



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of Marine Safety

## Interview Summary

**Casualty:** Contact of *Miss Mollye D* tow with Bayou Ramos Bridge (NTSB No. DCA22FM008)

**Date:** December 23, 2021, at 0326 CST

**Location:** Bayou Boeuf, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, near Amelia, Louisiana, 29°40.67' N, 91°8.37' W

**Person Interviewed:** Mr. Matt Parker, Lead Man and Front Watch Deckhand, Towing Vessel *Miss Mollye D*

**Interview Participants:** Mr. A. Ehlers, NTSB  
LT [REDACTED], US Coast Guard  
LTJG [REDACTED], US Coast Guard  
Mr. Z. D. Deloach, Deloach Marine Services  
Mr. W. Schwartz, representing Deloach Marine Services  
Mr. J. Devall, representing Mr. Joseph Giordano  
Mr. A. Hayes, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development  
Ms. Rebekah Esnault, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development  
Mr. D. Forrester, Ingram Barge Co.

**Summary Provided By:** Mr. A. Ehlers, NTSB

### OVERVIEW

Mr. Parker was interviewed via Zoom video conference on January 26, 2022. The interview was conducted in conjunction with the investigation into the December 23, 2021, casualty involving the contact of the *Miss Mollye D* tow with the Bayou Ramos Bridge near Amelia, Louisiana. Unless specifically delineated by quotes, the text that follows is not a verbatim record of the conversation. It has been developed from notes of the interview.

### INTERVIEW SUMMARY

At the time of the casualty, Mr. Parker was the leadman and front watch (0600–1200/1800–2400) deckhand of the *Miss Mollye D*. His responsibilities included:

- Managing the vessel and helping the captain,
- Hourly engine room checks and maintenance, to include
  - Checking expansion tanks, day tanks, murphy switches
  - Ensuring no leaks
  - Draining water tanks
  - Ensuring no oil or diesel in the bilges
  - Draining Racor fuel separators,
- Swapping generators every 3 days,
- Writing maintenance and repair requests if no parts or knowledge of the equipment on board,
- Cleaning and cooking,
- “Boat work” and “Tow work.”

Mr. Parker had worked for Deloach Marine Services (DMS) for 3.5 Years. He was trained by senior deckhands and captains. He holds a towing vessel tankerman-PIC license (diesel and lube oil only).

Previous to joining DMS, he had been incarcerated. He stated that, when he was younger, he had served on offshore supply and crew boats.

Mr. Parker was normally assigned to the *Miss Mollye D* but had worked on two other vessels in the fleet. He had been the lead deckhand on the *Miss Mollye D* for the last two hitches, although the on-call deckhand on the casualty voyage, Mr. Robb, was senior to him.

Mr. Parker's normal work schedule is 28 days on/14 days off, but he can be extended as needed by the company if agreed to by him. He had been aboard the *Miss Mollye D* for about a week before the casualty, and his hitch lasted 41 days. The previous hitch had been the normal 28 days. Mr. Parker stated that he seldom stood the back watch; if he did not stand his usual front watch, he stood on-call watch.

Mr. Parker stated that he primarily communicated with the captain during their shared front watch. His communications with the captain included "everything concerning the boat," including tow building and drops.

Mr. Parker did not stand watch with the pilot, Mr. Giordano. Therefore, his interactions with Mr. Giordano were normally during meals and watch changes. Mr. Parker stated that he "gets along" with Mr. Giordano. They are not friends outside of work, because they live in different places and have family lives separate from the business. Mr. Parker described Mr. Giordano as "a good guy" and feels the same about the vessel captains.

Mr. Parker stated that deckhands change, and he tries to get along with everybody. Rotating deckhands requires more training and explaining, but it is not a problem.

Daily engine checks were recorded in engine room logs, along with any problems. During the casualty voyage, there were no problems with the engines, steering systems, or electrical system that Mr. Parker could recall.

Bilges were pumped out once or twice a week, depending on the level. Mr. Cashio's assignment to pump out the bilges on the morning of the casualty was normal maintenance, and not related to a spill or an engineering problem.

Mr. Parker described a normal watch turnover, which included a discussion of "what you did, what projects were going on, and any other information" so that the oncoming watch "knows what's going on." The deckhand turnover occurred at the same time as the wheelman turnover, but in separate locations. The wheelmen turned over in the wheelhouse; the deckhands turned over in the galley.

Mr. Parker stated that, when building a tow, the deckhands "find out how the captain wants it built;" taking into account any drops or pickups or if the captain wants a certain configuration. The tow makeup was at the captain or pilot's discretion, depending on who was on watch. Regarding barge positions, Mr. Parker further explained that drops and pickups were considered so that they did not have to rebuild the tow during a transit. Also, it could be undesirable to have boxes (barges without a raked bow) at the head of the tow.

Mr. Parker recalled that the tow for the casualty voyage was made up of six barges: four empties and two loads. The barges were picked up in Houston. He believed that he had been involved for part of the tow building, but the back watch had also worked on the build. Mr. Parker recalled nothing out of the ordinary during the voyage up until he was informed of the casualty.

Mr. Parker was asked to describe the events that he could recall from the casualty. He was not awake when it had happened. He had gotten off watch at midnight while the tow was waiting to go through the Bayou Boeuf Lock. He went to bed and did not wake up during the night. He did not feel any bumps or hear any alarms. He woke up at 0530 with his alarm clock. Nothing was knocked over in his room when he got up.

Mr. Parker heard about the accident when the captain was called by the Coast Guard in the morning. Mr. Parker was on watch and was in the wheelhouse at the time of the call. The captain instructed him to “Go wake Joe [the pilot] up.”

The captain then instructed him to check the barges. He found several broken wires, including the second coupling on the outside starboard side, a steering coupling, a lead coupling, and another wire on the port side. Mr. Parker stated that the broken wires were not easily seen, at least by an inexperienced deckhand. Mr. Parker also found concrete on the port lead barge. The barges were not loose; other wires and soft lines were keeping them together.

Mr. Parker saw the damage to the port lead barge later – a hole above and not near the waterline. There were no major leaks.

**END SUMMARY**

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A. Ehlers  
Marine Casualty Investigator