 finders.

13 Q. How's your visibility out the windows?

14 A. It's really good. It's good.

15 Q. All right.

16 A. Clear.

17 Q. Okay. All right. So, why don't we right now go, if you
18 could, explain what happened during the accident. What I'd like
19 you to do is started where your transit started, where you picked
20 up the barges, and then take me down river, and then for the night
21 of the 23rd, if you could, as much detail as possible, explain
22 what happened.

23 A. That's a lot to remember.

24 Q. Well, you can, you can summarize the first part.

25 A. I can summarize it. Well, we started at St. Louis.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And we came out of St. Louis with 20 loads with no problems.
3 We stopped in Cairo and picked up 4 loads. So we left Cairo with
4 29 [sic]. Then at New Madrid, Missouri, we picked up our 25th
5 barge. And then we headed south from New Madrid, went down on the
6 lower end to -- let see, Caruthersville, Caruthersville Bridge,
7 Memphis and Memphis bridges and then went on. I was in bed at
8 Helena.

9 Q. You've got to keep your voice up a little bit.

10 A. Kick it up a little bit?

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. I'm sorry.

13 Q. Volumewise.

14 A. Then after Helena, we got down to Vicksburg or Greenville, I
15 should say Greenville, through Greenville and then Vicksburg and
16 then here to Natchez.

17 Q. What was your destination?

18 A. Mile 119 on the lower, Saint Rose.

19 Q. Okay. All right. So take me through two evenings ago, what
20 occurred.

21 A. The 23rd.

22 Q. Yes, sir.

23 A. I was coming around the bend above the bridge. It was
24 Natchez Beam Light, and I was coming around the bend. I just
25 wasn't paying attention to what I was doing. And when I was

1 looking up, by the time I was looking for my marks to make the
2 bridge, I realized that I was way off my marks that I use for
3 making the bridge, and I made the judgment call that I wasn't
4 going to be able to get back on those marks and get through the
5 through the bridge without sliding into the left-hand pier. So I
6 made the judgment call to -- since I was already out wide enough,
7 I thought I could come down through the other span. End of story.

8 Q. Okay. So, what -- can you tell me, if you can remember, what
9 kind of rudder --

10 A. What kind --

11 Q. -- you were trying to do? Say that again.

12 A. What kind -- say that again.

13 Q. In other words --

14 A. Explain that.

15 Q. Yeah. Engines and rudders, what were you trying to do as far
16 as --

17 A. Well, the engines were -- the engines, you know, normally
18 when you're, you know, when you're steering down a bridge, you're
19 usually at full engine speed.

20 Q. Full ahead.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay. All right. So you didn't adjust the engines or --

23 A. No, not until after the allision.

24 Q. Okay. And as far as what you're doing with the rudders, do
25 you recall?

1 A. Well, I was steering the boat to clear around that pier. As
2 far as how many degrees, we don't have anything that measures
3 degrees up there. The follow up steering is your stick and
4 whatever angle the stick is at. We have nothing that tells us the
5 angle. You can estimate what it is.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But that's, you know, the position of the stick, the control,
8 is the position supposedly of the rudder.

9 Q. Okay. I think maybe what I'd like to do is pull out a sheet
10 of paper here. I'd like to get an idea of the orientation of the,
11 of the tow as you were approaching the bridge.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Do you think it's possible to draw that out?

14 A. Not accurately, no.

15 Q. Okay. Well, let me ask this then. You're coming around the
16 bend.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. How are you coming around the bend? Are you flanking the
19 bend or --

20 A. No, no, I'm slow steering and then when you come around --
21 well, not slow steering, but I'm at maybe 2/3, 3/4 throttle --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- coming around the bend, and I was just out a little wide,
24 and it hadn't registered yet the position I was in.

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. And, when it did, when I looked at my marks and saw the
2 bridge, I thought there's no way I think I can make it back to my
3 marks. So I've got to do something else.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And that something else was to try to down through the
6 Natchez span.

7 Q. Okay. And to do that, were you putting port --

8 A. I had to put more, I had to put more port rudder to it, yeah.

9 Q. Okay. All right.

10 A. And, you know, commit myself one way or the other.

11 Q. Yeah, yeah. Okay. Let me back up. You said your marks.

12 Can you explain -- I mean I can understand vague what that means
13 but can you --

14 A. We use, we use marks for -- most pilots use marks for all the
15 bridges, maybe background marks, landmarks, you know, flashing
16 high tower, flashing lights at night, which is I use here, and
17 also there's a dock right above there, that's directly in line
18 with the tower. So if you can't see the tower, you could see the
19 red blinking dock light. And as it comes across in your field of
20 vision, across the bridge span, when it lines up -- normally when
21 it lines -- when it gets to the green light on my span that I'm
22 going to be making, I want to have my starboard string pretty much
23 lined up with the right-hand pier of the center span.

24 Q. Okay. All right. You said that --

25 LT. [REDACTED]: For the recording, Lieutenant [REDACTED] from

1 the Coast Guard.

2 BY LT. [REDACTED]:

3 Q. Captain, just one question. When you're lining up, what do
4 you use for your marks?

5 A. I just said that.

6 Q. I'm sorry. I --

7 A. The -- well, I'm sorry. The high tension tower --

8 Q. The high tension tower.

9 A. -- that's down below the bridge on the Mississippi side. And
10 then there's a dock right above there. That might be the Coast
11 Guard dock.

12 Q. Roger. Was there any back lighting issues in there or a
13 better question, could you tell me what the back lighting
14 circumstance was?

15 CAPT. SPRENGER: The only back lighting that I know of was
16 the casinos down below. I think there's a casino down there.
17 They're just all white lights.

18 LT. [REDACTED]: Roger.

19 BY MR. EHLERS:

20 Q. You didn't have any problems seeing your marks?

21 A. Not after I looked at them.

22 Q. Okay. But visually they were -- you were -- they weren't
23 obscured or anything?

24 A. They weren't obscured.

25 Q. Okay. All right. You mentioned that you weren't paying

1 attention was the words that you used.

2 A. Well, that's the only way I can describe it.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. I just wasn't in my zone --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. -- at the time, and I should have been. You get complacent
7 sometimes when you do something so many times, and you're sloppy.

8 Q. How many times were you -- have you -- would you say you have
9 piloted or captained a vessel through this bridge?

10 A. That bridge.

11 Q. Down bound.

12 A. Another math problem.

13 Q. You can, you can give me a broad.

14 A. The first time I made the bridge was in 1990. Let's see. I
15 was running down here in 1991 and worked in the northern route and
16 came back down here 2003. So 2003 to now, and two round trips
17 every other month. So --

18 Q. We can do the math later.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. So -- okay. That gives me an idea. You've done it a lot is
21 to say the least.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay. All right. Was there anything that was taking your
24 attention away? Were you on a cell phone? Were you looking at
25 the computer?

1 A. No, I was not on the cell phone. I was not on the cell
2 phone. I was not on the computer. I just wasn't paying
3 attention.

4 Q. Okay. Any other traffic in the area?

5 A. There was traffic behind me that I had already talked to and
6 met that were northbound, but no one close to the bridge that I
7 remember.

8 Q. Okay. This is --

9 A. There was northbound traffic though.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. It was farther down below.

12 Q. It wasn't affecting the bridge --

13 A. I wasn't going to deal with them until after I made the
14 bridge.

15 Q. Okay. All right. This isn't the first accident that we've
16 investigated of hitting this bridge -- of other towboats hitting
17 this bridge, sorry.

18 A. This bridge.

19 Q. This bridge.

20 A. Other people hit it?

21 Q. Yes, sir. So my question to you is, is this a particularly
22 difficult bridge transit in relation to other bridges along the
23 Mississippi River?

24 A. No, no, it's actually -- and that's probably why it's been
25 hit because it's an easy bridge to hit, and you get complacent.

1 It's an easy bridge to hit if you're not paying attention. You
2 also have, you know, a little higher water, a little swifter
3 current. So reaction time has to be more precise and on time. So
4 the -- I don't know what the other problems were with the other
5 pilots that hit the bridge. I just know what mine was.

6 Q. Okay. You mentioned higher water. Do you know what the
7 river stage was two nights ago?

8 A. I'd have to look again.

9 Q. Okay. I can look it up.

10 A. It's on a sign right outside the hotel that you go by if
11 you're looking there.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. But, you know, you're supposed to be looking at the bridge.
14 So.

15 Q. Was it high water for this time -- compared to this time of
16 year or is this always this time of year?

17 A. No, it's not real high. It's a falling river. So the
18 current's a little bit less --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- than it normally would be if it was a rising river. It's
21 not real high water. It gets much higher.

22 Q. Okay. So this wasn't necessarily an unusual water?

23 A. This isn't an unusual water stage, no --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- for this time of year, no.

1 Q. Okay. Just some other background. What kind of hitch
2 rotation are you on?

3 A. Twenty-eight on and -- twenty-eight days on, twenty-eight
4 days off.

5 Q. And where are you in that rotation right now?

6 A. I have 10 more days.

7 Q. Ten more days, okay. And what kind of watches are you
8 running?

9 A. We run 6 hour watches, 6 hours on and 6 hours off around the
10 clock.

11 Q. Okay. Do you have the front watches?

12 A. Front watch.

13 Q. Okay. What's your turnover times? In other words, is it
14 5:30, 0600.

15 A. It depends. We're not really, we're not really -- sometimes
16 one of us, you know, either one of us might be a little -- a few
17 minutes late getting up there. Sometimes we're a few minutes
18 early. But usually it's right around 5 o'clock, sometimes a
19 little earlier, sometimes a little later. Somebody, you know,
20 will distract you down here, and ask you something right when you
21 need to go up. And so -- but it's not written in stone. As long
22 you're there by 5:30. I don't complain, and I don't think he does
23 either. Generally nowadays, it's right around 5 o'clock most
24 days.

25 Q. Okay. How much sleep do you get in a 24 hour period? And

1 how is that sleep broken up?

2 A. I gets lot of sleep.

3 Q. How is that -- how do you --

4 A. I come out here to get sleep.

5 Q. All right. So if you -- so take me through a typical day
6 then as far as, you know, let's start with your 0500 and you come
7 on watch. Take me through what --

8 A. In the morning, I come on watch at 0500, do watch change
9 protocol, and then drive the boat.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Take over and, you know, deal with whatever's been passed
12 onto me. And then at around 11 o'clock I go off duty.

13 Q. Okay. And then where do you go from there?

14 A. Usually I come down here and check the crew, and sometimes I
15 might eat. Sometimes -- most of the time, I don't eat. I go back
16 up to my room, and go to bed.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Brush my teeth.

19 Q. So, and I'm going to get into detail because fatigue is
20 always important for us.

21 A. I get up --

22 Q. What time, what time would you say --

23 A. I get up at 3 o'clock.

24 Q. You get up at 3. Okay. What time would you say you put your
25 head down in the afternoon?

- 1 A. No later than 12.
- 2 Q. Okay. Okay.
- 3 A. But I get up at 3.
- 4 Q. Okay. And then what do you do between 3 and your next watch?
- 5 A. I walk.
- 6 Q. Walk the boat. Okay.
- 7 A. The second deck. I usually try to get at least 3 1/2 miles
- 8 in.
- 9 Q. Oh, okay. It's an exercise regime. Okay. All right. And
- 10 then you take the watch at 5?
- 11 A. Um-hum.
- 12 Q. Okay. And, then take me through the end of your watch to the
- 13 beginning of the next watch, the end of your night watch.
- 14 A. You mean 11 o'clock?
- 15 Q. Yeah.
- 16 A. When I'm not hitting bridges.
- 17 Q. Right.
- 18 A. Okay. At 11 o'clock I get relieved. I go -- again, I come
- 19 down here to the galley. I have my usual cottage cheese. Then I
- 20 go back up to my room, get ready for bed and usually I'm in bed by
- 21 11:45 or 23:45.
- 22 Q. Okay. And when do you wake up in the morning?
- 23 A. 4:30.
- 24 Q. Do you have breakfast before you go up on watch?
- 25 A. Not usually.

1 Q. Okay. How do you sleep? On a normal rotation -- normal
2 hitch --

3 A. I usually sleep pretty good.

4 Q. Do you?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. As you go through your hitch, as the days wear on,
7 how's your fatigue level? In other words, do you get more tired
8 as the rotation goes along, as the hitch goes on or --

9 A. I would say, no, but then again it depends on what's -- on
10 how the trip was going, whether the -- at the times when I get to
11 get up off watch and do something, participate in something then.
12 Yeah, you get tired. But normally I'm not too fatigued. I'm more
13 fatigued on the drive home if I get off at New Orleans.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. It's a 10 hour drive. So that's fatigue. When I come to the
16 boat, if they're 400 miles away, I will drive 300 miles, get a
17 room, spend the night, get plenty of rest, before I come on the
18 boat. The company reimburses me for that.

19 Q. Okay. As the NTSB I endorse such actions. So. So tell me
20 about the -- then your sleep in the 24 hours prior to the
21 accident. Did you sleep well? Did you get the full amount of
22 sleep that you normally get?

23 A. I think so.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I don't remember not being able to sleep. I wasn't --

1 Q. Did you -- it was getting close to -- go ahead.

2 A. I don't think fatigue was a problem that night. I wasn't --
3 you can tell if fatigue is setting in because you'll start to nod
4 off sitting in a chair. So you have to start standing up. So,
5 most pilots, I think that's what most pilots do. Get out of the
6 chair and stand up and drive for a while. You're a lot less
7 likely to fall asleep that way, and then there are rivers that you
8 get on, runs that you get on that are so damn boring, you're going
9 in a straight line for so long, like the Ohio River. You might
10 doze off for a while and it didn't make any difference.

11 Q. Yeah. All right. Did you nod off at any time --

12 A. No.

13 Q. -- during the watch prior to the accident?

14 A. No.

15 Q. The accident occurred towards the end -- tail end of your
16 watch.

17 A. I was actually in a good mood.

18 Q. Okay. So you didn't have -- feel any fatigue, didn't feel
19 tired --

20 A. No.

21 Q. -- at that point. Okay. All right. Again, fatigue is a big
22 issue with us which is why I'm hammering away at this.

23 A. Sure. I know it is.

24 Q. So, okay. Another question I've got to ask, did you drink
25 any alcohol in the 24 hours prior?

1 A. Not this trip.

2 Q. Okay. That's all I'm going to ask.

3 A. I'm just kidding.

4 MR. CURTIS: Save the jokes. None.

5 CAPT. SPRENGER: None. I don't drink at all.

6 MR. EHLERS:

7 BY MR. EHLERS:

8 Q. Okay. All right. Okay.

9 A. I'm a hard core Baptist. I don't drink.

10 Q. I understand. Does the wheelhouse have either internal or
11 external forward-facing video? Do you have video cameras on the
12 vessel?

13 A. Not that I know of.

14 Q. No. Okay. All right.

15 MR. EHLERS: [REDACTED], I'm going to review my notes. Do you
16 have some questions?

17 BY LT. [REDACTED]:

18 Q. Captain, what's the -- what's your normal width? You were
19 five wide on this trip, right?

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. How many wide do you guys normally go?

22 A. Well, that is normal for this boat. When the water's down a
23 little bit, you know, say we have marks, we have gauges we go by.
24 When the river stages get to a certain stage, we cut back. When
25 they drop down a certain stage, we load things a little heavier.

1 So 25 barges is normally what we push southbound in this river
2 stage.

3 Q. Okay. And who makes those decisions? The scheduler makes
4 all that?

5 A. No, I do.

6 Q. You make the five wide. Okay. Thank you. I really don't
7 have very many more questions.

8 BY MR. EHLERS:

9 Q. Okay. Just to again, hammer away at a couple more things.
10 In this area of the river, are there any peculiar aspects, eddies
11 or anything like that, that affect the tows or anything like that?

12 A. No, as far as the channel, say in the channel, there's no
13 eddies that -- not like in other places in the river like, you
14 know, you have to watch at Vicksburg. There's a huge eddy there
15 at Brown's Point, and if you -- it's hard left-hand turn. And if
16 you get out wide there, and you get in an eddy, that's where you
17 will stay. It'll drag you into the shore because you have the
18 current pushing you and the eddy coming upriver there, it'll just
19 suck you in.

20 Q. All right. That's all I have. Thank you.

21 LT. [REDACTED]: Yeah, I don't think I have any other questions.
22 I think we've covered everything. One thing, Captain, are we able
23 to get somebody who can operate the Rose Point and rewind it for
24 us so we can watch that? Is there somebody on board who could do
25 that today?

1 CAPT. SPRENGER: I think so.

2 LT. ██████: Okay.

3 CAPT. SPRENGER: Somebody taught me how to do it.

4 LT. ██████: Okay. Perfect.

5 MR. EHLERS: And, sir, do you have the manual for the Rose
6 Point?

7 CAPT. SPRENGER: Yes, we do.

8 MR. EHLERS: Okay. What I'd like to do is I'd like to get
9 that Rose Point data because we are able to review it in our
10 offices. So I -- can we -- do you want to provide it to us later
11 on?

12 MR. CURTIS: Yeah, but within a reasonable time.

13 MR. EHLERS: That's perfectly fine. In fact, that's easier
14 for me because then I don't have to figure out how to do it
15 myself. That's perfectly fine.

16 CAPT. SPRENGER: It's on YouTube. Rose Point is on YouTube.

17 MR. EHLERS: Everything is on YouTube.

18 CAPT. SPRENGER: To get the manual, just go to YouTube and
19 you can watch all the plotting and everything.

20 MR. EHLERS: That's a good point.

21 CAPT. SPRENGER: When I was taking my test to renew my radar
22 license, endorsement for intercoastal waters, it just went on
23 YouTube. And I'm refreshing my memory.

24 BY LT. ██████:

25 Q. I'm sorry. I did have one other question. Who was the

1 deckhand on watch with you?

2 A. Dee. I have a hard time remembering his last name.

3 Q. Is that Delta-Echo-Echo or --

4 A. It's Dee --

5 MR. CURTIS: This is Jake Curtis, the attorney representing
6 SCF. (Indiscernible) -- I know why he's having trouble. D- and
7 then --

8 CAPT. SPRENGER: And there's a Z in there, too.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, we'll just call him Zeke.

10 MR. CURTIS: Dee Raywin D-Charzar (ph.), he was the deckhand.

11 BY LT. [REDACTED]:

12 Q. Was anybody else on watch or was it just you and Dee?

13 A. No, Dee is the deckhand and Ben Ferguson is the second mate.

14 Q. Ben Ferguson.

15 A. The second mate stands the forward watch. That's an old
16 steamship thing.

17 Q. So Ben Ferguson was on watch with you?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Do you know where he was at --

20 A. No, but he does.

21 MR. McNELLEY: And this is Richard McNelley. I think you'll
22 -- if you were to talk to him, he would tell you he was in the
23 deck lock.

24 LT. [REDACTED]: He was in the deck lock.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And I can tell you with respect to Dee

1 Raywin, he was in the bathroom at the time -- taking a shower
2 (indiscernible) what you can find out.

3 LT. [REDACTED]: Okay. Roger.

4 BY MR. EHLERS:

5 Q. Tell me, how those guys -- how they stand watch. In other
6 words, a lot of boats --

7 A. Same as me.

8 Q. -- the deckhand --

9 A. Same watch as I have.

10 Q. But I mean, a lot of times, the deckhand will be on call in
11 the galley. Where do these guys usually post themselves during
12 their watch. Are they always --

13 A. Smoking, where they can smoke.

14 Q. Okay. All right.

15 A. Usually on the lounge. If it's hot, and there's a lot of
16 bugs, they'll be in here with the lights off.

17 Q. Okay. All right.

18 MR. EHLERS: Why don't we stop this interview, and we can
19 talk a little bit more about the deckhand and the second mate.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sounds good.

21 MR. EHLERS: So, all right. This concludes the recording.

22 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

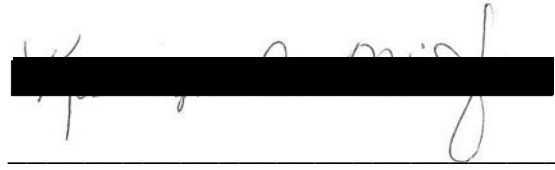
IN THE MATTER OF: *SUSAN K COLLIDES WITH MISSISSIPPI
RIVER BRIDGE IN NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI
ON APRIL 23, 2023*
Interview of Donald Scott Sprenger

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM030

PLACE: Natchez, Mississippi

DATE: April 26, 2023

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.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber