

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: JACKIE BURNS, Pilot
ITV *BIG D*

ITV *Big D*
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., outside counsel Ingram Barge
Liskow & Lewis

JASON KENNEY, ESQ.

LANCE BULLOCK, ESQ., outside counsel for Ingram Barge
Liskow & Lewis

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Jackie Burns:

By [REDACTED]

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:45 a.m.)

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3 CWO ██████: It's still good morning. This is Chief Warrant
4 Officer ██████ with Coast Guard, investigating officer from MSD,
5 Vicksburg, Mississippi. I'm onboard the *Big D*, and this is an
6 interview with Mr. Jackie Burns.

7 Today is the 12th of January. It is approximately 11:45.

8 Right now, we're just going to go around the room and
9 introduce everyone that is present. We'll go this way.

10 MR. BULLOCK: Lance Bullock, Liskow & Lewis, outside counsel
11 for Ingram Barge.

12 MR. REISMAN: David Reisman from Liskow & Lewis, outside
13 counsel for Ingram Barge.

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

16 CWO ██████: Chief Warrant Officer ██████, US Coast Guard,
17 MSD, Vicksburg.

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

20 MR. KENNEY: Jason Kenney, Staines, Eppling and Kenney,
21 outside counsel for Florida Marine.

22 MR. BURNS: Jackie Burns, Pilot on the *Big D*.

23 CWO ██████: All right. Great. Thank you.

24 We're here today because of a collision between the *Big D* and
25 the *Carol McManus* that occurred the other night on 9 January.

1 All right. Mr. Burns, let's get started here.

2 INTERVIEW OF JACKIE BURNS

3 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

4 Q. So, if you could, pretty much, tell us your story. What's
5 your background. How you became a master or pilot. You know,
6 you're time in the industry, training, all that. From the
7 beginning, please.

8 A. I started working at *Sarah D*, Incorporated (ph.) somewhere
9 around 1995. Got my license January 6, 1999. Move from there on
10 the Tennessee River where I was running at then. Down into the
11 Mobile area for Henry Marine Service. I went from Henry Marine
12 Service to Marquette. Left Marquette went to work for *Nature's*
13 *Way Endeavor*, or *Nature's Way* on the *Nature's Way Endeavor*. And
14 went to work from *Nature's Way* to SMS, Southern Management
15 Systems, pushing on the *Black Warrior*. From there, I went to --
16 actually, from there I came to Florida Marine seven years ago.

17 Been on several rivers of -- Florida Marine and several boats
18 and ended up here.

19 Q. So, what Merchant Mariner license do you hold?

20 A. MOTV, Master of Towing Vessel.

21 Q. So, Master of Towing Vessel. Your training to become a
22 pilot, has that all been on-the-job training, or, did you ever
23 attend like a training center or college or anything like that?

24 A. I went to Davis Marine for my original license, Davis Marine
25 in Memphis for my radar endorsements, of course. And, went back

1 to update to an Inland, to Davis. That's been about it.
2 Everything else has been either posting on rivers or OJT,
3 whatever.

4 Q. So, how long have you been a pilot on the *Big D*?

5 A. Since the 24th, I think, of December, I believe.

6 Q. What I mean is, is this -- you just started working on the
7 *Big D* then?

8 A. Yes. I've been on the *John Grimsley* before that.

9 Q. Is that a similar type vessel?

10 A. Yeah. It's a similar type vessel. It's the sister vessel to
11 this one.

12 Q. Okay. Sister vessel. So, what's your work schedule like in
13 terms of your hitch? Like, how many days on and days off is it?

14 A. Twenty-eight days on and fourteen days off is my actual
15 schedule.

16 Q. So, the other day, the day that the incident happened, how
17 far along into your current hitch was that?

18 A. The 25th to the 9th so, that was how far along it was on this
19 boat.

20 Q. December 25th? That was when you got on.

21 A. Yeah. Something like that.

22 Q. So about two weeks in?

23 A. I think so. Yes, sir.

24 Q. What's the normal watch schedule like during your hitch? In
25 terms of on the vessel, so what's your watch schedule with the

1 Master?

2 A. Six on, six off. On the back watch. We relieve at 1730 and
3 1130, you know, 7:00 in the morning, 11:00 in the afternoons.

4 Q. Where there any changes to the schedule during this voyage?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. Can you describe the *Big D*? So, kind of just talk about the
7 vessel's capabilities, steering, horsepower, engines, all that.

8 Just describe everything that you know about the vessel.

9 A. Well, it's a 6000 horsepower boat. It's got big barn door
10 rudders on it. It steers good. Kort nozzles for wheels. Steers
11 good. It backs good. Shoves good. It's a very good boat.

12 Q. How many engines?

13 A. Two.

14 Q. There's two engines?

15 A. Twin.

16 Q. And you've got flanking rudders as well?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Vessel has flanking rudders. Can the rudders be operated
19 independently, or is it all in one?

20 A. You talking about from flanking to steering?

21 Q. Yes. When you operate the rudder, is it like, can you do
22 that independently from each other? Like, the two engines, like,
23 the two rudders? Or, is it all work at the same time?

24 A. Well, your steering rudders work together, and your flanking
25 rudders work together. But you have a set of steering controls

1 for the flanking and a set of steering controls for the main
2 steering.

3 Q. How do you control the engines from the bridge?

4 A. With a set of power command throttles.

5 Q. So, since you came onboard, have you had any trouble with the
6 rudders or the engine?

7 A. No, sir.

8 Q. What equipment's in the wheelhouse? Can you talk about all
9 of the navigational equipment that's up there?

10 A. Two radars. We have two computer monitors both of them
11 equipped with Rose Point. Chart plotting system units. NS.
12 Slide indicators. GPS. AIS. Depth sounders. Wind gauge.
13 That's pretty much the main.

14 Q. How many radios are there? I don't know if I heard that.

15 A. Three radios. Plus, we always keep a portable radio, hand-
16 held radio up there as a spare.

17 Q. And where are they located, in regards to where the sticks
18 are?

19 A. Well, your mic controls where they're at is, you have one
20 that's forward of your right knee, one that's forward of your left
21 knee and one that's adjacent to your right knee. That's where
22 your hand-held mics are. Your radios, you have two on the
23 starboard and one on the port. That's your fixed. The spare
24 radio just sits up on the console in front.

25 Q. What's the company policy with regard to use of personal cell

1 phones on the bridge.

2 A. It falls under restrict devices, no cell phone use while on a
3 watch, except for if it's in the areas of your duties or something
4 like that.

5 Q. So, you're allowed to have a cell phone, your personal cell
6 phone on watch with you on the bridge?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Did you have your cell phone on you the night of the
9 incident?

10 A. Yes, sir. It was in the bridge. It wasn't on me, but it was
11 in the bridge.

12 Q. During watch, during that watch on Monday, were you using
13 your cell phone at all? During that watch?

14 A. The only time it was used I believe was when my alarm came
15 for the -- got fifteen minutes to turn into midnight position. I
16 keep an alarm on there for that. Other than that.

17 Q. So, what is that, midnight position?

18 A. Midnight position is 12:00 is where you're at and what you're
19 doing. You log it in and stuff.

20 Q. Oh. Into the vessel's logbook?

21 A. Into the vessel's logbook and on the -- our Cenex (ph.)
22 vessel log, electronic log.

23 Q. At this point, I'd like you to describe this voyage starting
24 from when you got on the vessel in terms of the tow, the cargo,
25 where you picked it up, where you were going. Everything you can

1 remember leading up to the incident.

2 A. We were, oh, shoot, somewhere around St. Louis, going up when
3 I got on the vessel. Went up through Mel Price lock all the way
4 up to Florence, Illinois. Turned around and came back. Picked up
5 barges along the way, I believe fifteen barges out on that. All
6 the out the Upper. Picked up to the equivalent of nineteen, four
7 more barges in Cairo. Started our transit down from Cairo,
8 Illinois, all the way to where we had the incident.

9 Q. So, Cairo is where you picked up all this load, this current
10 load that you have?

11 A. That's where we completed our tow at before we ended up
12 picking up the rest of our tow. Pick up more barges as you come
13 down.

14 Q. So, what was the configuration? The tow configuration?

15 A. We had three strings of five and then a string of four.

16 Q. What was the cargo?

17 A. We had DDG, corn, two loads of steel, three load of ethanol.

18 Q. What was the destination?

19 A. Different destinations all the way down --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- to Mereaux. Usually it stops in Mereaux.

22 Q. So, is this a regular route for the vessel, this current
23 trip?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. How many times would you say you made this voyage? This

1 trip?

2 A. This voyage? This trip?

3 Q. Yeah. So, this route that you were running. How many time
4 would you say you've done this trip?

5 A. This trip, once.

6 Q. So, overall -- so Mr. Burns, I'm probably asking in not the
7 right way here, but, so, how many times would you say you've done
8 this whole trip? Not saying right now, specifically. But, like,
9 how many times in your career have gone down the river, this
10 river, this way?

11 A. Countless. Fifty times?

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Up and down. I guess, maybe more than that. Maybe less.
14 Quite a few.

15 Q. So, prior to getting underway from Cairo, did you all do any
16 checks of like, engines and steering and all that?

17 A. Yes. You do that every watch change.

18 Q. When you got underway, how did the vessel handle?

19 A. Handled good. It handled good all the way down. It's -- had
20 no problems with handling.

21 Q. All right. So, at this point. I would like for you to just
22 go through the incident. So, start at when you came on watch and
23 did your pass down with the Master, kind of what you all
24 discussed. And then, everything that you can remember leading up
25 to and until after the incident.

1 A. Well, I came on watch at 11:30. Had a watch discussion with
2 the Captain, Garvin. Told me who was coming up. The general
3 goings on and everything else. Any wishes that he had to, you
4 know, having down through there. Transited down. Met a few boats
5 coming up. I don't remember exactly which ones. At about 1:30 in
6 the morning, I made a passing agreement with the *Carol McManus*,
7 right about Black Hawk Landing. And, we agreed upon one during
8 the passing agreement. You know, we work it out to greet on the
9 one. So, I stayed on in that area there, at the Red River water
10 project, or whatever they called it. Took that side of the buoys,
11 which would be the point way. And I come down there toward Ft.
12 Adams and everything else. Tied on the right descending shore and
13 everything. Give him plenty of time to get up. Actually, I had
14 backed my throttles off to give him more time to get into a
15 position. Slowed my headway. Right about, right before Ft.
16 Adams light, I looked on my -- checked my charts and checked the
17 radar and everything else. And on the charts, I noticed his boat
18 was steering toward the right descending, which would mean that
19 his boat was coming in. His head was starting to angle out
20 because it shows the trajectory of your boat. So, if your boats
21 going in, that means your head's coming out. So, that would've
22 been the point for me to assume that he was starting his crossing
23 out to widen out for me to make the pass, for him to go ahead and
24 take the bend way. So, I watched the bank, made sure I was in
25 line with the bank good and I was tight enough on the bank and not

1 going to hit the dyke down below it, below the point there, the
2 edge of the point. And, I was lining my header line up on it, and
3 looking down at my radar, waiting for the dock, to see if it was
4 going to be above the water or below the water. See if it would
5 show on the radar. And, when I looked back over, when I looked
6 back up just to check his boat position, I noticed that his -- the
7 aspect of his lights were sitting at an oblique angle to me.
8 Which means he was crossing. I look, I check on my -- the I
9 looked at my Rose Point, I checked, and I could see his definite
10 steer, coming towards me. And, for a split second I thought that
11 is a strange move, you know, is he incapacitated, or is he
12 something. So, I grabbed the radio and I called him. I said,
13 you're cutting in on me pretty hard. And at that time, he
14 responded with I thought we'd agreed on the two. I said, no, sir,
15 we agreed on the one. And, he asked me if I could pull it off of
16 him, and I told him I could not pull them off him at that angle.
17 That would put my boat in severe danger of having a collision or
18 him clipping my boat, or me knocking out of tow and going under
19 his rakes. He had twelve loads surrounded with rakes. And, I
20 told him, I said, I might be able to pull it in. And at that
21 time, I think I was going for the general alarm about then. Who
22 knows. We just started backing and I hit the general alarm, and
23 the captain came up, came running up, he was the first one in the
24 wheelhouse. The first one on the scene. I told the crew that --
25 to brace themselves, we might have a collision. I can't remember

1 if I said probably have a collision, or might have collision or
2 will have a collision. But, when I let off the general alarm and
3 I was backing, Captain Garvin made it up to the wheelhouse, and I
4 don't remember the timeframe, but that's when we started colliding
5 and the barges started separating. The boat broke out of tow and
6 I was trying to, trying to worry about keeping my boat in tow and
7 keep from flipping around, because it broke my inside, my port
8 side wires and my capstan line. And I didn't want the boat to
9 flip around on the outside of the tow and get drug down under the
10 rakes, or get drug down on top of my own rakes. And seeing what
11 was going to happen. My starboard wire's going to break or if I
12 was going to be able to get my guys to get the wire off in time
13 and keep my boat in a safe proximity from the barges.

14 After that, started policing up the barges and trying to get
15 the ones that were above from to keep from coming down on him or
16 get trapped underneath them. Trying to get them into position
17 where it be safer for him and me, myself. Started re-building
18 tow. We put them on the side of him after he landed on the bank.
19 Started picking up barges and everything.

20 In amongst that, sometime, I had called traffic on our -- on
21 13 which is the local river traffic, and told anybody down below
22 that there was barges coming that way, you know, and everything.
23 That we had a collision there was barges floating. In some manner
24 of speak, I don't remember the exact words, tried to notify them.
25 We attempted to notify the Coast Guard on 16, couldn't get a

1 response from them on 16. I think the other boat probably
2 contacted them, because we didn't make contact with New Orleans,
3 and then Western Rivers contacted us back after that.

4 Q. What was the weather like on scene?

5 A. Very light haze. At the worst, I had two miles of
6 visibility, but at the time when it happened, it was a little
7 light haze, but the visibility for the bends we was at was almost
8 unlimited.

9 Q. When you say your understanding was, or, you had agreed to a
10 pass on the ones, that means port side, port to port?

11 A. Port to port. Yes, sir.

12 Q. Is there anything unusual about the location of the incident,
13 like that bend? Is there anything unusual that you know of?

14 A. No, sir. It's pretty routine passing.

15 Q. So, when you make passing arrangements with other vessels, is
16 there any way -- do you log that information anywhere?

17 A. No, sir. Make so many, sometimes, it would be just about
18 impossible to log.

19 Q. About how long before the incident occurred, did you make the
20 passing agreement?

21 A. Twenty, twenty-five minutes. That timeframe.

22 Q. Is that normal for making arrangements, about twenty minutes
23 before?

24 A. Usually you make them as soon as you can so that you can go
25 ahead and set it up. So, the sooner you can make it, the better

1 off you are.

2 Q. In the twenty-four hour period before the incident, how much
3 sleep did you get?

4 A. I get lots of sleep. I'm on a routine, so, anywhere from
5 nine hours.

6 Q. Nine hours. Is that split between two watches?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. So, prior to relieving the captain that night, how much sleep
9 did you get in that timeframe before?

10 A. Four and half to five hours.

11 Q. How would you describe the quality of the sleep?

12 A. It's good. On here, it's really good. There's no noise or
13 anything that -- it's about like sleeping in a hotel.

14 Q. So, how were you feeling during that watch? Physically, in
15 terms of like, your mental state?

16 A. I was feeling good. I was feeling good. I was perky. I
17 was -- I don't if anybody that runs ever run a tow boat, I was
18 enjoying my watch. Just, sometimes you know, you just enjoy your
19 ride down, or your ride up, whichever way you're going.

20 Q. Did you drink any caffeinated drinks?

21 A. I don't remember. Sometimes I do. Probably a diet Pepsi
22 when I first come on.

23 Q. That's your drink of choice? Diet soda? You don't drink
24 coffee?

25 A. Sometimes I'll drink coffee.

1 Q. You typically do have some sort of caffeinated drink though?

2 A. Yeah. Sometimes. Sometimes I don't. But, typically, yes.

3 Q. Give me a moment here. Go through some notes.

4 So, at this point, is there anything that I haven't asked
5 that you think would add to this investigation? Anything that
6 you'd like to tell us?

7 A. No, sir.

8 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay. No problem at all, Mr. Burns.

9 So, at this point, I'd like to thank you for your time. I
10 appreciate it. And, that's going to conclude the interview.

11 (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 Jackie Burns

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