

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CONTACT OF TOWING VESSEL *

OLYMPIC SCOUT WITH THE *HYLEBOS* *

Accident No.: DCA24FM003

WATERWAY BRIDGE IN TACOMA, *

WASHINGTON ON OCTOBER 12, 2023 *

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Interview of: ADAM EMMANUEL, Master
Montlake

Aboard the *Montlake*

Friday,
October 13, 2023

APPEARANCES:

LT [REDACTED], Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

LCDR [REDACTED], Senior Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

DAN MORRISON, Vice President,
West Coast Marine Operations
Centerline Logistics Corporation

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Adam Emmanuel:

By LT [REDACTED]

4

By LCDR [REDACTED]

11

I N T E R V I E W

(12:08 p.m.)

1
2
3 LT [REDACTED]: Good afternoon. Today's date is Friday,
4 October 13th; the time is 12:08. My name is Lieutenant [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED], and I am on board the towing vessel *Montlake* conducting
6 interviews in regard to the allision that occurred on 12 October
7 2023. My last name is spelled [REDACTED]. In the room we
8 have Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED].

9 LCDR [REDACTED]: Last name is spelled [REDACTED].

10 LT [REDACTED]: And Captain?

11 MR. EMMANUEL: Captain on the *Montlake*, Adam Emmanuel. Last
12 name E-m-m-a-n-u-e-l.

13 MR. MORRISON: And Centerline Logistics, marine operations,
14 Dan Morrison. Last name's spelled M-o-r-r-i-s-o-n.

15 LT [REDACTED]: Thank you, guys.

INTERVIEW OF ADAM EMMANUEL

16
17 BY LT [REDACTED]:

18 Q. So, Captain, if you wouldn't mind please walking us through
19 kind of from the time you guys got the assignment or the tasking
20 up until after the allision?

21 A. Okay. So we were set to sail at 2300, and the assist tug got
22 there right at 2300, and they were still, you know, delayed on the
23 barge a little bit, so -- putting everything away. So we made the
24 assist tug up on the port bow. We call it head and tails or
25 Chinese, three-line makeup, so he's looking back at us. And then

1 after he was made up and he was straight on the barge, started
2 dropping lines.

3 We made a pre-call to Seattle traffic and the Hylebos bridge
4 and everybody confirmed everything. So dropped the lines from
5 stern to the bow, all lines in, pulled her off the dock, got her
6 to the middle of the channel and pretty much stopped everything
7 because I noticed the bridge wasn't up. So I need to call the
8 bridge tender again and said, yeah, we're away from the dock
9 heading your way. So basically we were stopping again.

10 So when he proceeded to open, we proceeded to (indiscernible)
11 in gear and line up with fender system on the bridge. As we were
12 picking up speed, the vessel started to set to the left. We were
13 counter-steering to get back into the middle of the channel to
14 line up with the opening. And we told the -- I told the captain
15 on the *Olympic Scout* to -- you know, just asked him how he's
16 looking. Even though I had guys on my starboard side, I asked him
17 how they're looking. So he -- because he's comes in kind of
18 close. He can get off 5 feet, you know, while we need -- you
19 know, so, either way, he's watching his end.

20 So as we're going, he says, yeah, I'm not looking good. I
21 said, all right, just keep yourself out of trouble and do what
22 you got to do as far as meaning work against the bow to get him
23 clear with everything (indiscernible). And so as we were
24 proceeding on and, you know, trying to get it all lined up, you
25 know, straight so he can see through, he was saying it wasn't

1 looking good. And I guess he worked harder on it. I told him to
2 do -- you know, work on it, do what you got to do. So he started
3 working on her, I presume. And then I worked on my end to work
4 against it to get her back over and backing on her, too. But by
5 that time, the vessel -- he hit, the stern clipped the fender
6 system. So when that happened, I just let him go altogether. He
7 got up through the bridge and went out the rest of the way
8 alongside.

9 Q. And so kind of going back to before you guys got underway, I
10 wanted to talk about some pre-departure checklists and just like
11 your general navigation custom that you guys go through. So if
12 you wouldn't mind just walking me through those steps that you
13 guys take before you get underway and kind of brief you had for --

14 A. So we got all the radios on and checked the radios. Radars
15 are on. The Rose Point's on with the route activated. Variance
16 was actually was on. Steering, we check our steering, check our
17 throttles. Just that's pretty much a pre-departure, you know,
18 everything gets -- and we got it on a list, on a list like this.

19 Q. Okay. And so do you guys have, you know, like a crew brief
20 so everybody's sort of the same page --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. -- of the evolution that you guys are about to do?

23 A. Right. Yeah, we do a pre-departure conference.

24 Q. Okay. And that involves everybody, the whole crew?

25 A. Yes. But last night -- yesterday it did, but I mean

1 sometimes -- you know, it only applies to crew members, but -- so
2 it depends on like -- if it happens like close to watch, I think
3 most time everybody's up.

4 Q. Okay. And you would say that yesterday kind of briefing
5 seemed normal for the operation that you guys were about to do?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And no equipment was malfunctioning for the vessel?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Can you describe the weather?

10 A. The weather was clear, no wind. It was -- like I say,
11 visibility was good, a little bit chilly. Other than that, it was
12 a nice night.

13 Q. And would you say that everybody had had adequate rest prior
14 to the evolution?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. So as you guys were waiting to come through the bridge, what
17 would you say would be a normal distance for like both sides of
18 the vessel, assuming that you have the other assist tug go on your
19 port side? How many feet would you have on your starboard side
20 and your port side typically?

21 A. Well, typically we'll keep that assist tug as tight as we can
22 because he's got the best visibility. So he can see, you know,
23 the distance off of him. Sometimes he can (indiscernible), 5 to
24 10 feet, and we're a 25-foot vessel.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. That's the -- that's what we shoot for anyway.

2 Q. Okay. And how often were you guys getting those range calls
3 from the *Olympic Scout*?

4 A. I don't know. I mean, every time I asked him. You got to
5 think about how quick this took place because it's a -- I mean, I
6 think from the dock to the bridge it's like three barge lengths.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. You know, it's -- yeah, it's like 1500 feet.

9 Q. Okay. And so once you kind of heard that call and he was
10 saying things aren't looking good, what were your like helm and
11 throttle commands that you gave to him?

12 A. Well, I was about at 3, 3 to 3½ knots at that time, you know,
13 and I was telling to work against. You know, so he would work
14 against, so I would give her left rudder, back on my port engine,
15 punch ahead on the starboard, just to try to work my stern back
16 over. If he's going to be pushing my bow, I got to work against
17 him. So and then, in the case when he said, you know, it's not
18 looking good at all, that's when I was like back everything.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So -- you know, I wasn't anticipating that there was going to
21 be an impact. I was hoping to get it stopped before it got to
22 that.

23 Q. And so I believe you had mentioned kind of like once you
24 realized it was too far gone, they were going to hit, you -- did
25 you guys actually drop the lines from the assist tug and you went

1 on your own or did you just take full control and kind of operate
2 as if he wasn't there?

3 A. Yeah. When he -- when about time he clipped it, that's when
4 I said just, yeah, just go ahead and take the lines --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- I'll get through here.

7 Q. Okay. So the allision happened, you drop lines, and then you
8 proceeded with the barge?

9 A. Right.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And then he just topped around and got right about there.

12 Q. Okay. And so you mentioned that you were transiting about 3½
13 knots. You stated that's the speed you typically need for when
14 you're doing this transit.

15 A. Yeah, through the bridge. Yes.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Because you got to have some -- you got to have a little bit
18 of speed just to steer, you know.

19 Q. Good point. And so when -- how many times have you actually
20 gone through this particular bridge?

21 A. Probably, over the years, 25.

22 Q. Okay. And do you normally have a particular heading that
23 you're aiming for or does it always kind of vary?

24 A. Outbound it's around 2-9-0. Well, basically, you know, it's
25 2-9-0 when we leave, so you try to aim for the middle but make

1 sure he has the room, and then you pretty much line up something
2 to steer for.

3 Q. Okay. And is there like a reference that you guys normally
4 try to steer for, like a waypoint or -- sorry, not a waypoint, but
5 like additional reference that you will use?

6 A. Yeah. But at night obviously it's different approach. But,
7 yeah, sometimes you can see -- and also like when you come through
8 that bridge sometimes you got boats on that other side, so it
9 might be a certain boat there that's there today but not there
10 tomorrow. You like might steer for his, you know, mast or
11 something.

12 Q. Um-hum. I see. Okay. So, let's see -- okay, so the *Olympic*
13 *Scout* dropped lines and you continued transiting. Did you have
14 any other issues as you finished the transit through or what
15 happened after you guys had parted lines?

16 A. After I let him go, I just -- like I say, at that time I
17 was -- I had backed on it so much, you know, to kill that speed to
18 try to prevent him from hitting on anything, so by that time I was
19 just kind of drifting through the bridge. I was hardly making --
20 I might have been making 1 knot. So then once my stern got
21 through the bridge, I could see my stern and the barge, which is
22 the widest part of us. You know, I just boost her a little bit to
23 get her out of that last bend by the marina because then it was
24 straight out.

25 Q. And again, no -- you didn't experience any equipment issues

1 or any like problems with the vessel's steering?

2 A. No. No, the vessel was setting to the, like I say, setting
3 to the left, and that's normal for these things.

4 Q. And so in terms of communication between the crew members on
5 the barge and then also the *Olympic Scout*, you guys are just using
6 radios communication?

7 A. Yeah. Yeah, VHS 72 is what we were working and back up
8 (indiscernible).

9 Q. Okay. And any issues with, you know, the radio communication
10 that you guys?

11 A. No.

12 Q. You felt like it was, you know, kind of clear
13 (indiscernible)?

14 A. Yeah. I mean, it's typical tugboat talk, you know. But
15 yeah, it was clear.

16 Q. Okay. And is there anything else that you wanted to share or
17 you think is important that we know?

18 A. No. I wish you didn't have to be here. But like I say, I'm
19 just trying to, just trying to remember everything like piece by
20 piece, you know, I was just -- wish it never happened, but I'm
21 glad it's over with so we can get past it.

22 LT [REDACTED]: Commander, do you have any questions?

23 BY LCDR [REDACTED]:

24 Q. Hey, Captain, I'd just like to touch on your experience a
25 little bit to highlight it. How long you been a master?

1 A. Since 2000- -- master since 2000- -- let me see -- 2012.

2 Q. And how long have you been in the towing industry?

3 A. Since '95.

4 Q. And how long have you been with Centerline?

5 A. I worked for Centerline for -- it's 6 years next week.

6 Q. And congratulations early, 6 years.

7 LCDR ██████: That's all I have. That's all I got
8 (indiscernible).

9 LT ██████: Unless you have anything else for us, Captain,
10 I think that's everything that we needed. I know sometimes in the
11 moment it's hard to recall everything, so --

12 MR. EMMANUEL: It is, yeah. It is.

13 LT ██████: We'll leave you with our contact information,
14 so please feel free to reach out to us if you think of anything
15 that you want to share.

16 MR. EMMANUEL: Yeah, definitely.

17 LT ██████: And if you have nothing further, we're going to
18 conclude the interview. The time is 12:21.

19 (Whereupon, at 12:21 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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


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OLYMPIC SCOUT WITH THE HYLEBOS
WATERWAY BRIDGE IN TACOMA,
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Interview of Adam Emmanuel

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA22FM003

PLACE: Aboard the *Montlake*

DATE: October 13, 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.



Kay Maurer
Transcriber