



## National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594  
Office of Marine Safety

### Interview Summary – DCA21FM019

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**Interview of:** Roy Briones, second officer of the tank vessel *Bow Tribute*  
**Date/Time:** March 19, 2021 1130 to 1215 CDT  
**Location:** Crew recreation room on board the *Bow Tribute*, alongside Bowland Marine Perry Street Wharf, Gretna, LA  
**Interviewed by:** Lt. [REDACTED], USCG and Adam Tucker – NTSB  
**Attendees:** Adam Davis, Phelps Dunbar (attorney for Odfjell), Hermina Urica, Tagalog Translator  
**Accident:** March 16, 2021 Contact of the Norwegian flag tank vessel *Bow Tribute* with City of New Orleans Water intakes (NTSB No. DCA21FM019). Nine Mile bend, Lower Mississippi River, mile 104, New Orleans, Louisiana.

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This interview summary has been compiled based on NTSB and US Coast Guard investigator notes taken during the interview of second officer Roy Briones.

- Mr. Briones was the officer of the watch on the *Bow Tribute* at the time the vessel made contact with the New Orleans Water intakes in the Lower Mississippi River near mile 104.
- Mr. Briones said he has been at sea for 24 years and started as an able seaman before becoming licensed as a navigational watch officer in 2001. He has sailed as a second officer since 2006 or 2007. This is his first contract on board the *Bow Tribute* and he has not sailed on any sister vessels in the past. He joined the *Bow Tribute* February 19, 2021.
- Mr. Briones is the officer of the watch for the periods of noon to 1600 and from midnight to 0400. He is the navigation officer on board and is responsible for the voyage and passage planning of the vessel. He creates the voyage plans which the master must approve.
- The primary means of navigation on the *Bow Tribute* is using the electronic chart and information display system (ECDIS).
- When asked if he has sailed in the Lower Mississippi River (LMR) before, Mr. Briones said he has done so many times.
- Prior to getting underway, the voyage plan was loaded into the ECDIS and Mr. Briones said it was active during the voyage southbound in the river. He noted that the ship was on the track line but sometimes they were off the track based on the pilots heading orders. He noted the pilots are experts in the area, and they know the best headings and courses in the river.
- The passage they were on was from the Sunshine LBC terminal to the Devant anchorage at (LMR mile 54).
- During the departure from the Sunshine LBC terminal, Mr. Briones was stationed on the bow for the unmooring. He recalled being awakened about 0800 that morning and being told he was to be on standby on the bow.
- The departure from the terminal was uneventful. Mr. Briones said he went to sleep at about 1000 and woke up at 1100 to get ready for his watch at noon and to have lunch.

- Mr. Briones said he was awake and on watch from midnight (March 16, 2021) to 0400 for his normal watch. The ship was alongside the dock at that time. After his watch, he went to sleep which was a little after 0400.
- Just before noon on March 16, Mr. Briones relieved the third officer on the bridge. They were underway southbound in the LMR at the time. They use a watch handover checklist, and he was briefed by the third officer on the movement of the vessel and the telegraph order, which was full ahead. There were no problems with any of the navigation systems, steering or propulsion. Traffic was good.
- The New Orleans Baton Rouge Steamship Pilots Association (NOBRA) pilot conning the *Bow Tribute* told him shortly after relieving the watch that they needed to pick up an apprentice pilot 10 to 15 minutes ahead. Mr. Briones then called the master and informed him of this.
- They picked up the apprentice pilot from the port side and the master was on the bridge at the time.
- Mr. Briones said the NOBRA pilot was very comfortable, with the handling of the *Bow Tribute* in the river. He was nice and friendly, and the pilot made no complaints about the steering by any of the helmsmen.
- When asked what the current was in the river, Mr. Briones estimated it was about 3 knots. He based this on the water speed log and the speed over the ground that he saw on the radar display.
- Mr. Briones recalled that before the Huey P Long bridge (LMR mile 106), there was a tug and barge (*American Way*) ahead of them that the NOBRA pilot spoke to using his handheld VHF radio. At that time, the pilot was sitting in the chair by the wheelhouse windows ahead of the main console.
- There was “plenty traffic” approaching the Huey P Long bridge. The pilot did not mention anything specific regarding the traffic to Mr. Briones. He knew the pilot had spoken to the tug and barge ahead of them and that there was a conversation about the *Bow Tribute* overtaking the tug.
- The tug and barge (*American Way*) at the time were on the starboard side of the channel but as it went around the turn, it passed through the middle of the channel. Mr. Briones knew the plan was to overtake the tug on its port side.
- When the tug and barge were in the middle of the channel, he heard the pilot, in a higher pitched voice, speak to the tug on radio again. Upon hearing that, Mr. Briones thought to himself that he should call the master, but as soon as the pilot finished speaking to the tug, the pilot told him he better call the master. The pilot then ordered the engine stopped which Mr. Briones responded by moving the telegraph to the stop position. Mr. Briones called the master.
- The master came to the bridge, and about that time the pilot requested full astern which Mr. Briones responded by moving the telegraph to the full astern position. The tug and barge were still moving to port towards the east bank at that point.
- Mr. Briones recalled the pilot saying to stand by to drop the anchor. The bosun and the deck cadet were forward on the bow and Mr. Briones radioed the bosun and told him to standby to release the anchor. Once the pilot knew that the tug and barge were clear, he ordered the anchor let go, which Mr. Briones radioed to the bosun to let go the anchor.
- Mr. Briones asked the bosun for the distance to the tug and barge on the starboard bow. The Bosun responded but he could not remember the distance given.
- When asked when it was that the captain was called to the bridge, Mr. Briones estimated that the tug and barge were about 4 cables ahead of the *Bow Tribute*.

- When asked what radar he was using, Mr. Briones said he was always using the starboard side which was the X-band. Both the NOBRA pilot and apprentice pilot were on the port side of the bridge center console in front of it.
- When asked what radio the pilot was using to communicate his intent to overtake the *American Way* (the tug and barge Mr. Briones was referring to), Mr. Briones said it was a handheld VHF.
- When asked if the pilot was in communication with VTS or if VTS had communicated to the *Bow Tribute*, Mr. Briones said he could not recall any VTS communications.
- When asked about when the anchor was let go, Mr. Briones recalled it was before they hit the small barge. The brake was opened before they hit the barge. When asked what barge he was referring to, Mr. Briones said it was the small barge alongside the bank on the port side of the *Bow Tribute*.
- Mr. Briones thought the small barge on the port side was struck by the port bow of the *Bow Tribute*. He recalled that after it was hit, the barge floated away from the dock.
- When asked what he felt when the *Bow Tribute* contacted the bank and barge, Mr. Briones said the impact was not strong. When asked about vibration, Mr. Briones said that when the *Bow Tribute* was in full astern propulsion, there was a “big vibration”.
- When asked about damage to the *Bow Tribute*, Mr. Briones said there was damage to the accommodation ladder on the port side. He recalled when they hit the small barge on the port bow, the barge then swung around and hit the port stern of the *Bow Tribute*. Although he didn’t see it, the pilot boat later reported there was a small hole in the port quarter of the *Bow Tribute*.
- When asked about communications from the pilot to him before the accident, Mr. Briones could not recall the pilot did not informing him of anything. He noted that when the pilot gave helm and propulsion orders, they were very clear. When they saw the tug and barge going into the middle of the channel, the pilot began to talk to the tug and barge. Mr. Briones could not remember any specifics of the communication between the pilot and tug.
- When asked of the weather conditions, Mr. Briones said it was clear with good visibility. He had no concerns with the wind and recalled the winds were around 10 knots.
- When asked about what happened after the anchor was dropped, Mr. Briones said the ship was still making headway, but the tug and barge were clear of the starboard bow. The ship swung around and faced upriver. Mr. Briones remained on the bridge until the anchor was aweigh. He was relieved by the third officer just after 1600. Mr. Briones was on the bridge when the relief pilot boarded and came on the bridge. He escorted the NOBRA pilot and apprentice pilot down to the pilot ladder where they disembarked the ship.
- Mr. Briones said both pilots conducted a handover, and the master conducted a master pilot exchange with the relief pilot.
- When asked if he noticed any errors of the helmsman responding to the pilots helm orders, Mr. Briones said he saw no errors and there no complaints from the pilot.
- When asked of his first visual contact of the tug and barge, Mr. Briones said it was after the Huey P Long bridge.

**End of summary**