



## National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594  
Office of Marine Safety

### Interview Summary – DCA22FM024

---

**Interview of:** Dillard Bowman – Marsh Buggy Operator for Rigid Constructors  
**Date/Time:** July 7, 2022 – 1416 to 1452 CDT  
**Location:** USCG Marine Safety Field Office Lafayette Conference Room  
**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), Tommy Plaisance - LA Carriers Operations Manager (Party in Interest), Jeff Mizzi – Rigid Constructors President of Marine Operations (Party in Interest), Mark Fazioli – 3D Marine (representing LA Carriers interests)  
**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. Dillard Bowman, a marsh buggy operator for Rigid Constructors assigned to secure the e-crane barge *Ambition*.

- Mr. Bowman is a marsh buggy operator with Rigid Constructors and has been employed with Rigid for five months. He explained that a marsh buggy is a track on pontoons. He has experience operating marsh buggies from other companies. He has not worked around barges in the past and his taskings with the *Ambition* was his first time doing so. He has received safety training from the company, but no other training beyond that.
- He recalled on the day they were tasked to go to the *Ambition*, he received a call where he was told to go to the barge and prepare it. He was told that he had to drive and meet Ronnie north of Hackberry, with the skiff. There was a boat ramp there north of the Ellender bridge. He recalled Brady and Fred were in the truck with him for the drive.
- Once they got to the boat ramp, they put the skiff in the water and rode the skiff to the barge. There was a job safety analysis done.
- They were told they had to strap down everything on the barge for a trip.
- When asked if there were any specific taskings to strap down things, Mr. Bowman said he did not know and that he never boarded the barge. His job was to stay with the skiff. Brady, Fred, and Aiden went on the barge.
- When asked of the freeboard of the barge, Mr. Bowman said it may have been about “4 feet tops” above the skiff. Mr. Bowman said he had been around a barge a previous time, but he had never been on board of one.
- When asked of what he saw from the skiff, Mr. Bowman said the spuds were up and there was a man lift there but did not know what else was on deck.

- When asked of the weather conditions he observed from the skiff, Mr. Bowman said that the water was “pretty slick” and “glassy”. It was sunny and hot.
- When asked if he noticed any list or heel of the *Ambition*, Mr. Bowman said he could not recall.
- Mr. Bowman recalled that at some point, the tug boat captain couldn’t keep control of the barge, so the tug unhooked from the side of the barge and then got behind it. He did not know what location this took place. The tug was on the side of the barge that did not have the spuds on it. The barge was spudded down so the tug could reposition to the back of it.
- After the spuds were brought back up, the crew came back in the skiff and Mr. Bowman drove back to the boat launch with them. They then put the skiff on the trailer and drove to the fuel dock.
- At the fuel dock, Mr. Bowman observed the *Ambition* and tug were a long way out coming down the Calcasieu River. It took an hour to dock the barge from when the tow got close. The tug couldn’t get the barge along the slip, so it was laid against a bank at the other fuel station.
- At the fuel dock, fuel and water was put on the *Ambition*. Mr. Bowman was on the bank handling the fuel hose for a guy on the barge, he could not remember. He was fueling something green, and square looking on the barge.
- When asked if he saw what items on the barge were strapped down, Mr. Bowman said he could not see.
- After the fueling was completed, Mr. Bowman put the fuel hose back on the bank and got ready to leave. They left with four people in the truck towing the skiff behind.
- At some point, the boss called and told Mr. Bowman the captain of the tug was dissatisfied because one manhole cover was off on the barge and that he was not leaving with it like that, so they turned around and went back. One of the guys boarded the barge after putting on a lifejacket and replaced the manhole cover.
- When asked of the items he saw on the deck of the barge when in the skiff, Mr. Bowman said there was nothing that he saw.
- When asked if he had any thoughts about what may have caused the *Ambition* to capsize, Mr. Bowman said he had no idea.
- When asked where he last saw his supervisor Ronnie, Mr. Bowman said he was at the fuel dock taking care of paperwork for the fuel. When he was out on the skiff, Mr. Bowman saw Ronnie on the tug speaking with the captain. Ronnie got on the skiff at some point and Mr. Bowman brought him to his truck. After dropping Ronnie off, Mr. Bowman went back to the barge with the skiff where at that point, he did not tie off to the barge and rode behind it.
- When asked where they were when Ronnie called him to return to the barge, Mr. Bowman said they were waiting for the ferry.
- When asked to confirm who the boss was, Mr. Bowman said his boss is Ronnie.
- When asked to look at the call log of his phone to see at what time Ronnie had called Mr. Bowman to return to the barge while they were waiting for the ferry, Mr. Bowman said

that he received the call at 1656 on June 14<sup>th</sup>. He recalled that Stone Fuel closed at 1645 because he heard over the radio that they had to be done with everything at that time.

- When asked where the boat launch was, Mr. Bowman said it was by the Ellender bridge.
- When asked when tending the fuel hose if he saw any counter or noticed the quantity of fuel taken, Mr. Bowman said no, the guy at Stone Fuel was watching the counter.
- When asked of where he recalled seeing the crane's boom bucket, Mr. Bowman said it was on the deck of the barge.
- When asked who went on board the barge when they went back from the ferry, Mr. Bowman said he could not remember, but noted a few guys put lifejackets on and went on the barge.
- When asked why Ronnie would just not go on the barge and replace the manhole cover himself since he was still there, verses calling the crew back, Mr. Bowman said Ronnie is the boss and the boss don't do anything like that.

**End of summary**