



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594
Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary – DCA22FM024

Interview of: Terry Allen Scott – Ordinary Seaman/Deckhand of Karen Koby
Date/Time: July 13, 2022 – 0947 to 1203 CDT
Location: Jones Walker Office, 201 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA
Interviewed by: CWO3 [REDACTED] – USCG, Adam Tucker – NTSB
Attendees: Alan Breaud – Breaud & Myers (representing Rigid Constructors interests), Jefferson Tillery – Jones Walker LLP (representing LA Carriers interests), Wayne Zeringue - Jones Walker LLP (representing LA Carriers interests) - Tommy Plaisance - LA Carriers Operations Manager (Party in Interest), John Plaisance – LA Carriers (Party in Interest)
Accident: June 15, 2022, Capsizing and sinking of the e-crane barge *Ambition* in the Gulf of Mexico, about 18 nautical miles offshore of Freshwater Bayou, Louisiana (NTSB No. DCA22FM024).

This interview summary has been compiled based on Coast Guard and NTSB investigator notes taken during the interview of Mr. Terry Allen Scott, ordinary seaman/deckhand of the Karen Koby.

- Mr. Scott has worked on supply boats in the past and has worked with LA Carriers for about 2.5 years as a deckhand. He does barge reports and inspections et cetera.
- When asked of his experience with barges, and if he had in the past worked with a company that had barges, Mr. Scott said no.
- When asked how often he has dealt with crane barges during his tenure with LA Carriers, Mr. Scott said a few times – maybe seven times. They tow dredge barges with cranes sometimes.
- When asked if crane barges handle differently versus any other barges during a tow, Mr. Scott said sometimes they seem to sit a little deeper in the water. There is not much difference in the way they tow.
- Mr. Scott said he was made aware that they were going to tow the crane barge *Ambition* maybe a day or two before the job was to commence.
- When asked where the *Karen Koby* was before proceeding to the *Ambition*, Mr. Scott said he believed they were in Vermillion. The transit to the *Ambition* took about a day and a half.
- Mr. Scott works the back watch from noon to 1800 and from midnight to 0600.
- When asked if he has any other duties from his watch schedule, Mr. Scott said sometimes he may get up earlier to get a barge/boat tied up and help with the towing inspection. There are only four people that work on the *Karen Koby*.
- When asked what he was tasked with when the *Karen Koby* arrived at the barge *Ambition*, Mr. Scott said it was the other deckhand that was working at the time. He was

not on watch. He recalled when he was awake, seeing the barge crew getting stuff ready while the Karen Koby was on the hip.

- When asked where the Karen Koby was first tied up to the Ambition, Mr. Scott said he thought they were made up to the starboard side of the barge and they had their bridles hooked up to the timberheads of the barge. There was a bowline and two breast lines.
- When asked what he noticed tied and strapped down on the barge, Mr. Scott said from what he recalled, the only things strapped from the time they left the Duvall fleet until they left the fuel dock, only the basket of the man lift was tied down. Other than that, he saw nothing else strapped down. 2-inch or maybe 2.5-inch ratchet straps were used. The man lift was closer to the bow end of the barge, but he couldn't recall what side it was on.
- When asked if he saw anything else on the barge, Mr. Scott said that on the stern there looked to be 8 to 10 pieces of concrete which looked like I-beams. They were not strapped down. There was a generator and a second fuel tank by the stern. The fuel tank appeared to be the same size as the fuel tank that was by the crane. There were plastic totes, maybe about 4, all of which were in the same spot on the starboard side by the crane. There may have been one on the port side by the crane as well.
- When asked if he did anything to prepare the Ambition for it to get under way, Mr. Scott said no. From their standpoint, the barge crew was there to prepare it for pick up. The barge checklist was completed by the other deckhand Tony.
- When asked if the e-crane was secured or not, Mr. Scott said he saw nothing secured on it. It was knuckled down with the claw on the deck. Every other crane barge they had moved, the claw was secured, and the boom strapped down.
- When asked when he was walking on the barge Ambition if he saw manhole covers that were missing, Mr. Scott said yes. He saw the port bow had a diesel pump, used for dewatering, over the hole when they went to leave. Tony told him, but he didn't see with his own eyes, there was a piece of angle iron across a manhole on the stern. There were also manhole covers, between the two barges that had hoses and pumps sitting there with the hoses going down inside the tanks. Tony told Mr. Scott that a barge crewmember said that this was normal, and they did that all the time in case they needed to pump the barge out. For those manholes, the covers were there but just not secured in place. For the ones with the pump and iron on it, the barge crew told Tony they couldn't find the covers.
- When asked if he witnessed any of the diesel dewatering pumps being ran, Mr. Scott said no.
- When asked if the diesel pumps had any kind of auto start means, Mr. Scott said no they had to be physically started; they had pull cords.
- When asked before getting underway, if there was anything he could recall regarding the barge, Mr. Scott said he took a picture of the stern by the fuel tank on the port quarter (port stern) where there was a bunch of rust and a small hole in the deck. He took a picture of it and sent it to Jarrod. He still has that picture on his phone and shared it with Tommy. The picture was taken on June 14 at 1529 (local time). There were two pictures taken which Mr. Scott said were basically the same one.
- When asked if the location where he took the picture of the hole in the deck on the port stern, if there was a manhole nearby, Mr. Scott said yes, and he was pretty sure that was

the manhole that did not have the cover for it. The hole was about 4 to 5 feet from the manhole cover. It was about 1.5 inches by 3 inches. Mr. Scott explained that walking around in the vicinity of where that hole was to the center where the barges met together, the deck very rusty, and you could hear the rust crumbling under your feet. He had to walk in areas where it was good and sound. He was concerned with the hole in the deck and the hazard it presented for someone to fall through.

- When asked if noticed areas similar to what he described on the port barge stern when walking the rest of the barge, Mr. Scott said no, not that he could recall.
- When asked of the draft of the barge *Ambition*, Mr. Scott said he did not know, but recalled at the Duvall fleet, the bow was a lot heavier than the stern. When asked of the freeboard of the barge, Mr. Scott said it was about 3 feet on the bow and about 4 to 5 feet on the stern, but noted he was not exactly sure.
- When asked about when they were getting ready to leave for Stone Fuel, Mr. Scott said the barge crew picked up the spuds and they went into an area where they could turn around to head out in the Calcasieu River. In the river, the captain heard that there was an inbound ship and spoke with the ship on the radio. Once past the LNG plant, the tow got near the bank where they broke off from the hip and got on the push to push for the remainder of the way. The tug made up on the bow end of the barge. He recalled seeing the ship, a tanker, pass them just before they were made up to the barge.
- When asked if he recalled seeing a channel marker when they broke off the hip and made up for the push, Mr. Scott said no he did not.
- When asked if the tow was regrouped again after that, Mr. Scott said once they got at the fuel dock they got off the head and back on the hip on the same (starboard side). When they departed the fuel dock, they did so on the hip and once in the river they turned around and then connected the barge to take it under tow.
- When asked what he recalled happening at the fuel dock, Mr. Scott said the barge crew took on fuel and took on water to ballast the tanks to make the barge level. After that was done, the barge crew left. Chester asked him and Tony if they were ready to go and when they went out on the barge, they saw the cover tops were not on the hatches so they told Chester there were two covers missing and they couldn't find them. He noted if they could be found they would have just put them on themselves. Chester then called the guys back and the barge guys put a piece of angle iron over one hatch and the pump over the other. The covers that were missing was the one on the port bow and the one on the port stern.
- When asked what tanks the barge crew ballasted, Mr. Scott said he did not know.
- When asked when at the fuel dock if he noticed the freeboard after the ballasting was complete, Mr. Scott said he thought the freeboard was about 4 feet on the bow and 5 feet on the stern.
- When asked who set up for the stern tow, Mr. Scott said it was him and Tony. They got the bridles and tow line set up for the tow. The port bridle went to the port timberhead on the barge and the starboard one went to the starboard timberhead. The bridles are 65 feet long and they went to a shackle that was connected to the shock line. The shock line was

about 13 feet or so. The tow cable was on the winch which was attached to the shock line which was attached to the bridle.

- When asked about how long the tow line was, Mr. Scott said before they got out into the gulf in deeper water, it was probably 40 feet off the stern. Once in the gulf, there was about 900 to 1000 feet of cable out.
- When asked if there was any problem with the tow bridle, fittings or cable, Mr. Scott said no there was not.
- When asked how the length of tow affects the movement of the barge, Mr. Scott said in his experience when towing offshore, you let out enough cable to when the tow comes tight, you don't see your bridles or snatch line coming out of the water.
- When asked how the barge was following while in tow, Mr. Scott said he thought it followed slight off to the port side a little. The barge seemed to be handling smooth during the tow.
- When asked of the weather, Mr. Scott said there were 2-to-3-foot seas with maybe 5 to 10 mph winds.
- When asked how they monitored the barge when it was under tow, Mr. Scott said there was a thousand foot of cable out, so the only way to see it well was to look back at it with the binoculars. Once it got dark there was no real way to check except for using the spotlight to look at it.
- When asked how often he would look at the barge, Mr. Scott said he is a smoker, and he goes outside a lot, so any time they are towing anything he is usually looking back at the tow.
- When asked when he recalled it starting to get dark, Mr. Scott said it was around 2000 or 2015.
- When asked of the last time he saw the barge, Mr. Scott said it was around when it got dark. He was not on watch then. There was nothing unusual or out of the ordinary the last time he saw the barge.
- When asked about his first indication there was a problem with the barge, Mr. Scott said he went down to make some checks in the engine room and after, he went to the wheelhouse around 0315 where he talked to Jarrod for a few minutes before he went outside of the wheelhouse side door to the steps. He noticed Jarrod went back to the wheelhouse stern controls and turned the spotlight on the barge. Mr. Scott said this prompted him to get up and walk outside the wheelhouse to the aft railing of the stern controls where he looked back at the barge and saw with the spotlight hitting the barge but could only get glimpses of it. He then went back into the wheelhouse where he remained while Jarrod went to wake Chester.
- When Jarrod returned, Mr. Scott said he went to wake up Tony, the other deckhand. He then returned to the stern controls to look back at the barge, and he was able to get his first good view of the barge with the spotlight on it. He saw that the water had gotten up close to the forward spud on the bow of the barge. He then went back to the wheelhouse and told Jarrod and Chester it looked like the water was up to the port spud. He then

returned to the stern control handrails and looked back at the barge where he saw it capsize. The barge went down by the port bow and then went over.

- When asked if he used binoculars when looking at the barge, Mr. Scott said no.
- When asked about how long he thought it was from when he noticed the water close to the port spud to when it capsized, Mr. Scott said it may have been 1 to 1.5 minutes at most.
- When asked what he thought what may have caused the *Ambition* to capsize, Mr. Scott said he didn't know but thought the missing manhole covers could be a factor.
- When asked what could have been done to prevent a similar event from occurring, Mr. Scott said he did not know what caused the barge to roll over but making sure everything is secured on deck and making sure all the manholes have covers properly secured in place are all that he could think of. He noted the concrete blocks were not secured and they could have shifted.
- When asked to clarify what watch he worked, Mr. Scott said his watch was from midnight to 0600 and noon to 1800. He works the same watch as Jarrod.
- When asked to clarify when they were getting ready to let the tow line out, Mr. Scott said that was around the time when he was going off watch.
- When asked to recall the size of the concrete blocks on the deck of the *Ambition*, Mr. Scott said they appeared to be about 6 feet tall and 5 by 8 feet long and wide. He estimated there were 8 to 10 of them. He noted that he was at that location when they left the fuel dock and there were no straps on them at that time. The only strap he saw was one going across the back of the man lift boom. He noted in the photo taken by the mate Jarrod that the strap used to secure the man basket could be seen. The actual manlift vehicle was not strapped down with any chains or binders and the wheels had no chocks to keep it from rolling.
- When asked to clarify about what was said regarding the two manholes in the middle of the barge that had the hoses in them, Mr. Scott said the Rigid guys told Tony that was their normal procedure and they did that all the time so that in case of an emergency, they could pump those spaces out. When they departed the fuel dock, the hoses were still in the manholes and the covers were just placed on top of the hoses.
- When asked about the aft control station he referenced going to in order to look at the barge, Mr. Scott said the stern controls are inside the wheelhouse, but he was outside at the railing aft the stern controls.
- When asked what side he was on when he was outside the wheelhouse by the door, Mr. Scott said he was on the port side. He was there because there was no wind on that side so he could light his cigarette. The winds were 5 to 10 mph but they weren't getting the wind on the port side.
- When asked of the weather, Mr. Scott said the visibility was good that night and he didn't remember much of the moon illuminating things.
- When asked to clarify after his engine room round what he did, Mr. Scott said it was around 0318 when he entered the wheelhouse and started talking to Jarrod before stepping outside the wheelhouse door for a cigarette. Shortly after, he noticed Jarrod

turned the spotlight on towards the stern. Jarrod went out the starboard door and went to the stern controls. Jarrod told Mr. Scott that the spotlight would not adjust up and down, just side to side so he went back into the wheelhouse where he turned both spotlights to the stern. It was then that Mr. Scott walked to the stern control railing and looked back toward the barge to see what it was Jarrod was trying to look at.

- When asked again to describe what he saw with the Ambition, Mr. Scott said the boat was going up and down so the spotlights were moving, and would at times miss the barge, which was also moving. Mr. Scott said he went inside the wheelhouse from the aft control station railings and Jarrod went down to get Chester, right down the stairs from the wheelhouse. Jarrod and Chester came to the wheelhouse, and they were there talking and looking at the barge. Mr. Scott walked back out the port side to the stern control railing. The barge kind of stayed still for a little bit and the spotlight stayed on the barge for a bit longer so he could see the barge. It looked like the water was at the port spud on the bow of the barge. He went back into the wheelhouse to let Chester and Jarrod know of what he had seen before he went back to the stern control railing. Chester came out behind him. Mr. Scott saw the barge capsize, seeing Chester arrive, he told him he just saw the barge capsize. Chester then went inside the wheelhouse and Mr. Scott thought they pulled the propulsion back to clutch, but they still had it in clutch so they wouldn't get the towline caught up in the wheels.
- When asked to clarify if the port forward spud was in the up position at that time, Mr. Scott said it was in the up position.
- When asked to recall of what he saw with the barge running lights, especially the port red running light, Mr. Scott said he didn't see the red light indicating to him that portion of the barge was already under water. He noted the running lights were up at the timber head right where the bridle would have been hooked up on that side, the very bow of the barge. Mr. Scott said the green light was still visible and he could see that fine before the barge rolled over. That light was also at the timber head on the starboard side. He didn't see it after the barge capsized. Mr. Scott noted there was a stern light on the barge and after the barge capsized, he could see that light.
- When asked to clarify the 1 to 1.5 minutes he referenced from seeing the water at the spud until the capsize, Mr. Scott said the duration was from when he saw the water at the spud to when he went in the wheelhouse to tell Chester and Jarrod of what he saw, and his return to the aft control railings where he then saw the barge capsize. He noted the tug and barge got in sync with the motion and he was able to see the barge with the spotlight.
- When asked what specific times he remembered, Mr. Scott said it was around 0400 when the barge capsized and around 0330 when Jarrod noticed the tow slowed down and he turned the spotlight back to the barge to look.
- When asked what time he was awake the day they arrived at the Ambition, Mr. Scott said he normally wakes up about 1050 or 1100 in the morning before he starts his watch. After getting a coffee and having a cigarette, he then went out to help Tony.
- When asked about the hole he took a photo of on the aft port quarter of the Ambition and how he knew there was a hole there, Mr. Scott said the picture shows there is a hole there. He noted he also saw a bit of water that was on the deck of the barge running down

into the hole. Mr. Scott said in the area where the hole was, the deck was spongy. There was scaly rust there and you could hear it crunching under your feet. He said he didn't want to step there because he didn't want to fall through.

- Mr. Tillery, counsel for LA Carriers, noted that Mr. Scott provided him with the photo and that he would provide this to investigators.
- Mr. Scott said he sent the picture to Jarrod and not to Chester because he didn't have Chester's phone number. He noted he went to the wheelhouse and spoke to Jarrod about it when he didn't get a reply regarding the picture, he sent to him.
- When asked what Jarrod said in response to Mr. Scott speaking to him about the hole in the deck, Jarrod told him that he would let Chester know.
- When asked why he took the picture of the hole in the deck, Mr. Scott said it was because he was concerned. The hole was on the stern right beside the fuel tank.
- When asked if he personally spoke to any of the Rigid crew, Mr. Scott said no, that was just Tony.
- When asked based on his experience who prepares and secures crane barges prior to being taken under tow, Mr. Scott said normally it is the people that crew the crane who usually secure items, make sure the covers are in place, and that the crane and equipment is bound down so that nothing shifts during the voyage. Mr. Scott said that with some of the hopper barges they tow around they may open the tanks up and make sure there was no water inside. Normally the crane crew handles all that with crane barges though.
- When asked, when the barge was being brought to the fuel dock and the approaches made to the dock, if he felt any movement of the barge and tug or felt any impact, Mr. Scott said he did not.
- When asked if he was present when the towline was removed from the sunken barge, Mr. Scott said he was. When asked how much they reeled in before they cut it, Mr. Scott said he was not sure and noted they couldn't get too close to the oil boom that was out to avoid it getting stuck in the wheels. When asked if he saw the snap line and if both bridles were still attached, Mr. Scott said yes, he did and they were.
- When asked if there were any sea swells during his watch at the time of the casualty, Mr. Scott said he did not recall any.

End of summary