

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

*

CRUISE BARGE COLLIDES WITH DOCK AT *

CHALMETTE REFINERY ON THE LOWER * Accident No.: DCA23FM031

MISSISSIPPI ROVER NEAR CHALMETTE, *

LOUISIANA ON APRIL 25, 2023 *

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Interview of: WRANGLER LANE MAXFIELD, Deckhand
Ovide J

Houma, Louisiana

Friday,
April 28, 2023

APPEARANCES:

██████████

United States Coast Guard

LUKE WISNIEWSKI

National Transportation Safety Board

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(8:16 a.m.)

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] All right. Good morning. This is [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard. The date is 28 April 2023. The
current time is 0816 local time.

Coast Guard and NTSB are conducting a joint investigation into the *Ovide J* collision with the Chalmette Refinery crude oil dock which occurred on 25 April 2023.

At this time, I just want to confirm everybody okay that we record this interview? Any issues with that at all?

MR. MAXFIELD: No.

██████████ Okay. Excellent. Thank you very much. So we'll go ahead and state our names and positions. I'll go first. This is ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ United States Coast Guard.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke Wisniewski, National Transportation
Safety Board, W-i-s-n-i-e-w-s-k-i.

MR. HERSCHAFT: Jeremy Herschaft, H-e-r-s-c-h-a-f-t. I'm a maritime attorney with Blank Rome LLP and External Admiralty Counsel for EMS.

MR. JOHNSON: Jeff Johnson, J-o-h-n-s-o-n. I'm a manager of investigations at Enterprise Marine Services.

MR. MAXFIELD: Wrangler Lane Maxfield, M-a-x-f-i-e-l-d,
deckhand on the *Ovide J*.

██████████ Okay. Thank you so much. Mr. Maxfield, can you please give me a good address for you?

1 MR. MAXFIELD: [REDACTED].

2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you so much. What about a good phone
3 number for you?

4 MR. MAXFIELD: ([REDACTED] --

5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Okay.

6 MR. MAXFIELD: -- [REDACTED] --

7 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Okay.

8 MR. MAXFIELD: -- [REDACTED].

9 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Got it. Thank you so much. Appreciate that.

10 Yeah. Well, thank you all for meeting us today. We're just
11 going to kind of walk through the incident. We'll start off with
12 a few introductory questions, and then I'm just going to let you
13 talk and kind of tell us what happened.

14 MR. MAXFIELD: Okay.

15 INTERVIEW OF WRANGLER LANE MAXFIELD

16 BY [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

17 Q. So what is your role at the company and how long have you
18 held that position?

19 A. I'm a deckhand, roughly a year and a half.

20 Q. Okay. What about previous positions at the company or
21 elsewhere?

22 A. I was a welder before.

23 Q. A welder, okay. Where were you a welder?

24 A. Brian Coop (ph.).

25 Q. Brian Coop. Is that local or --

1 A. No.

2 Q. Texas.

3 A. Texas, yes.

4 Q. Texas, okay. And was that on marine welding or --

5 A. No, no, no.

6 Q. Just -- okay.

7 A. This will be the first thing I've ever done in the marine
8 industry.

9 Q. Okay. First thing. Got it. Thank you for that. Okay. And
10 then walk me through -- who was with you on the vessel that day?

11 A. On the vessel that day was Captain Mike, the relief captain,
12 James, and the tankerman, Kevin.

13 Q. Okay. Gotcha. Those were the only people on board?

14 A. Yeah, those were the only people on board.

15 Q. Okay. And then how well did you know all those folks?

16 A. I've been working with those guys for -- this will be my
17 third hitch on this vessel. So, I mean about 3 months I guess.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MR. HERSCHAFT: And a hitch is what?

20 MR. MAXFIELD: Twenty-eight days.

21 BY [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

22 Q. All right. Any issues with the crewmembers or anybody at the
23 company whatsoever?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay. So, how do you explain the crew dynamics, the

1 relationship and everything with those people?

2 A. Everybody does their job.

3 Q. Yeah. No fights, issues, arguments?

4 A. No, no, no. We all get along really good, lots of cutting up
5 and joking around with each other. As long as everybody does
6 their job --

7 Q. Yep.

8 A. -- there's no problems.

9 Q. Okay. And then who is your -- who do you say is your direct
10 supervisor?

11 A. Mike, Captain Mike.

12 Q. Captain Mike. Okay.

13 A. Yeah. I work on his rotation. So we get on and off the boat
14 at the same time.

15 Q. Okay. Gotcha. So you work with him consistently?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. All right. Well, I think those are my introductory
18 questions. So I think what we'll do is just walk us through what
19 happened. Be as detailed as possible. We're not going to
20 interrupt. So we'll just let you talk.

21 A. So, since I've been on this boat, we consistently loaded and
22 went and discharged at PBF Chalmette basically. There's only been
23 a few other -- a few times since I've been on this boat that we've
24 discharged at other docks. So, we've been there a dozen times at
25 least, probably more. And, we always do the same thing basically

1 because I mean they've been coming to this dock since before I got
2 this boat, but I mean whenever we come in and the stern touches
3 up, and then you lay in and they'll rotate. Because the dock's
4 not completely flat.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. So like -- it's kind of hard to see in the picture because it
7 looks pretty straight right there, but whenever you -- you come in
8 and that corner of the barge touches up, and you lay, you lay in
9 flat, you kind of land like this. And so there's, you know, an 8
10 foot gap on the head roughly. And so they'll kind of pivot around
11 to that head touches up right here which, you know, the head of
12 your barge would be roughly right here. And you'll catch a line
13 up here, downriver, so you can follow into it and flatten out and
14 catch -- you'll catch lines here, here, here and here. And then
15 we'll get up on the dock here, walk down and lay a cable on the
16 very head, off the timber heads.

17 And so I mean it was -- everything was the same as usual. We
18 came in, and I was on the head talking on the radio, you know,
19 calling numbers. You know, you're 30 feet, 25, and Kevin was, you
20 know, somewhere towards the stern. And, he was talking them off
21 the stern, telling them, you know, you're 3 feet, 4 feet. And
22 when it got to about 3 feet, that's when I started, you know,
23 picking up and grabbing line, paying attention, so whenever he
24 touches up, he'll lay the head over, and I catch the line.

25 And, I heard him say, you're about to touch up, and whenever

1 -- so I always grab the -- I was standing right there at the edge
2 of the expansion trunk, and just in case, I always grab the cable
3 right there to hand because that's -- so you don't fall over if
4 you're unexpected, you bump up. And I never felt anything, and
5 when I looked back, the dock was -- it was shaking, and then it
6 just dropped. I mean it was -- the only, you know, explanation or
7 like the analogy is like when you see the World Trade Center just
8 straight drop, it was like that. It just -- and it just dropped
9 like a sack of potatoes.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. And at that point, I didn't know what to do. They don't
12 teach that. And, Bull came on the radio, or James, sorry --
13 Everybody calls him Bull, came on the radio and was like catch me
14 as many lines as you can. And so on these -- right there and
15 here, we ended up catching like five lines and a wire, just to
16 keep us in and, you know, that's whenever -- once we got secured,
17 we went to -- we came back to the vessel and went to the
18 wheelhouse. That's where we got our alcohol tests and all that.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. They were on the phone with the company, you know, reporting
21 the incident.

22 Q. So, just so I'm clear, we're not connected obviously at this
23 time in terms of --

24 A. No.

25 Q. -- crude oil. Okay. But -- so where -- explain to me where

1 you said -- so I guess once the dock fell, you were connected at
2 one point still?

3 A. When the dock fell --

4 Q. I'm talking about -- I'm sorry. When you were moored, you
5 had lines over, correct?

6 A. No.

7 Q. You did not have lines over?

8 A. No. When the dock fell, we did not have any lines connected
9 to the dock.

10 Q. So you had just kind of touched basically?

11 A. Yeah. I mean it was, it was -- because normally whenever you
12 come in and touch up, you feel it --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- you know, wherever you are on the barge. And, I never
15 felt anything, and we weren't -- the head wasn't closing up like
16 it normally would. So that's when I looked over or looked back
17 and the dock was falling.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. You know, shaking and falling.

20 Q. So once that happened, what happened? What did you guys do?
21 Once that fell, what happened? Did you guys push off?

22 A. No, no, no, no. No, we -- he kind of just kicked the head
23 in, and we caught lines after it had already --

24 Q. After it happened.

25 A. -- it was -- yeah.

1 Q. So I mean where did you catch lines exactly, just on the
2 (indiscernible)?

3 A. So like your -- the -- so that's like -- it's hard to see
4 because like here there's nothing under the dock.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Like there's no padding or anything. So right here, there's
7 wood pilings and then right here, there's wood pilings --

8 Q. Right.

9 A. -- just like there is -- there was down here.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And so there's bits to catch lines right here, here, here,
12 here and there's one at the top and one at the bottom. One at the
13 top, one of the bottom, one at the top, one at the bottom. And
14 so --

15 Q. That's what you all did?

16 A. Yeah, we were able to able to catch our lines off the top and
17 the bottom. We ended up with five lines and a wire.

18 Q. And once that fell, no damage at all to the barge or
19 anything?

20 A. No. There's not a dent. There's not a mark.

21 Q. So it fell straight down.

22 A. I mean it came straight down.

23 Q. Okay. And who is James? You mentioned James -- Bull.

24 A. That's the relief captain. He was at the --

25 Q. Okay. That's relief captain. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. We're still getting names.

3 A. I'm sorry.

4 Q. No, you're fine.

5 A. Yeah, everybody calls him Bull.

6 Q. Okay.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I wish I had a cool nickname like
8 that.

9 BY [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

10 Q. So thank you for that. I appreciate it. And then you
11 mentioned a dozen times or so, you've docked there previously?

12 A. I mean more than a dozen times.

13 Q. Okay. You're familiar with that.

14 A. Yeah, I mean do it all the time.

15 Q. Nothing out of the norm.

16 A. Not at this time.

17 Q. Okay. Have you ever noticed any previous damage when you're
18 coming into the facility, the docks or anything like that?

19 A. No, no damage. I mean a lot of rust.

20 Q. A lot of rust, yeah.

21 A. But not damage.

22 Q. Okay. What about from other captains, crews, anybody from
23 the company ever mention anything substandard about that dock?

24 A. I've never spoke to anybody else at the company about that
25 dock.

1 Q. What about other -- anybody else from other companies or
2 maybe somebody from the Chalmette Refinery or anything like that?
3 Ever talk to anybody about that?

4 A. No, not until after the incident.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. And everybody was like, oh, we waiting on that to fall.

7 Q. Oh, really.

8 A. Oh, yeah.

9 Q. Who said that?

10 A. All the shore tankermen and the dockmen and everybody. We
11 were waiting on that thing to fall.

12 Q. Gotcha. Okay. So once you all hooked up, you're kind of
13 sitting there. You made your reports. I mean what did you do at
14 that point or what did the vessel do?

15 A. We never hooked up any hoses.

16 Q. Well, I thought you said once this fell you connected here,
17 made your --

18 A. Oh, yeah, lines. I thought you were talking about hooking to
19 unload the cargo on the ship.

20 Q. No, no, no.

21 A. Yeah. Once we, once we had tied off, and we had, you know,
22 the tug secured, we went back to the boat and that's when we went
23 to the wheelhouse to talk to Captain Mike and Bull or James, and
24 that's -- what was the question?

25 Q. I just wanted to see what you all did after that. So you

1 made your calls, and then what did the vessel do?

2 A. Oh, I mean we took our -- oh, we set there. We stayed there
3 until I don't know what time exactly but it was, you know, later
4 in the morning.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I was in bed at that time because it all happened around
7 midnight which I would have been getting off watch at midnight,
8 but being that we were right there at the dock, you know, I just
9 stayed out there to help Kevin.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. Because Kevin came out there. So I was going to stay out
12 there and help Kevin tie off, and then I would go to bed after we
13 got -- it got tied off. But --

14 Q. So who inspected for damage? Once the dock fell, who on the
15 crew -- who on your crew kind of inspected the barge for damage or
16 the tug for damage?

17 A. Me and Kevin.

18 Q. Both of you. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, we went and looked at it. Just from what we could see,
20 I mean plus we were loaded, you can't see what's under the water.

21 Q. Yeah, that's right. Okay. Did the company send anybody out
22 other than the crew to inspect the barge and the tug for damage or
23 was it just the crew?

24 A. I don't know. I know the port captain came out that night,
25 but I was in bed before he got here.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I don't know who else came before I got up.

3 Q. Okay. Awesome. Did you communicate with anybody at the
4 company or was it just the captain?

5 A. It was just him. I didn't communicate with anybody.

6 Q. Gotcha. Was there any issues with the vessel that day,
7 equipment that day, anything, you know, whatsoever?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Nothing. Okay. Who does the walk arounds of the barge? I'm
10 assuming you do like a safety walk around and stuff like that?

11 A. Yeah, we do a pre-transfer inspection, and that would be the
12 tankerman, Kevin.

13 Q. Okay. You don't help with that at all?

14 A. I mean I do whenever we're on the same -- if there's -- if
15 there was another tankerman here, I'd be working like a call
16 watch, a 12 hour instead of a 6 hour. And so I would help with
17 that. Like I said, I'm going for tankerman for Monday, but I
18 didn't help with this one, because the tankerman has to sign it.

19 Q. Gotcha. Okay. All right. How was the weather that day?

20 A. Average. I mean it was clear looking. It wasn't raining.

21 Q. What about winds?

22 A. I don't -- the wind, I don't think the wind was blowing real
23 hard or anything.

24 Q. Currents?

25 A. I don't believe I --

1 Q. You didn't notice anything abnormal that day?

2 A. No, no, no. Nothing. I mean it was literally like every
3 other, you know, day on the boat. I mean would go to dock to
4 dock, you know. We done it quite a bit, so.

5 Q. Okay.

6 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke with NTSB.

7 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

8 Q. I just wanted to follow up there on a few items. You made a
9 comment on -- so you said 21 days on --

10 A. Twenty eight.

11 Q. -- or 28 days on. What's your off schedule?

12 A. Fourth.

13 Q. You're off 14.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Where are you at on this hitch as far as the day? When are
16 you due to get off?

17 A. Can I look at a calendar?

18 Q. Sure. Absolutely. Yeah, anything you want to jog your
19 memory.

20 A. So, let's see.

21 Q. Does Tuesday sound right? Are you supposed to get off this
22 Tuesday or no?

23 A. I will actually get off of the boat tomorrow to go to
24 tankerman's school on Monday.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. But as far as my 28 day hitch, because when I finish taking
2 this school, I'll be coming right back. I got off on April 5th,
3 and I came back to the boat on April 19th.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And then -- yeah, I got off on the 5th. I came back on the
6 19th. And then I should get off on the 17th.

7 Q. Okay. And your schedule was what? So you said you're with
8 the captain. That was a 6 to 12 watch.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. You were doing 6 hour watches.

11 A. So, the day before, we had another tankerman on here who got
12 off. He was riding over from a different boat. And so I was
13 working 12s, and then the day before, I switched to the 6 hour
14 watches. You all had a sheet. I don't remember exactly when. I
15 you all had a sheet yesterday.

16 Q. Okay. But prior -- a day prior you were working straight
17 12s?

18 A. No, the day prior, I believe I was working 6s.

19 Q. So how often do you rotate like that? Is that typical for --

20 A. Yeah, yeah. I mean it just depends on if they, if they get
21 another tankerman or if -- I mean if we go up to a five man crew,
22 the deckhand goes to call watch or if --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- you're --

25 Q. So that's just if you have an (indiscernible)?

1 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I mean if we get a five man crew, then
2 I'll go to a 12 hour watch.

3 Q. Twelve hour watch. All right.

4 A. If not, then I'll work 6 hour watches on, you know.

5 Q. Thank you. I was provided a copy of his 96 hour work record.
6 I appreciate. So, you're going through -- go through a little bit
7 more, and just give me a little more detail as far as the lines.
8 You talked about you were up on the bow, on the starboard bow of
9 the Barge EMS -- what was it? 348.

10 A. Yeah, 348.

11 Q. So you were there and what line did you grab first? Is there
12 a certain name to it like forward spring, aft, you know?

13 A. It would have been a single part down river.

14 Q. Say that again.

15 A. Single part down river.

16 Q. Okay. And do you put that one on the --

17 A. On the first cavel. So you've got your timber heads.

18 Q. Yep.

19 A. And then, you know, roughly an expansion trunk right there,
20 and then you've got a cavel here. And so it would have been the
21 -- it would have been a single part of down river off the first
22 cavel.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Off the first cavel back from the rake.

25 Q. Okay. Great. And how about the next one you grabbed after

1 that? You said you had a wire in hand or just to hold onto?

2 A. Yeah, it would have been I believe -- I'm not 100 percent
3 sure, but I believe we would have caught the wire next. Kevin
4 came down here and got the ladder, walked up and I handed it up.
5 He put it on the bit. I tightened it with the winch. And then
6 coming back this way, we would have caught -- there's a cavel
7 right there that makes a short one. We ran a two part, and then I
8 believe we caught a longer single part off the top right here.
9 And then it would have been another two part right here. One, two
10 three -- yeah. No. We caught a line off the timber heads. The
11 cable went around the button. I'm sorry. There's a button there.
12 We ran a cable off the button and caught a line off the timber
13 heads also.

14 Q. And when you're putting say your first line out, how much
15 distance between the fendering and the barge, the side of the
16 barge? Is there a distance there or are you right up against the
17 fendering?

18 A. We're probably like maybe a foot out.

19 Q. A foot off.

20 A. A foot off of it.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. We were touched up on this, on this fendering.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I assume the wood pilings are what you're calling fendering,
25 right?

- 1 Q. Yeah, the wood fendering.
- 2 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- 3 Q. Because there's pilings behind it that are --
- 4 A. Yeah, the steel.
- 5 Q. -- the steel pilings that are driven into the ground --
- 6 A. And the wood.
- 7 Q. -- probably 15, 20 feet below the mud line.
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. So the fendering is the wooden --
- 10 A. Okay. Yeah. Yeah, so we would have been touched up on this
- 11 fendering back here I believe.
- 12 Q. Okay.
- 13 A. And then coming around -- pivoting around to catch the lines
- 14 off this one.
- 15 Q. All right. Now, I'm going to back a little bit farther.
- 16 Like when you said that the stern was, you know, touched in.
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. How far out were you, distance from the first fendering to
- 19 the bow of the barge?
- 20 A. Maybe 12 feet.
- 21 Q. Twelve feet?
- 22 A. Yeah, roughly.
- 23 Q. Okay. And then you -- whose calling out the distances? You
- 24 said -- is that you or Kevin?
- 25 A. Kevin was calling out distances for the stern.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And I was calling out distances for the bow.

3 Q. The bow. So how far out? What was the last distance you
4 remember you gave to the bow right before contact, where you saw,
5 you know, the dropping of the 150 feet of dock that went into the
6 water?

7 A. We were 12 wide I would say.

8 Q. Twelve wide.

9 A. Yeah, about 12 wide up there when we touched the stern.

10 Q. Okay. And then you can hear Kevin over the radio, right?

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. So you were already touched up on the stern. Could you hear
13 what they were saying? What did --

14 A. So when we got --

15 Q. When Kevin gets to the point where it's touched up, does he
16 say, you know, 0 feet or you're up against it? How does he -- how
17 do you guys relay and talk to that?

18 A. So as you're coming in, you know, you say 10 feet, you know,
19 8, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, fixing to touch up.

20 Q. Okay. Fixing to touch up.

21 A. Yeah. Or 1 to touch, you know.

22 Q. Yeah. So fixing to touch up right after is what you just
23 call?

24 A. Well, no. So I was -- whenever we got to, you know, fixing
25 to touch up, I grabbed the -- there's a cable that runs the side

1 of the expansion trunk.

2 Q. Right. So you're not going to go overboard.

3 A. Yeah, yeah. So you don't -- I mean it's just habit.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. And so whenever I hear that, you know, grab that. I got the
6 line in the other hand getting ready, and because he still has to
7 close, you know, close the head up. And so whenever -- usually
8 you feel it, and I just never felt anything. And so I looked
9 back, and the dock was, you know, it was --

10 Q. And was there any terminal reps? Was there a lead wharfman,
11 PCI on the dock? Was anyone there yet?

12 A. Nope. Never is.

13 Q. Is that typical?

14 A. Yeah, it's very typical for there not to be anybody out there
15 yet.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. They always -- whenever we call, they just tell us or they
18 tell the captain where they want the header.

19 Q. So how do they, how do they explain where they want the
20 header? Bow up, pipe up --

21 A. Well, they would --

22 Q. -- pipe down river.

23 A. It would be header down, but they would tell them they want
24 the header spotted in between the crane and the ladder because
25 there's a ladder inset on the wood -- what did you call it?

1 Q. The fendering.

2 A. Fendering.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. That's what I was thinking. So the wood fendering, there's a
5 ladder inset on all three of these.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And so they would tell them that they want the header spotted
8 in between the crane and the ladder.

9 Q. Okay. And were you there when they gave that command or that
10 reply?

11 A. No, I'm just -- that what he always says, that's where they
12 want United States.

13 Q. All right. So that's just relayed to you over the radio?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Or --

16 A. Over the radio or in the boat.

17 Q. You know you talked about the pre-transfer inspection. Were
18 you involved with any of the communication with the terminal reps?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. So the PCI handles most of that or is that the
21 captain?

22 A. Are you talking about, you talking about like a pre-transfer
23 conference?

24 Q. Yeah. So just in general, like you have a pre-transfer
25 conference but then you also have like an inspection you probably

1 go through on the ship, making sure everything's lined up or how
2 do you --

3 A. I was, I was talking about the pre-transfers, the inspection
4 that we do before you get to the dock.

5 Q. Before you get to the dock?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. We have a form, the EM pre-transfer checklist.

9 Q. Yeah, if you can pull that out, yep.

10 A. This is what I'm referring to.

11 Q. So do you fill this out or who's filling this out?

12 A. The tankerman will fill it out, and he has to sign it,
13 tankerman's signature, and then the wheelhouse also has to sign
14 it.

15 Q. Okay. And so was this -- you wouldn't know if this was done
16 prior to pulling up, right? That's up to the --

17 A. It should have, it should have -- it has to be done within 24
18 hours before you pull up to the dock.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. That's Enterprise policy. I'm sorry.

21 Q. I appreciate it. Thanks for clarifying that.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And then once you got there, you've completed this, you don't
24 have any communication with the terminal at all, do you?

25 A. No. I mean I have before but not in this instance.

1 Q. Not in this instance.

2 A. Yeah, yeah.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I wouldn't have because I would have been -- as soon as we
5 got there, I would have going to bed.

6 Q. Yeah. Now -- so because it's just transferred over the watch
7 rotation, that's why that you guys stayed up and helped?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. So it's typical that only one person would be up on there
10 doing the lines.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay. And I guess the only thing, you saw no damage. I
13 guess there was no reported like sheen in the water. Just curious
14 if there was anything else that was like kind of discussed. Like
15 either what response actions or items that the captain told you to
16 do after you got the lines on or were you just told to come back
17 here and get drug tested.

18 A. He just said to look at the barge and we didn't see anything
19 and then we came back to the vessel.

20 Q. Okay. Now, did you take a -- did you write down a witness
21 statement or anything for the company?

22 A. Yes, yes, I did. I did that the next day I believe.

23 Q. All right.

24 A. Yeah.

25 MR. WISNIEWSKI: I think that's all I have right now. I'll

1 let anyone else ask questions.

2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard again.

3 BY [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

4 Q. So when you say you looked at the barge, did you open voids
5 as well to check for water ingress?

6 A. Not at that time.

7 Q. Okay. Well, when did that happen?

8 A. That happened whenever the surveyor came out, and then it
9 happened again whenever Coast Guard came out and asked to see if
10 me and Captain Mike opened the void right there.

11 Q. Okay. When you said surveyor?

12 A. I wasn't --

13 MR. JOHNSON: Granville Bolger (ph.).

14 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Granville. Okay. So a company hired surveyor.
15 Okay. And then -- I think I'm going to let -- I do have a couple
16 of questions at the very end.

17 MR. WISNIEWSKI: I just had a few.

18 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Yeah.

19 BY MR. HERSCHAFT:

20 Q. Wrangler, you had mentioned numerous times, and this is
21 Jeremy Herschaft with Blank Rome, counsel for EMS, you've
22 mentioned numerous times today during the questioning from the
23 officers about witnessing the structure fall into the water. Can
24 you describe in just a little bit more detail what exactly that
25 looked like? The position as to how it fell, how much fell, if

1 you saw that or can comment on that?

2 A. So, when -- from what I saw, it shook but it didn't, it
3 didn't sway back and forth like you would think or I would think
4 that it normally would. It was almost like an earthquake like,
5 you know, that up and down motion. And when it dropped, the whole
6 thing just -- it didn't, you know, one side go and then the other.
7 It was simultaneous. Just whole platform dropped, and I mean I
8 don't want to say how far it dropped definitively but if I had to
9 guess, you know, a good 20 feet of just drop and --

10 Q. Okay. That's all I was looking for.

11 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] You can ask him some questions before I close up.

12 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yeah.

13 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

14 Q. I just wanted to show you again real quick as you're coming
15 up, and maybe we'll go through it here. The video's up. This is
16 the board (ph.) facing (indiscernible), and I just -- and then
17 we're starting at -- what's the time?

18 A. 12:45.

19 Q. Okay. Just -- and if anything strikes you or if you want to
20 elaborate on anything else. You've probably already looked at
21 this a couple times, but anything help jog your memory on anything
22 that you haven't told us so far. Did you have lights on? Because
23 I know they turned the spotlight on the bow here shortly.

24 A. Yeah, they have spotlights on. They didn't have the flood
25 lights on I don't believe.

1 MR. JOHNSON: Where are you at in here, Wrangler?

2 MR. MAXFIELD: I would have been right there. That light,
3 that's me.

4 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

5 Q. So you have a little light on you, a flashing light or what
6 is it?

7 A. I don't know what it was. I don't know if it was -- no, I
8 mean I saw me move. I'm right here.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Because whenever it fell, I backed up off the edge.

11 Q. Yeah, can you pause it and tell me the time.

12 A. Yeah, right there. That little light there on the side is me
13 no.

14 MR. JOHNSON: And just for your record, that's -- I'm sorry,
15 13 minutes and 55 seconds. There's a little dot on the starboard
16 barge.

17 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Right in the corner, yep.

18 MR. MAXFIELD: Yeah, that's me.

19 MR. WISNIEWSKI: All right.

20 MR. MAXFIELD: And then I mean I saw Kevin.

21 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

22 Q. So Kevin's where? Halfway back on the barge at point.

23 A. Let me see. See if I can find him again. I seen him. Yeah,
24 I don't know. I saw him at some point. He was right in here.

25 Q. Okay. All right. So now, the spotlight just went off.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. I believe the captain pointed it on the -- it looks like --
3 where you would be attaching the forward, forward line.

4 A. Yeah, where I'd be catching -- trying to catch it down river.
5 And we're still probably like 3 feet wide there I think because I
6 was -- I was trying to throw it. We were a little far out, and I
7 was trying to catch something. I was, you know, kind of frenzied
8 I guess, and I missed it a couple of times.

9 MR. JOHNSON: That's at 14:40 in your video.

10 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Thank you.

11 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

12 Q. Okay. It's look like it's already --

13 A. Yes, this is where he's pivoting. He's putting that head in
14 there, touching it. And I know that when -- so Kevin -- whenever
15 we put the wire, Kevin went up here and walked down to help me,
16 and he put the wire on the bit and I know -- I believe Captain
17 James told him, I prefer you to come down the ladder on the rake
18 of the bow instead of coming back down the swath way.

19 Q. And does that happen now or was that a little bit later?

20 A. It's probably happening now-ish, I guess.

21 Q. All right. So what's the time in the lower --

22 A. 16:11.

23 Q. Okay. All right.

24 A. It's kind of hard to see with those spotlights on.

25 Q. It is.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. It is. Just try -- does it jog anything in your memory that
3 remember other than what you told us?

4 A. Yeah. Like I say, I know Kevin came up this one and went
5 down and then the relief captain or James said to him like, hey,
6 don't -- you know, I'd wish you'd come down there instead of
7 walking back towards this way.

8 Q. Sure. Yeah, there's not a lot of stability --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- in those spots.

11 A. Yeah, yeah.

12 Q. Understood.

13 A. I mean I can see somebody on the side. I don't know who
14 catching -- we're catching lines.

15 Q. At what point do you remember any of the terminal reps even
16 showing up?

17 A. You know what. So, I -- after we caught the first line off
18 the -- that first cavel back, we put the wire on, we put the two
19 lines here or three, and then when -- I went back up to the timber
20 heads to just throw another line on because I could catch that bit
21 at the top. And, the terminal guy was coming up then. So we
22 almost had the tug tied off, and I threw the, threw the line up
23 there, and it landed, you see you've got the bit and then you've
24 got two tips off the side. And so the line landed on the side of
25 the tip and he was standing right there. I said, hey, will you

1 throw that over that for me? And he said -- and he yelled behind
2 him and he said, hey, come put the line on for this guy. And he
3 said I'm just the tank guy. And so, then the dockman I guess came
4 up after that and put the line around the bit because the tank guy
5 wouldn't do it.

6 Q. Okay. Do you know what time that roughly was?

7 A. I don't.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I don't know.

10 Q. Now, is that pretty typical for them to not show up until
11 after you're tied up, until you're getting ready to hook up --

12 A. Oh, yeah.

13 Q. -- the hoses.

14 A. Oh, yeah. They don't get in a very big hurry at that dock.
15 Some -- when they want you there, they'll get you there, and
16 sometimes they're going to hook you up right away and they'll hook
17 you up and you'll standby for 10 hours. And sometimes they don't
18 want to hook you up right away, and sometimes they will get right
19 away and get started. But they don't get in a big hurry at that
20 dock.

21 Q. Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. WISNIEWSKI: That's all I have. I think you have just a
23 couple of closing.

24 BY [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

25 Q. So this -- it hadn't fallen yet. Is that right?

1 A. It hasn't what?

2 Q. Has it fallen? I can't really.

3 A. Yeah, it's already in the water.

4 Q. When did that happen? I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm still
5 trying to see it. Or do we not see it because of the angle?

6 A. Oh, there it is.

7 Q. There it is.

8 A. You'll see the light on it.

9 Q. So what minute was that that it happened?

10 MR. HERSCHAFT: That is at 13 minutes and 10 seconds on the
11 video.

12 MR. MAXFIELD: I haven't seen this video before. There I see
13 it. So that was 13:32 when that actually just fell.

14 [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. HERSCHAFT: That had to have been a scary situation.

16 MR. MAXFIELD: Yeah, they don't teach that in deckhand
17 school.

18 [REDACTED] Yeah, yeah.

19 BY [REDACTED]

20 Q. I was going to ask, I mean what type of training do you guys
21 do in terms of like, you know, an incident occurs? What's your
22 protocol? There's probably nothing for that, right?

23 A. Yeah, they don't have nothing that I know of. I -- well, I
24 mean actually I'm lying. There's something. All owners as
25 directed by PSC on scene.

1 Q. Well done. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Okay.
2 So I think just the last questions I have --

3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] As long as nobody else has anything else.

4 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yeah, I'd just like ask one more. Luke,
5 NTSB.

6 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

7 Q. So when you were calling out the distance, was it quicker
8 than you've done in the past as far as closing the gap or --

9 A. It's normal. It was the same. I mean --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- it's hard to gauge, gauge that I mean, but we weren't
12 coming in fast by any means at all. It was very anti-climatic
13 until it was, you know.

14 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. Yeah, that's all. Thank you.

15 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.

16 BY [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

17 Q. So, I'm just going to ask you a couple of blanket questions
18 here. Do you think anything could have been done to prevent this
19 from occurring?

20 A. Other than us just not being there and it not being us, I
21 mean in my opinion, it would have been the next person that
22 touched that dock.

23 Q. Okay. And then anything further you'd like to mention that
24 could assist us in our investigation?

25 A. No, I don't have anything.

1 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

2 Q. Yeah. So you were there on the -- this is Luke again, NTSB.
3 You were there on April 21st. Were you involved with tying up
4 while docking?

5 A. On the 21st.

6 Q. Or was it the 24th. I wrote down that you were there on
7 April 21st. Is that right?

8 A. I don't know.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Honestly, off the top of my head. Do you know the time?

11 Q. I didn't have the times.

12 A. That they came to the dock. If it was during the day, I
13 might have been but if -- because I believe at that time I was
14 working the 12 hour watches and I don't believe Kevin
15 (indiscernible) at any point at this hitch. So, if it was in the
16 night, I don't believe I would have been involved in that.

17 Q. So when you stand your 12 hour watches, was that wherever
18 you're needed? The wheelhouse. What's the difference between
19 your 12 hour watch and your 6 hour watch as far as where you're
20 at? Is it -- does it -- does anything change other than the time
21 of day you're working?

22 A. It's just the time of day you're working a job. You know, I
23 get up in the morning. I sleep in my loft (ph.) just like I do
24 right now. I do all the same things, except I just work the 12
25 hours during the day, like for big projects like painting and

1 chipping and, you know, I mean there's another guy during the day
2 to work on big projects on the boat.

3 Q. Okay. Thank you. I appreciate it.

4 A. Um-hum. Thank you.

5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] All right. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast
6 Guard. If nobody has anything further, we're going to go ahead
7 and conclude the interview. The time on deck is 0859 local, and
8 we are concluding the interview. Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, at 8:59 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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


IN THE MATTER OF: CRUISE BARGE COLLIDES WITH DOCK AT
CHALMETTE REFINERY ON THE LOWER
MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEAR CHALMETTE,
LOUISIANA ON APRIL 25, 2023
Interview of Wrangler Lane Maxfield

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM031

PLACE: Houma, Louisiana

DATE: April 28, 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.


Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber