

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 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: RENI ROBBIN, Deckhand

*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

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:06 a.m.)

1  
2  
3 LT [REDACTED]: Good morning. My name is Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
4 [REDACTED]. I am on board the towing vessel *Montlake*. It is  
5 Friday, October 13th at 11:06 a.m. We're on board conducting  
6 interviews of the crew in regards to the allision that took place  
7 last night. My last name is spelled [REDACTED]. Also in the  
8 room we have Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED].

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

10 LT [REDACTED]: And the crew member?

11 MR. ROBBIN: My name is Reni Robbin, spelled R-o-b-b-i-n,  
12 last name. I am AB tankerman.

13 LT [REDACTED]: Great.

## INTERVIEW OF RENI ROBBIN

14  
15 BY LT [REDACTED]:

16 Q. So would you mind just explaining the day for you yesterday  
17 starting when you guys got underway from Tacoma?

18 A. So we got underway from -- from Tacoma? Okay. So I finished  
19 up splitting the barge -- getting the barge kind of stowed for  
20 going back to Seattle. And as we were leaving the dock, I was  
21 stepping up to the bow on the starboard side on the other side of  
22 the wind wall where the incident happened. And I had given two  
23 distances off the bridge, and at which point I heard the captain  
24 of the *Olympic Spirit* [sic] come on the radio with a certain sense  
25 of urgency. And so I stopped giving distances and I had kind of

1 walked around the back side of our -- well, I guess the outside of  
2 the wind wall, and faced the port side from the starboard side and  
3 saw the *Olympic Spirit* revving the engines and trying to, I guess,  
4 get away from that other side of the wall. At which point I heard  
5 the sound of wood cracking and I'm assuming that's when it made  
6 contact. And then a spring line had parted. And I stood on the  
7 starboard side until I was able to safely go over there and untie  
8 the *Olympic Spirit* from the barge.

9 Q. Okay. And so just to confirm that the green bulkhead on the  
10 top of the barge, that's the wind wall that you're referring to?

11 A. Yes. Exactly.

12 Q. So can you repeat again where you were standing during the  
13 transit?

14 A. I was standing on the other side of the wind wall where that  
15 battery is, and I kind of looked across the front and I kind of  
16 seen what was kind of starting to unfold. And then I walked  
17 around the back side towards the stern a little bit and I looked  
18 straight across to see when the *Olympic Spirit* kind of started to  
19 move a little bit and then crunching of the wood at which point it  
20 hit.

21 Q. Okay. So I'm just trying to confirm the order of everything.  
22 So the *Montlake* was astern?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And then the *Olympic* --

25 A. *Spirit*.

1 Q. -- *Spirit* was alongside the port --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- side of the barge? And so the *Olympic Spirit*, in your  
4 opinion, is what actually hit -- made contact with the bridge?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And so from your perspective on the port bow of the  
7 barge, were you able to see the contact, see it at all, or you  
8 only heard it?

9 A. I only heard it. I was on the starboard side looking across  
10 the barge towards the port.

11 Q. Okay. And so after you heard the contact, what happened?

12 A. I waited for the contact to -- I'm assuming the boat's  
13 sliding across the bridge, the wood fendering there. I just  
14 waited for it to be deemed somewhat safe before even thinking  
15 about walking over there and doing anything that would remotely  
16 put myself in danger.

17 Q. Absolutely. And so you had mentioned that a spring line  
18 parted. Which line was that?

19 A. So we had a -- the *Olympic Spirit* was -- had a three-line  
20 makeup, one coming off the bow and one coming off the stern and  
21 then a spring line coming diagonally from the midship to the  
22 forward bollards. And the *Olympic Spirit* was actually -- we made  
23 up in reverse towards the *Montlake*, so it was faced -- the *Olympic*  
24 *Spirit* was in tow acting as an assist for the *Montlake*, or  
25 actually the barge *Sodo*.

1 Q. So the, like the propulsion and the stern was actually closer  
2 to the bow of the barge?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. And so it was that one spring line that parted?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And so what happened, outside of your roll of what you  
7 saw after you heard the noise, you walked over, you saw the spring  
8 line parted, what did the vessel continue to do?

9 A. They -- we slowed down and we're still kind of down the  
10 waterway there, and we slowed down, and at which point it was much  
11 slower and safer. We slowed down to a complete stop and I quickly  
12 hawsed the lines off, the (indiscernible) making lines off.

13 Q. Okay. So then the *Olympic Spirit* pulled off?

14 A. Oh, yeah, *Olympic Spirit* pulled off and turned around face  
15 forward to kind of just guide it, I guess you could say. I went  
16 back to the starboard side to make sure -- to keep calling  
17 distances ahead.

18 Q. Okay. And so once the *Olympic Spirit* turned around, you guys  
19 continued to transit to Pier 11 right here?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. How fast would you say --

22 A. Well, we stopped -- our boat actually stopped just outside  
23 there and we started -- I guess they started making phone calls.  
24 I was on the barge still because I was getting the barge set up  
25 for making the docking at Pier 11.

1 Q. Okay. And how fast would you say the three vessels were  
2 transiting through that area at the time of the incident?

3 A. Not very fast at all. I couldn't give you an exact number,  
4 honestly.

5 Q. I guess, in your opinion, was it faster or slower or about  
6 the same as what you would expect to do the evolution?

7 A. It was about the same of what we normally do in the  
8 evolution.

9 Q. Okay. And do you know who was driving?

10 A. The captain was driving the (indiscernible)

11 Q. Okay. After the incident, did you have any interactions with  
12 the captain?

13 A. No.

14 Q. No. Okay.

15 A. I did come up and they were on the phone and I waited for him  
16 to get off it. They were on the -- or the captain was on the  
17 phone and the mate was up here, and at which point I was -- we  
18 were all instructed to go down and take rest.

19 Q. Okay. And kind of the totality of the day, had it been a  
20 busy day for you guys? Had you been able to rest?

21 A. It was fairly busy, yes.

22 Q. Did you guys feel like -- or did you notice anybody feeling  
23 particularly fatigued before you started this operation?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay. And did you witness anything that it seemed like sort



1 of out of the ordinary of like the normal manner of doing  
2 business?

3 A. No.

4 Q. No. And how was the weather?

5 A. Weather was calm, no winds -- or very light winds, I guess  
6 you'd say, and there was no waves.

7 Q. No waves.

8 A. Fairly calm.

9 Q. Is there anything else that you feel like is important for us  
10 to know or like have reported?

11 A. No. Not that I can think of.

12 Q. Okay. Great.

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

14 LCDR [REDACTED]: Yeah, a few questions.

15 BY LCDR [REDACTED]:

16 Q. So just going back to your position during the evolution, you  
17 said you were on the starboard side up on the bow just forward of  
18 the plow shear or wind wall?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And you were calling distances?

21 A. I called two distances and then after that it was just all  
22 kind of all --

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. -- all the stuff all of a sudden just started happening.

25 Q. Can you just specify what distances were you calling?

1 A. I called -- like the specific distances?

2 Q. What was your role out there? Were you calling distances for  
3 the starboard side?

4 A. Oh, the --

5 Q. The port side, or both sides?

6 A. I was calling distance, my distance for the starboard off the  
7 bridge.

8 Q. Starboard side off the bridge. And what were those  
9 distances?

10 A. I called 20 and then I called 25 and slowly, slowly all the  
11 way.

12 Q. Okay. And how many times have you done that exact same  
13 position?

14 A. That was the second time.

15 Q. Second time?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And what type of equipment do you have on when you're up  
18 there?

19 A. Just the generators mostly.

20 Q. What about on you personally?

21 A. Just a radio. Yeah.

22 Q. And were you able to hear if there are any distances being  
23 called for the port side?

24 A. There -- I -- no, I couldn't really tell any distances.

25 Q. Okay. And your last transit, because you said that was your

1 second time doing that, what -- do you recall the distances that  
2 you were calling the first transit?

3 A. It was about the same, 20, 25.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. (Indiscernible) 20, 20 was about the closest I got.

6 Q. Twenty is?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And that was going in the opposite direction.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Into the waterway.

12 Q. Do you know about how wide that opening is?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. I think that's probably it. I appreciate it.

15 BY LT [REDACTED]:

16 Q. And then you said no issues with any kind of like your radio  
17 communications or any --

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. Anything with the vessel that you noticed was not  
20 working?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. All right. Great.

23 LT [REDACTED]: Well, I am going to stop the recording. The  
24 time is 11:16.

25 (Whereupon, at 11:16 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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,  
WASHINGTON ON OCTOBER 12, 2023  
Interview of Reni Robbin

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA24FM003

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