

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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BARGE COLLISION ITV *CAROL McMANUS*
& ITV *BIG D* NEAR ANGOLA, LOUISIANA
ON JANUARY 9, 2023

Accident No.: DCA23FM010

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Interview of: DENNIS KING, Master
ITV *Carol McManus*

ITV Carol McManus
Angola, Louisiana

Thursday,
January 12, 2023

APPEARANCES:

CWO [REDACTED], Investigating Officer
US Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment Vicksburg

CWO [REDACTED], Investigating Officer
US Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment Vicksburg

KENNY UNDERHILL, Director of Operations
Ingram Barge Company

RICK TORRES, Director of Compliance
Florida Marine Transporters

DAVID REISMAN, ESQ.

JASON KENNEY, ESQ.

LANCE BULLOCK, ESQ.

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Dennis King:

By CWO [REDACTED]

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:30 a.m.)

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3 CWO [REDACTED]: All right. Good morning. This is Chief Warrant
4 Officer [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard from Marine Safety
5 Detachment, Vicksburg, Mississippi. This is an interview with the
6 Master Dennis King of the *Carol McManus*.

7 We are on the *Carol McManus* now. It is January 12, 2023,
8 approximately 10:30 a.m.

9 We're just going to do a quick intro of everyone who is in
10 the room here.

11 CWO [REDACTED]: This is Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED] from US
12 Coast Guard, MSD Vicksburg

13 MR. UNDERHILL: Kenny Underhill, Ingram Barge Company,
14 director of operations.

15 MR. REISMAN: David Reisman with Liskow & Lewis, outside
16 counsel to Ingram Barge.

17 MR. KENNEY: Jason Kenney with Staines, Eppling & Kenney,
18 outside counsel to Florida Marine Transporters

19 MR. TORRES: Rick Torres, director of compliance, Florida
20 Marine.

21 MR. KING: Dennis King, Master of the *Carol McManus*.

22 MR. BULLOCK: Lance Bullock, Liskow & Lewis, also outside
23 counsel for Ingram Barge.

24 CWO [REDACTED]: All right. Great. Thank you all. This is an
25 investigation into the incident the other night. Collision

1 between the *Big D* and the *Carol McManus*.

2 INTERVIEW OF DENNIS KING

3 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

4 Q. So, Mr. King, I guess to get started, let's -- give us your
5 history. Talk about your background, how long you've been driving
6 boats. How long you've been working on towing vessels. How long
7 you've been a captain. Kind of just go through your history as a
8 boat captain.

9 A. I've been on the -- in the towing industry for 47 years.
10 I've been in the pilothouse for 44. I've been with Ingram for
11 just short of 15 years. And, I've been a Master on here for the
12 last two years. And I've been a Master previously to other
13 employers.

14 Q. So, you've been the Master of the *Carol McManus*
15 for two years, you said?

16 A. Approximately.

17 Q. And I know I checked your license, but just for the record,
18 can you just discuss, or describe what type of licenses you hold?
19 Merchant Mariner licenses.

20 A. I have a Master of Towing, Western Rivers. And, I also have
21 a 1600 Ton Master of Inspected Vessels, Western Rivers.

22 Q. So, you're training to be a master, has that all been on the
23 job training? Or, have you attended any sort of training center
24 or academy or anything like that?

25 A. I have not attended an academy. Towing, I've had various

1 training with Seamans' Church. Various other training to upgrade
2 licenses. But, most of it's on the vessel.

3 Q. So, as the captain of the *Carol McManus*, how does your
4 schedule work, in terms of like, your hitch schedule?

5 A. We work basically, 29 days on the boat, 27 off. That's a
6 basic schedule.

7 Q. Is everybody on that schedule? Or, is that like, the
8 master's schedule?

9 A. Yes. No. It's not the master's schedule. That's everyone's
10 schedule --

11 Q. The whole crew has the same schedule.

12 A. -- four week on, four week off. That's the base schedule.

13 Q. So, do you work with the whole -- does the whole crew change
14 at the same time? Or, is it like, scattered in terms of --

15 A. At times they are scattered. We have set crews at certain
16 times, but due to the constraints of personnel, you will have
17 other crew members that are filling in and in certain capacities.

18 Q. So, the other day -- so when this incident, the day this
19 incident occurred, how far along into your current hitch was it?

20 A. I'd been on for thirty-five days. I was riding over. I was
21 due off Wednesday, but I've been on thirty-five days.

22 Q. Okay. So that's -- so you were actually working like,
23 overtime, I guess? Or past your scheduled --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. When were you supposed to leave the vessel?

1 A. Within the working over? I was getting off on Wednesday, the
2 11th.

3 Q. The previous Wednesday, so, the 11th?

4 A. Yes. I was going to get off on the 11th from working over.
5 My regular crew change date would have been the previous
6 Wednesday.

7 Q. Do you know why you were delayed in coming off your hitch?

8 A. Need for personnel to run the route.

9 Q. What's the -- can you describe like the crew make up of the
10 *Carol McManus*? The typical, you know, like the whole, how many
11 persons are onboard and all of that?

12 A. We typically, when we're running a route between Baton Rouge,
13 on up above Baton Rouge and running into Columbus, we typically
14 have an eight man crew. We have a, the master of the vessel,
15 pilot, mate, a lead man, two deckhands and a cook, and a chief
16 engineer. And, at this time, we have a junior engineer. We had
17 nine.

18 Q. So there was nine crew members onboard --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- for this, the day of the incident. All right. Can you
21 talk about the vessel itself? Kind of go over just the
22 arrangement, in terms of engines, horsepower, rudder, steering,
23 all the systems?

24 A. We have 9000 horsepower, three main engines, 3000 a piece.
25 Triple screw. Becker steering rudders. Two generators.

1 Electrical systems, Fast systems for sewage. Electronic system
2 with radar and all of the electronics that we have.

3 Q. Are the engines paired with the transmission?

4 A. Paired with the transmission.

5 Q. Is there a reduction gear?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Do you know what kind of reduction gear?

8 A. Right offhand, I don't recall.

9 Q. What kind of throttles are in the wheelhouse?

10 A. Electric. Electric throttles, redundant systems.

11 Q. So, there's no pneumatic?

12 A. Air? No.

13 Q. There's no air. Do you know the last time there was -- so,
14 you've been the master for two years, right, on this vessel?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Do you know when was the last time there was major
17 maintenance completed on the rudders or engine? Do you know?

18 A. Main engines, they have about 32,000 hours since the last
19 overhaul. It has been in the shipyard for some maintenance
20 approximately eight months ago. I wasn't on the vessel at the
21 time when it went in for some repair.

22 Q. So in your time as the master, have you had any trouble with
23 the rudders or the engines?

24 A. No.

25 Q. What kind of equipment is in the wheelhouse for navigation?

1 Can you just describe all of the equipment that you -- up there?

2 A. We have three VHF radios. Two radars. And an AIS system.
3 Swing meter. Sounders. Depth finders. Various communication
4 systems, internal communication systems. Search lights.

5 Q. Does the vessel have internet access? Like --

6 A. Yes. At times. Depending on internet connectivity.

7 Q. So, it's satellite?

8 A. Some of it's off cell phone. Some of it's on satellite.
9 Where it switches back and forth. Some of the tracker systems
10 are. Internal tracker.

11 Q. Where are the radios located on the bridge?

12 A. We have one radio is the, that we use for primary navigation
13 is on the starboard side, on the console where it's easily within
14 hands' reach. And we have a backup radio and the stand-by radio
15 on the port side. Same area, just across from it, near the
16 console.

17 Q. Are personal cell phones allowed on the bridge when you are
18 on watch?

19 A. We have personal cell phones. There is a policy where
20 they're not to interfere with navigation or whatever we got going
21 on. Electronic device policy.

22 Q. So, for this trip, can you just start from the beginning of
23 this trip, kind of, where you got the barges, what's the cargo,
24 where you were going?

25 A. This northbound trip?

1 Q. Yes, sir.

2 A. Okay. We picked this tow up at Triangle Reserve, at mile 136
3 on the lower. Twelve loads, thirty empties. We have caustic
4 soda, styrene monomer. Ethanol. Those are the liquid cargoes.
5 Potash, a phosphate, and ores for dry cargo.

6 Q. And what was the, where's the destination? Where were you
7 going to?

8 A. Columbus.

9 Q. Columbus?

10 A. Mile 937 on the lower.

11 Q. Is this a regular route for you? For the vessel?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. How many times do you think you've made this voyage, or, this
14 route? Completed this route?

15 A. The route between here and Columbus? Eighteen years, two
16 trips a month at a minimum, I'd say 250 times, between working
17 over and everything else. I've ran up and down, exclusively.

18 Q. Prior to getting underway with the load down south, did you
19 conduct checks of like, the engines and the steering and all that?

20 A. Yes. Yeah. We do a pre-voyage. Before we ever board the
21 vessel we do a pre-voyage. And then we do periodic checks of
22 various systems. Backup systems and so forth.

23 Q. So, before leaving on this trip, were there any -- did you
24 notice any problems with the engines or steering or anything like
25 that?

1 A. No. They're turned up to maximum RPM. Like what they
2 typically turn up to at all times. Rudder function was good.

3 Q. So, how did the vessel handle once you got underway?

4 A. Oh, it handled good. It's a short load to tow and with the
5 number of loads, it handled well.

6 Q. So, the night of the incident, can you just kind of go over
7 what time you got relieved, did Mr. Powell relieve you and kind of
8 what was discussed at this meeting?

9 A. We discussed, it was approximately 10:55 to, well, 2255 to
10 2300. We discussed traffic in the area. Potential conditions.
11 And possible conditions. That pretty much sums it up. Everything
12 was working fine.

13 Q. When you were doing relief, what was your assessment of kind
14 of, the upcoming, you know, next few --

15 A. Upcoming watch?

16 Q. -- yeah. Like, what was your assessment?

17 A. The upcoming watch should be fairly smooth. Very low traffic
18 in the area at the time. So you've got a minimum interaction
19 coming up for the next several hours anyway, from what I can
20 ascertain from the monitoring systems and listening to radio.

21 Q. What was your first indication of this accident, there was an
22 incident occurring?

23 A. A bump. I was in bed sleeping and I felt the first bump.

24 Q. Okay. So, you didn't hear -- there was no alarms or whistles
25 or --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- general alarms, or anything going off?

3 A. No.

4 Q. So, once you felt this bump, what did you do?

5 A. I got out of bed, to stand up, put clothes on to come
6 upstairs. That's not something that you usually feel, a bump like
7 that. And then, there were several bumps.

8 Q. So you said you got up, got dressed, went up to the
9 wheelhouse --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- what did you see when you got up to the wheelhouse?

12 A. I saw barges coming apart, floating down the river. Trying
13 to make, Van was trying to make maneuvers to keep from running
14 over other stuff. Just trying to assess the situation as far as,
15 because there were barges scattered a pretty good little bit.

16 We had one block of about twelve barges that was kind of
17 hanging together, but the rest of it was scattered. And then, the
18 four strings in our tow were together, that we had a hold of, so
19 we were trying to get to one side to get out of the way.

20 Q. So, what did Mr. Powell say to you when you first got up to
21 the bridge?

22 A. He was not -- he didn't say anything directly to me,
23 initially, other than he thought he was on a wrong, you know, he
24 was not happy that the incident had occurred. He had thought he'd
25 made arrangements and was just trying to adapt to the other -- at

1 the situation going on at that point.

2 Q. Did you take any actions while you were up there, in terms
3 of, like, did you take controls?

4 A. No.

5 Q. What was your role?

6 A. He was trying to maneuver to one side, I did not take the
7 helm. I began trying to make various phone calls and
8 notifications to try to get some assistance together with the
9 barges to stop the, you know, to keep the barges -- get whatever
10 barges recovered that we could. Trying to get in touch with Carol
11 Marine and notifications to Kenny and various parties that had to
12 be notified. Trying to get a number to the Coast Guard, which the
13 one number I had wasn't the one to call -- but, anyway, we did get
14 the number. No response on the 16.

15 Q. You said no response on 16?

16 A. No response from the Coast Guard on 16.

17 Q. What was the weather like that morning?

18 A. Weather was clear. The weather was good. It's dark, but it
19 was clear.

20 Q. So, this incident involved passing arrangements around this
21 bend, are you -- is there anything unusual about this location,
22 from your experience?

23 A. In that particular area, you can meet on either side,
24 depending on the tows and personal preference. Situation of
25 particular river stages come in to play, but, it's the preference

1 of the individuals involved.

2 Q. How was is that turn right now in terms of you saying the
3 river stages? You know, can you just describe how the river is
4 and how that turn is at the moment?

5 A. It's just below Point Breeze where you have there's a dyke,
6 it's just below the intake of it blows over -- control. Below
7 Point Breeze. We were out near the dyke initially, there's a red
8 buoy line that's on up above Fort Adams that they come down. We
9 were behind where the low-water buoys could be, but -- you could
10 meet there, it just need -- people need to be set up in proper
11 place. You can meet on either side.

12 Q. So, during your watch, how do you keep a log?

13 A. How do I keep a log?

14 Q. Yeah. Like, the logbook, is it on a computer?

15 A. It's on a computer.

16 Q. What kind of information do you put in there?

17 A. We'll put in delays, crew changes, pickups, drops, tug
18 service, tug assist, various different activities on the log. In
19 helm, we log change of watch, monitored channels, and various
20 other drills and things that we perform.

21 Q. Can you describe the -- while you're onboard as the master,
22 is it the watch rotation that you have?

23 A. Work six hours on, six hour off. Twice a day. Six hour
24 watch is approximately 1100 -- or 2300 to 0500. 0500 to 1100 and
25 1100 to 1700. And 1700 to 2300.

- 1 Q. So, how much sleep do you normally get in a 24 hour period?
- 2 A. A 24 hour period? I probably get eight hours of sleep a day.
- 3 For my daily four hours each watch off.
- 4 Q. So that's split up between the two different watches?
- 5 A. Right.
- 6 Q. So it's not eight hours at one time?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. So, prior to the incident, how would you describe the quality
- 9 of sleep you had that day?
- 10 A. Adequate. I was sleeping real well when this took place.
- 11 Typically, I'll get four and half hours sleep from 2300 to 0500.
- 12 And I usually get about three and half in the afternoons, noon to
- 13 about 3:30. I'll set my alarm for 4:00, so if I get that far,
- 14 that's good.
- 15 Q. Do you drink any sort of caffeinated beverages?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. What do you drink for caffeine?
- 18 A. Tea. And, I'll drink a Monster zero sugar drink.
- 19 Q. How long have your worked with Mr. Powell?
- 20 A. Van had gotten on about two days before we left Triangle.
- 21 I've worked with him on and off at times. I've not worked with
- 22 him for an extended period of time. Am I loud enough?
- 23 Q. You can always be louder.
- 24 A. Always be louder, okay.
- 25 Q. Thank you for checking.

1 Q. Okay. So, you typically, I guess you don't work with
2 Mr. Powell that often? Is that what you're saying?

3 A. No. I do not.

4 Q. Okay. How would you assess his skills as a pilot? As a
5 wheelman?

6 A. From what I've seen in the past, he's very experienced and
7 had good skills.

8 Q. So, during a voyage, are there any situations that you would
9 come on and take the sticks, even though it's not your watch?
10 Sort of like, a bridge pass or difficult turns, or something like
11 that?

12 A. No.

13 Q. So, when you're off watch, you're off watch. You're not
14 going on the bridge to, like I said, do any sort of maneuvers?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Is it part of your job to write any sort of periodic
17 evaluations for the pilots?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Have you ever written an evaluation for Mr. Powell?

20 A. He may have been on a vessel at one point in time about a
21 year ago, whenever I had to do evaluations.

22 Q. Have you ever written, either formal, informal, doesn't
23 matter, any sort of negative evaluation of a pilot's performance?

24 A. No.

25 Q. At this time, is there anything else that you could think of

1 that you want to say that would assist us in our investigation?

2 A. No.

3 Q. You're ready to go home after thirty-five days, right?

4 CWO [REDACTED]: Well, Mr. King, thank you for your time. I
5 appreciate you taking the time to spend with us. That concludes
6 the interview.

7 (Whereupon, the interview 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: BARGE COLLISION ITV *CAROL McMANUS*
 & ITV *BIG D* NEAR ANGOLA, LOUISIANA
 ON JANUARY 9, 2023
 Interview of Dennis King

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM010

PLACE: Angola, Louisiana

DATE: January 12, 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.



Angela Allen
Transcriber