

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: LARRY GLADJO, Master
Olympic Scout

Aboard the *Olympic Scout*
Tacoma, Washington

Friday,
October 13, 2023

APPEARANCES:

CWO [REDACTED], Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

ANDREW EHLERS, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:30 a.m.)

1
2
3 CWO [REDACTED]: This is Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED],
4 duty investigator for United States Coast Guard Sector Puget
5 Sound. Today is the -- Friday the 13th of October; it is
6 approximately 10:30. We are on board the vessel *Olympic Scout*
7 moored in Tacoma, Washington.

8 I'm going to go around the room for introductions. NTSB?

9 MR. EHLERS: Good morning. This is Andrew Ehlers, marine
10 accident investigator with the National Transportation Safety
11 Board.

12 CWO [REDACTED]: And Captain?

13 MR. GLADJO: Captain Larry Gladjo with Centerline Logics
14 [sic].

INTERVIEW OF LARRY GLADJO

15
16 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

17 Q. Okay, Captain, I'm just going to have you go ahead and just
18 tell me what happened last night in reference to the allision with
19 the Hylebos Bridge. Let's start from getting underway until when
20 you guys took off lines from the ATB after you guys got out into
21 the harbor.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Well, we started out, we were a three-line makeup, would be
25 on the port side of the barge on the bow. Standard top there

1 where we get off the barge together, get out in the middle of the
2 waterway. Once we got out in the waterway there with the *Montlake*
3 and the barge *Sodo*, I went all stop, had rudder to midship. He
4 had control there. So we start going through the bridge. We
5 started coming a little bit more to left than wanted, so radio
6 contact, we say we need to come a little bit more right. Right
7 happened a little bit, but it wasn't happening quite as much.

8 As we started getting closer to the bridge, we started
9 noticing that we're not in a good shape. My mate was on the aft
10 deck there and he's yelling out we're about 15 feet to the bad, we
11 need to come over. At that time I put it into a right twist to
12 bring the bow away or the bow of the barge away. The right twist
13 wasn't giving us anything, so then I went on 2 ahead with right
14 rudder, which should have brought us right back in the middle of
15 the channel. It's still coming in hard. I went full and still
16 nothing going on, and we touched down on the upriver quarter of
17 the breakwater on the bridge.

18 At that point we're still going and still making a little way
19 there, resistance here. I broke my spring line. So at that time
20 my spring line was kind of out of commission to help anything
21 here. So we came off back in the waterway, got through the
22 bridge, and then at that time I retrieved my bow line and my stern
23 line and then I shadowed him on his port side all the rest way to
24 the Hylebos, if any problems I could have a light on it.

25 Got out to the Commencement Bay and then I made our first

1 call was to traffic here. Then they contacted -- your name is
2 again?

3 Q. Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED], yeah.

4 A. [REDACTED]. Contacted him, talked to him. Once I was off the
5 phone with him, I talked to my incident hotline and got my company
6 involved.

7 Q. Okay. What I'd like to do, just so it's easier -- you know,
8 a picture's worth 1,000 words. So if -- okay, perfect. So you
9 have drawn out a picture of the setup of your tug, the ATB, and
10 the barge. What I'm going to do is I'm going to take a photograph
11 of that and send it to the NTSB so they can see what I'm looking
12 at.

13 MR. EHLERS: Perfect.

14 CWO [REDACTED]: Is this a good number to send a text message to?

15 MR. EHLERS: It is.

16 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay. Let me take a shot of this. Okay. And
17 I'll send that to you, maybe. It might be easier if -- select
18 conversations, contacts -- sorry. I'm a little bit
19 technologically slow, yeah, here trying to send a text out while
20 I'm on the phone. Actually, I got an idea. Let me get all
21 that --

22 MR. EHLERS: Do you need me to read my number to you while
23 you check, you know --

24 CWO [REDACTED]: I may. I may. I may. Let me do that real
25 quick. Hold on. See if I've got an option here. No. All right.

1 What's your number there, sir?

2 MR. EHLERS: [REDACTED].

3 CWO [REDACTED]: [REDACTED].

4 MR. EHLERS: [REDACTED].

5 CWO [REDACTED]: [REDACTED].

6 MR. EHLERS: [REDACTED].

7 CWO [REDACTED]: [REDACTED]. Okay. And it should be coming to you

8 shortly. We have a little blue wheel. It's thinking about it.

9 MR. EHLERS: Okay.

10 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

11 Q. All right. Well, while we're, you know, doing that, I did

12 have a couple of --

13 MR. EHLERS: Yeah, I got it.

14 CWO [REDACTED]: Perfect.

15 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

16 Q. I did have a couple of kind of basic questions. What was the

17 on-scene weather like, the wind, visibility?

18 A. Calm.

19 Q. Calm?

20 A. Calm. Tide was -- on the up there, it wasn't -- there was no

21 tide to mention.

22 Q. Okay. No winds, no waves?

23 A. No winds.

24 Q. Visibility okay?

25 A. Visibility's good.

1 Q. An approximation, how many times have you done this specific
2 maneuver, like with the fuel barge ATB coming through that
3 waterway?

4 A. ATBs, not very often.

5 Q. Not very often?

6 A. I -- no. As far as my barge, I go up there quite often and
7 coming out and -- usually coming in with an assist and I leave
8 without one at times.

9 Q. Is it -- what are the differences between what you would do
10 with a normal barge setup versus with an ATB which you don't do
11 very often?

12 A. Not any difference. If we were to make up to a regular
13 barge, we'd do the same thing.

14 Q. Okay. Okay. So, you know, obviously there was an event last
15 night and there was something that happened that was different
16 than normal. In your estimation, what would you say was the
17 reason why you guys ended up getting pushed north into the
18 dolphin?

19 A. Yes. Watching, it was just -- seems like we just had a crab
20 going the whole way or a slide. And once it's -- once we were
21 getting near, maybe it was -- I didn't think it was too late
22 because I know this boat has a lot of power. Once we started
23 going full on 2 and then it should've been kicking off, it wasn't
24 kicking off like it should any other time. So I don't know if the
25 barge at that time took (indiscernible) or what happened. It's a

1 loaded oil barge. We had a lot of tonnage working there.

2 Q. Yeah. So that was going to be my next question is, so if
3 you're not doing ATBs very often, do they have more volume? Are
4 they a larger -- do they have more tonnage than like a barge that
5 you're used to using?

6 A. Well, they're -- yeah, you can see over your shoulder what
7 size barge. It's just a -- quite a bit bigger, you know --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- a little bit more.

10 Q. I think that the master of the *Montlake* was saying that they
11 had 15,000 barrels on board of ethanol at the time.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Oh, okay. And that's larger than what you normally have?

14 A. Well, every tank weighs different.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. I don't know what ethanol weight is compared with like oil
17 weight, you know, (indiscernible)

18 Q. Okay. And then clearance issues, how much clearance do you
19 normally have when you're doing this -- maneuvering through there?

20 A. Maneuvering through there with that barge, we went through
21 earlier, I was about 5 feet on my side. And I remember the
22 (indiscernible) might have 15 to 20 on their side. More like 15.

23 Q. Is that pretty standard going through that area?

24 A. That's standard with me going with -- alongside my barge,
25 which is just -- it's not quite as wide as what they were, but I

1 probably have 10 to 15 on my -- or, well, my side because it's
2 easier to move the boat away than bring it towards.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. So then I usually carry about 15 to 20 on the other side.

5 Q. Was there any problem with visibility of the dolphin with the
6 wall? Did it have like marking lights on it? Was it UV --

7 A. No, it had all the range lights on and everything.

8 Q. They were working okay?

9 A. That's just -- normally when you come off, you know, you're
10 pointed toward that side as you're looking because usually you
11 come back around and level stuff off to go through the center span
12 of the bridge.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And as we're getting closer and closer, asked a little bit on
15 the -- we need to come more right. It was coming a little right,
16 but it wasn't coming quite as fast you think it would. It was
17 almost like we still had a --

18 Q. Kind of getting push?

19 A. -- well, like a shear going this way a little bit.

20 Q. Okay. And I should have asked you at the beginning of this,
21 but how many years do you have with the company?

22 A. Come February, it'll be 30.

23 Q. Thirty years. And how long have you had -- been a master?

24 A. Master's been 20- -- sorry. Since 2015, so --

25 Q. 2015. Okay. So pushing 20 years then?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay. Okay. We spoke about this last night, but was there
3 any injuries or pollution that you guys noticed as a result of the
4 marine casualty?

5 A. No.

6 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay. NTSB, do you have any questions?

7 MR. EHLERS: Yeah. I'll ask a couple here.

8 BY MR. EHLERS:

9 Q. So the makeup with the barge, you were, as I understand it,
10 port side to the barge, correct? And then facing her -- your
11 stern was facing in the direction the barge was going; is that
12 correct?

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. What -- why do you choose that makeup? Did you choose it or
15 was it the *Montlake* master? How did you guys come to that
16 decision to make up that way and why?

17 A. Well, with a conventional tug, which is just a typical twin
18 screw tug, we have maneuverability to be able to work away and
19 towards that way as far as on a twist, so we can control the bow
20 better that way.

21 Q. I see. So that's the normal way you'd make up in an assist
22 operation like that?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay. There's nothing unusual about it?

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. Okay. How far away were you from the dolphin when you
2 figured out or when you determined that you were not in a good
3 way?

4 A. I was just about 50 to 40 feet.

5 Q. Okay. All right. And you said normal clearance you might
6 have -- did I hear 5 to 10 feet?

7 A. That is true, yes.

8 Q. Okay. So it's a pretty tight squeeze through there?

9 A. Yes, it is.

10 Q. Okay. All right. When you, you know, when you figured out
11 that you weren't set up well there, did you have any
12 communications with the *Montlake* captain?

13 A. Yes, yes. The *Montlake* captain came down and says, Larry --
14 or *Scout*, do you what you have to do to clear. And that's when --
15 one time when I started my twist, a strong twist, nothing was
16 happening. So I went from a twist to 2 full ahead with right
17 rudder, which should've brought my stern to the right quite a bit,
18 and it just -- it kept tipping even more.

19 Q. Okay. Did the *Montlake* tell you that they were doing
20 anything as far as maneuvering? Did the captain try to back down
21 or anything like that?

22 A. At that -- no, I couldn't tell you. When we got in irons
23 like that, communication pretty much stopped when we're doing our
24 thing, since stuff was happening split seconds and --

25 Q. Okay. Okay. How much time was it between when you figured

1 out that again it was not a good situation and when you actually
2 hit the dolphin? Can you estimate that at all?

3 A. Oh, boy, that's -- adrenaline was running then, so --

4 Q. Sure. Yeah.

5 A. I want to say -- I can't say minutes, I would say probably,
6 but seconds or 30 seconds or whatever you want to say.

7 Q. Okay. All right.

8 A. It's hard to guess. I mean, it was enough to get where I
9 could hammer down and you could feel the ass end of the tug grab
10 and start moving a little bit, so --

11 Q. Yeah, yeah. Is this tug usually pretty responsive to your
12 inputs?

13 A. This tug? Yes, yes. Oh, responsive, on the nose, it's right
14 there.

15 Q. Okay. And when you said -- I think you said put the hammer
16 down. What kind of throttle were you using?

17 A. I was just about max, so I'm hitting there darn near 1150
18 rpms.

19 Q. Okay. And then how are your rudders at that point?

20 A. Rudder was hard right.

21 Q. Okay. Do you have a rudder on -- behind both screws?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. All right. Let's see here. I think the warrant
24 officer might have asked you this already, but have you worked
25 with this tug and barge before, the *Montlake* and the *Sodo*?

1 A. No, first time on the *Montlake* and the *Sodo*.

2 Q. Okay. Is it the first time working with a -- have you worked
3 with similar ATBs like that?

4 A. Yes, sir. We have five within the company. I've probably
5 assisted them all.

6 Q. Oh, okay. All right. Is there any -- you're familiar with
7 that waterway, you've been in that waterway, I assume, what you
8 said already, quite a bit; is that correct?

9 A. That's correct, sir.

10 Q. Is there any outflows around that area or any kind of current
11 anomalies that would've caused the -- how you -- you mentioned you
12 were crabbing pretty well the whole time. Do you have any idea
13 what caused that or what causes it?

14 A. I -- tell you the truth, I don't know if it was a character
15 of the boat or what. I don't see why it was doing what it was
16 doing myself.

17 Q. Okay. When you've taken other ATBs through that bridge, they
18 haven't had to crab like you were last night?

19 A. Well, no, I -- this'll be the first ATB I've had through that
20 bridge. I have not assisted any other ATBs. Many barges, but not
21 the ATBs.

22 Q. Okay. When you've taken barges through that bridge, have you
23 had to crab through there or have you been able to make a straight
24 shot?

25 A. Yeah, it's -- a lot of times going outbound it's a straight

1 shot. Coming inbound you're on a corner, so you do have a little
2 crab until you come out and get stuff straightened out.

3 Q. Okay. And this was an outbound transit last night?

4 A. This was an outbound, yes.

5 Q. All right. And you mentioned a little bit about your
6 experience. Specifically on this tug, on the *Olympic Scout*, how
7 long have you been a master on board her?

8 A. I've been off and on her for probably 5 years. I started my
9 career with her. I went on to other tugs, and right now my tug is
10 in the shipyard so I'm back on her just maybe (indiscernible)

11 Q. Okay. How long have you been on -- for this particular
12 stint, how long have you been on board?

13 A. Just about 4 days.

14 Q. Okay. And so can you give me a sense of your previous
15 experience on the *Olympic Scout* as far as time? You know, is it
16 months, is it years, is it weeks?

17 A. Before then was years.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. As I say, I was on here for about 5 years.

20 Q. Okay. All right. That's right, you did mention that. So --
21 okay. So you have a pretty good feel for that tugboat?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. All right. The warrant officer talked to you about
24 the barge loadout. How was it sitting? I mean, was it loaded
25 down low? Was it, you know, was it --

1 A. It was level. It looked to be mostly level there. It was --
2 I want to see what's my drafts here, just a second. It was
3 probably about 12 feet out of the water.

4 Q. Okay. Do you have any idea what the depth is on that boat,
5 on that barge?

6 A. Negative.

7 Q. Okay. That's all right. Okay. When -- how did you
8 coordinate with the captain of the *Montlake* when you first made up
9 to the barge? Was it via radio? How's that done?

10 A. VHF radio, channel 7-2 we were on.

11 Q. Okay. All right. And did you make up prior to that vessel
12 getting underway, prior to the *Montlake* getting underway?

13 A. Yes. I made up when it was alongside the dock there at
14 Seaport Targa, Tacoma.

15 Q. Okay. All right. Have you had any issues on -- or the
16 captain you took over from report any issues with the steering or
17 machinery or any systems on board the *Olympic Scout*?

18 A. Negative.

19 Q. Okay. And then when did your hitch start on the -- when --
20 how should I --

21 A. I came on, on the 8th.

22 Q. On the 8th. Okay. Since from the 8th until last night, any
23 issues with engineering, the engines, the rudders, any controls?

24 A. Negative.

25 Q. Okay. All right. Between the 8th and last night, how many

1 other assists or barge movements have you done?

2 A. All together between that time, five.

3 Q. Okay. All right. So suffice to say you had done enough
4 operations that you could be -- that you're confident in the
5 engineering on the *Olympic Scout*?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Okay. All right. Let's see. Just let me look at my notes
8 here. All right. So I got a couple of questions that I ask
9 during every accident, so you're just going to have to bear with
10 me. First is what's your watch schedule?

11 A. Watch schedule is, when we're underway there, 6 to -- or no,
12 6 to 12, then from 18. So 6 and 6.

13 Q. Okay. And do you trade off with the mate?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Okay. So you were towards at the end of your watch; is that
16 correct, when the accident happened?

17 A. I was right at the end of my watch, yes.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. But we -- not to interrupt you there, sir, but I am up -- as
20 a captain, I am up for all departures and landings.

21 Q. Okay. How much sleep do you get in a normal 24-hour period
22 when you're on your hitch?

23 A. It's 8 to 10, maybe. A good 8 there for the most, yes.

24 Q. Okay. And that's split between your two off-watch periods?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Okay. And you mentioned you're awake for any kind of
2 landings and such like that. How much sleep had you gotten in the
3 24 hours prior to the accident?

4 A. Eight hours.

5 Q. Eight hours. Okay. All right. And how would you describe
6 your sleep? Did you sleep well? Did you have trouble sleeping?
7 Anything like that?

8 A. Oh, I sleep well.

9 Q. Okay. And sort of to finish out this on fatigue here, how
10 did you feel up -- obviously, not including the accident itself,
11 but up and to just prior to the accident? Did you feel well
12 rested, did you have any -- or did you feel fatigued? How did you
13 feel?

14 A. No, I felt well rested. We were right there at the end of
15 our movement for the day, so we're kind of getting done with --
16 we're getting done with our job and then work our way back to our
17 barge for the evening.

18 Q. Okay. Had the mate come up to the wheelhouse yet when the
19 accident happened?

20 A. No. I had my hatch open. The mate was on the deck giving me
21 commands on how close we are on the port -- or it would be the
22 starboard or --

23 Q. Oh, okay.

24 A. -- starboard side. So he was on deck.

25 Q. I see. Okay. All right. Did you drink any alcohol the day

1 before the accident?

2 A. Negative.

3 Q. Okay. Any drug use?

4 A. Negative.

5 Q. Okay. Do you carry a cell phone with you while you're on
6 watch?

7 A. Negative. It's on the chart table, but no.

8 Q. Okay. And is there a company phone, a vessel phone --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- up in the wheelhouse?

11 A. No, I have a vessel phone on me.

12 Q. Okay. Were you using the phone? Was anyone trying to call
13 you? Was there any distraction from that cell phone during --

14 A. No. I did not have a phone call until I talked to the Coast
15 Guard.

16 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. I think that's all I have for the
17 moment, unless there's more questions I might -- it might stir
18 my -- might give me an idea. So that's all I have for the moment.

19 Thank you very much, Captain.

20 A. Have a good day now.

21 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay. All right. Well, I'm going to go ahead
22 and conclude this recording right now.

23 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

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



IN THE MATTER OF: CONTACT OF TOWING VESSEL
OLYMPIC SCOUT WITH THE HYLEBOS
WATERWAY BRIDGE IN TACOMA,
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Interview of Larry Gladjo

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA24FM003

PLACE: Tacoma, Washington

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