

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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IN RE: :
 :
THE ALLISION INVOLVING THE : NTSB Accident No.
AFRAMAX RIVER ON THE HOUSTON : DCA16FM055
SHIP CHANNEL ON SEPTEMBER 6, :
2016 :
 :
----- :

INTERVIEW OF: AMBHOJ KUMAR YADAVA

September 8, 2016


BEFORE

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ USCG
BRUCE DAVIES, USCG
LUKE WISNIEWSKI, NTSB
MIKE USHER, Port Pilot Commission for Harris
Co. Ports
ANANT SHARMA, Aframax River Marine
Superintendent


APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of G&H Towing Company:


JAY HUFFMAN, ESQ.
Blank Rome LLP
717 Texas Avenue
Suite 1400
Houston, TX 77002

On Behalf of the Aframax River:

JAMES BAILEY, ESQ.
Eastham, Watson, Dale & Forney, LLP
The Niels Esperson Building
808 Travis, Suite 1300
Houston, TX 77002-5769

On Behalf of ITC:

STACEY T. NORSTRUD, ESQ.
Fowler Rodriguez, Counselors at Law
Four Houston Center
1331 Lamar Street, Suite 1560



P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(No Time Given)

██████████ Chief, good afternoon.

MR. YADAVA: You're welcome.

██████████ Thank you for being here.

Just conducting a post-casualty interview with the hopes of trying to find a way to avoid this from happening again, so. That's kind of our purpose for being here. Just going to go through some questions.

MR. YADAVA: Yes.

██████████ First of all, we'll introduce ourselves. I'm ██████████ ██████████ I'm with the Sector Houston Galveston Investigations Division. I'm the investigating officer.

MS. NORSTRUD: I'm Stacey Norstrud of Fowler Rodriguez representing ITC.

MR. YADAVA: Yes, ma'am.

MR. HUFFMAN: Jay Huffman of Blank Rome representing G&H Towing Company.

MR. USHER: Mike Usher, PBIRC.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke Wisniewski, National Transportation Safety Board.

MR. DAVIES: Bruce Davies, U.S. Coast Guard Investigations.

MR. SHARMA: Captain Sharma, Leadership

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1 Management.

2 MR. BAILEY: James Bailey with Easton Watson
3 representing the Aframax River.

4 [REDACTED] All right, Chief, so it is our
5 understanding that you were on the bow watch -

6 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

7 [REDACTED] -- prior to getting underway
8 and after the incident, is that correct?

9 MR. YADAVA: Yes, yes.

10 [REDACTED] Okay. Can you explain the, a
11 little bit what are your duties as a bow watch?

12 MR. YADAVA: Yes. As a bow watch, I'm in
13 charge of each (indiscernible due to accent) of the
14 vessel casting off. We are casting off and we are to
15 pick up the line so I am the in charge of there along
16 with the other crew. I am one (indiscernible due to
17 accent) having walkie-talkie in touch with the bridge.
18 So what are happening up in the bridge I'm getting
19 (indiscernible due to accent) on the bridge and the
20 part of the (indiscernible due to accent) next on the
21 (indiscernible due to accent).

22 [REDACTED] Okay. Now, how many people
23 were with you that day on the bow, in the bow?

24 MR. YADAVA: In the bow, we have bosun,
25 bowman, oyes, cadet and myself. All including five.

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1 [REDACTED] And that's standard?

2 MR. YADAVA: Including me. That is
3 standard.

4 [REDACTED] For underway and mooring
5 operations also?

6 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

7 [REDACTED] Okay. All right. And if you
8 don't mind, could you just go over a little bit of your
9 pre-departure routine for this, for the, on the fifth
10 of September, so prior to getting underway the day of
11 the incident? Just go over a little bit of what you
12 guys did prior to getting underway.

13 MR. YADAVA: Getting underway, I was in
14 (indiscernible due to accent) in CCR doing the
15 paperwork and gauging the departure and everything is
16 done from the bridge. So, I was not there on the
17 bridge. Under condition of the (indiscernible due to
18 accent) from the CCR, I proceeded for the (indiscernible
19 due to accent).

20 [REDACTED] Okay, and just go over what
21 the commands you were getting from the bridge in
22 preparations to get under way. What was the first
23 command you received from the bridge?

24 MR. YADAVA: First one I received from the
25 bridge to be full circle. And then the next one was

1 cast off the headlines. And followed by the ridge line
2 and the listing last.

3 [REDACTED] And these are commands coming
4 from the master?

5 MR. YADAVA: It's from the master.

6 [REDACTED] Okay. Any issues with any of
7 those commands?

8 MR. YADAVA: No issues.

9 [REDACTED] No issues? All right. So,
10 last line was cast off, vessel was under way?

11 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

12 [REDACTED] Any, were you, did anything
13 alert you? Anything concern you or was it kind of a
14 normal operations?

15 MR. YADAVA: On the follow up door, Houston
16 on a person, Houston was falling back, I couldn't see
17 anything until.

18 [REDACTED] Okay, and when were you first
19 alerted that, alarmed that something had happened?

20 MR. YADAVA: First, what I could listen on
21 radio. I was standing forward to monitor the bow
22 (indiscernible due to accent) from the other vessel.
23 (Indiscernible due to accent) on the radio and the
24 bridge (indiscernible due to accent) then it was a
25 follow up the relay again was repeated, there's

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1 (indiscernible due to accent) then there was a stop and
2 then after that there was one more instruction from the
3 second officer. He ordered there is a bow and with
4 that off and after that I could not listen anything on
5 the radio and soon after I could see smoke on the port
6 bow.

7 [REDACTED] Okay, so you heard the second
8 officer tell the bridge that it was about 10 meters?

9 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

10 [REDACTED] Okay. All right, and then
11 after that you said you didn't hear any more radio
12 communications until you saw the smoke?

13 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

14 [REDACTED] All right, so what were your
15 orders after or your actions after you saw the smoke?
16 Did you get orders from the master or did you act on
17 your own?

18 MR. YADAVA: After the smoke, we heard from
19 the master who dropped both anchor and we did, we
20 dropped both anchor, port and the starboard.

21 [REDACTED] Okay. Do you recall how long
22 it took you to get the anchors away?

23 MR. YADAVA: I'm not counting a time and not
24 keeping up with the time so I didn't see how much time
25 it take, but we got order and we do it immediately.

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1 [REDACTED] Immediately? All right.
2 That's, okay. Any issues with the anchor getting
3 underway?

4 MR. YADAVA: No, sir.

5 [REDACTED] No? Was the smoke affecting
6 you at any time in the bow?

7 MR. YADAVA: Bow, no, sir.

8 [REDACTED] No? So after the anchors were
9 away what were your orders from the master?

10 MR. YADAVA: The line cut by us to the off,
11 then (indiscernible due to accent) firefighting along
12 with all of the crew, we personed up the fire hose and
13 doing the firefighting with all of the crew. And we're
14 doing this operation from the caisson to the bridge.
15 And, I'm having a walkie-talkie.

16 [REDACTED] Now, I think we've overheard
17 there was the ballast, the idea to have the ballast
18 pumps running -

19 MR. YADAVA: Over flow.

20 [REDACTED] They've overflowed. That, did
21 that, was that something that you recommended?

22 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

23 [REDACTED] Okay. And why did you
24 recommend that?

25 MR. YADAVA: Since I have a fire all around

1 and we are fighting fire. I want more water to cocoon
2 the vessel. So, this come in my mind, we can overflow
3 the forward tanks, we are being (indiscernible due to
4 accent) so we see water coming on the deck, it will
5 help in fighting the fire. I commanded the master
6 and he said yes go head and we started the ballast pump
7 and overflowed the one port and one starboard ballast.

8 [REDACTED] Is that something you've been
9 trained to do or is that something that you saw
10 somewhere?

11 MR. YADAVA: No, I'm not trained to do and
12 speak manner, but this all come in my mind, I don't
13 know if I would (indiscernible due to accent).

14 [REDACTED] Okay, Mr. Davies?

15 MR. DAVIES: Yes, Chief, can we get your
16 education? What type of education do you have?

17 MR. YADAVA: Yes, I'm a BSc in nautical
18 science from PSR (indiscernible due to accent).

19 MR. DAVIES: And your experience? How much
20 experience do you have at sea? How many years?

21 MR. YADAVA: First, I started in 2007 as a
22 cadet.

23 MR. DAVIES: Okay, nine years about?

24 MR. YADAVA: About.

25 MR. DAVIES: And how many years do you have

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1 as a chief mate?

2 MR. YADAVA: I promoted in 2014.

3 MR. DAVIES: All right. You know what, I'm
4 going to ask you a question about the anchors. If you
5 can help me out here if we have a problem.

6 How do you drop your anchors? Are the
7 brakes released and do you have a pelican hook over the
8 shackle and just take a hammer and knock it off or do
9 you, or somebody has to up and manually release the
10 brake?

11 MR. YADAVA: We -

12 MR. DAVIES: Okay.

13 MR. YADAVA: We just have to remove the
14 ballast copper -

15 MR. DAVIES: Right.

16 MR. YADAVA: And then, we open the brake and
17 let go. Damper.

18 MR. DAVIES: Do you have to knock off a
19 pelican hook with a sledgehammer or not? No?

20 MR. YADAVA: No.

21 MR. DAVIES: And how quickly do they drop
22 then? Do they drop right in?

23 MR. YADAVA: Yes, sir, right in. How they
24 do it.

25 MR. DAVIES: All right, I think that's it

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1 for me.

2 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke Wisniewski, NTSB.
3 Can you go through, you discussed the ballast tanks,
4 which ballast tanks did you press up? Did you -

5 MR. YADAVA: One port and one at starboard
6 ballast.

7 MR. WISNIEWSKI: And how quickly was that,
8 do you remember the time when you decided to start the
9 ballast pump to when the tanks were putting water on
10 deck, overflowing?

11 MR. YADAVA: I can't say exactly but it's
12 about five to 10 minute after completion of the
13 discharge in the ballast in the one wing was 90%. That
14 is a standard (indiscernible due to accent). So it
15 takes time to get it filled up and over flow.

16 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Right.

17 MR. YADAVA: So, it's about five to 10
18 minute.

19 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay, you think five to 10
20 minutes -

21 MR. YADAVA: 10 minutes.

22 MR. WISNIEWSKI: -- to press the tanks?

23 MR. YADAVA: I'm not (indiscernible due to
24 accent) on watch.

25 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yes.

1 MR. YADAVA: Works out, five to 10 minutes.

2 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Did you have both tanks,
3 both valves were open, same time to fill?

4 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

5 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay, and just one ballast
6 pump? Do you have more than one?

7 MR. YADAVA: Two ballast pumps.

8 MR. WISNIEWSKI: You had two ballast pumps
9 going?

10 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

11 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Is there a name or a number
12 for the ballast pumps?

13 MR. YADAVA: Ballast pump number one and
14 ballast pump number 2.

15 MR. WISNIEWSKI: And is that all you have?
16 Do you have anymore ballast pumps?

17 MR. YADAVA: No more ballast pumps.

18 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Just ballast pumps one and
19 two.

20 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

21 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. You indicated early
22 on you were discussing gauging, I guess maybe letters
23 of protest with the short, was there any delay from
24 departure?

25 MR. YADAVA: No, sir.

1 MR. WISNIEWSKI: No?

2 MR. YADAVA: No.

3 MR. WISNIEWSKI: No issue with the terminal?

4 MR. YADAVA: No.

5 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Was there any letters of
6 protests?

7 MR. YADAVA: There was no letter of protest
8 (indiscernible due to accent).

9 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. How about any issue
10 with the gangway? No? The gangway, was there any
11 delay with picking up the gangway or did you use the
12 terminal's gangway?

13 MR. YADAVA: It was terminal gangway.

14 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Terminal gangway?

15 MR. YADAVA: Yes.

16 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay, but there was no
17 delay?

18 MR. YADAVA: No delay.

19 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. That's all I have at
20 this time. Thank you.

21 MR. USHER: I have no questions, thank you.

22 MR. BAILEY: No questions.

23 MS. NORSTRUD: I have no questions.

24 MR. HUFFMAN: No questions.

25 [REDACTED] All right, Chief, do you have

1 any questions for us?

2 MR. YADAVA: No, sir.

3 [REDACTED] No? All right --

4 MR. DAVIES: Just one quick other question,
5 Bruce Davies with the Investigations. When we, you
6 pumped up the ballast tanks, I know Mr. [REDACTED] asked
7 you this question before, but did you ever do something
8 like that before or work for somebody who did something
9 like that?

10 MR. YADAVA: No, sir.

11 MR. DAVIES: Well, how did you come up with
12 that? Why did you think that was a good idea?

13 MR. YADAVA: This all come in my mind at
14 that time. And I (indiscernible due to accent) run it
15 through the master and he said yes, go ahead.

16 MR. DAVIES: All right, thank you.

17 [REDACTED] Thank you, that concludes the
18 interview.

19 (Whereupon the above-referenced interview
20 ended at unknown time).

21

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24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Allision Involving the Aframax River
on the Houston Ship Channel, Sept. 6, 2016
Accident No. DCA16FM055
Interview of Ambhoj Yadava

DATE: 09-08-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 15 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

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