



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594
Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary – DCA23FM024

Interview of: Viktor Olin – Port Captain for Oldendorff Carriers
Date/Time: March 28, 2023
Location: USCG Sector New Orleans – 1000 to 1050 central daylight time
Interviewed by: CWO [REDACTED] – USCG, Adam Tucker – NTSB
Attendees: None
Accident: March 27, 2023, Breakaway of the bulk carrier Sirocco and subsequent contact with barge MEM 5087 moored at the Mosaic Uncle Sam dock in Covert, Louisiana (NTSB No. DCA23FM024).

This interview summary has been compiled based on NTSB and Coast Guard investigator notes taken during the interview of Mr. Viktor Olin, Port Captain for Oldendorff Carriers.

- Mr. Olin has been working for Oldendorff since 2006 and has been based out of the New Orleans area since 2008. He has a background as master of bulk carriers. He works in the Mississippi River area bulk cargo terminals up to Port Allen.
- The Sirocco was to take cargo at the Covert Terminal. His job for the Sirocco involved scheduling a hold inspection for the vessel and advising on mooring lines for vessels docked on the river. He gives recommendations, not instructions. He noted that with the strong river currents and passing vessels, the mooring lines must always be tight.
- Before going to the Covert Terminal, the Sirocco was anchored at the Ama anchorage. A charter survey was carried out on the vessel there. Mr. Olin was in attendance. He said that while there, he told the chief officer about the mooring line arrangement and the loading system at the Covert Terminal. He said he told the chief officer that while the river is at 12 feet on the Carrollton gage, that a hold in tug was needed and with a draft over 35 feet, a second hold in tug was needed. He also told the chief officer not to touch the upriver mooring lines.
- Mr. Olin advised the chief officer that once finished de ballasting to start stripping the tanks and notify the master. The process for tightening the lines at the dock would be to start forward first. They would have to heave the forward breast lines, then the forward spring lines before they could heave the aft lines. He said they had to do this sequentially from forward first before they heaved any aft lines, otherwise the bow would come out.
- The Sirocco arrived at the Covert dock the early morning of March 26.
- Mr. Olin went to the Sirocco at the Covert dock and when he got there, he noticed some of the mooring lines were slack. He took pictures of them to show to the crew on board. He recalled boarding about 1300.
- When on board he spoke with the master advising him the lines aft needed to be made fast. There was a tug on the stern and once the lines were tight, he told him to have the tug stop pushing and if there was no problem, they could release the tugs. The aft tug was

released at 1315. At that time, the Carrollton gage was 11.8 feet. Mr. Olin referred to a message from the NOBRA pilots, which came out around noon on March 26, that all high-water restrictions were cancelled once the gage went below 12 feet.

- Mr. Olin said he asked the master of the Sirocco to make a test with the forward hold in tug since hold in tugs were no longer needed. Once the forward hold in tug was ordered to stop pushing and the ship held in position at the dock, the forward tug was released.
- When asked if the master expressed any concerns to him, Mr. Olin said the master asked him how long it would take to get tugs if needed again to which Mr. Olin told him usually about 30 minutes. He told the master that if they reach 35 feet in draft to give two hours' notice to the agent for a tug. They normally use Crescent towing.
- At 1505, Mr. Olin noticed the stern lines were slack on the Sirocco and he took a picture of this. He reminded the master to keep the stern lines tight. US Customs came on board around then and Mr. Olin departed the vessel.
- Mr. Olin returned to the Sirocco at 1650 and saw the lines were again slack. He was upset seeing this and said he raised his voice when he spoke with the master when on board and told him to heave the lines, which the crew did. He explained to the master the mooring lines must always be tight due to the current and passing vessels. The master told him that he would ensure the mooring lines would be kept tight.
- Mr. Olin recalled the master said that they had a problem with the ballast system at that time.
- Mr. Olin explained that the master of the Sirocco could have opted to keep one or both hold in tugs, but the cost would be to the head owner's account. Before the restrictions were cancelled, the cost of the hold in tugs were billed to the charterer.
- At the Covent Terminal, they can load 60,000 tons per day, so the turnarounds are 27 to 28 hours. He recommended to the master of the Sirocco the lines must be checked by the duty officer and that the currents at the Covent Terminal can be dangerous.
- When asked if the master was concerned about the current, Mr. Olin said that he was. When he was on board, he noticed the current was 3.2 to 3.6 knots on the ships speed log.
- Mr. Olin said that when he heard of the Sirocco coming away from the dock, he used an AIS web-based system and saw there was a northbound vessel that had passed the Sirocco at 0215 which had a 14.29-meter draft. He said if the lines are not handled properly, a passing 68,000-ton vessel can pull a vessel with slack lines off the dock.
- When asked why he took pictures of the slack mooring lines, Mr. Olin said anytime he sees something wrong he takes pictures to show the problem to the master. The first picture he took was at 1203 and the last one he took was at 1505.
- Mr. Olin noted that there are a few ship masters not familiar with the risks on the Lower Mississippi river and he advises them of those risks.
- Mr. Olin said when he boarded the Sirocco, the chief officer was doing ballast work and soundings and the ABs were doing the unnecessary job of handling the hatch covers. The second officer was handling the lines, and normally the AB's handle the lines. Mr. Olin noted that when he saw the chief officer doing soundings, he pulled him aside and asked why he, instead of the AB's, was doing that.

- When asked of any Covent Terminal requirements, Mr. Olin said that it depends on the river stage. One hold in tug is needed at 12 feet. An additional tug is needed at 35 feet of draft which is to hold the ship in on the stern. He noted the terminal is strict about this.
- When asked about the condition survey performed while the Sirocco was at anchor, Mr. Olin said Maritech did the condition survey. He was on board with the surveyors at the time and he didn't notice anything wrong with the vessel.
- When asked how long the Sirocco was under charter with Oldendorff, Mr. Olin said that it was a period charter, and it was just that time. The Sirocco had done no previous voyages for Oldendorff.
- Mr. Olin said that when the Sirocco broke away from the dock, only one of the 12 lines they had out was broken.
- When asked about keeping the engines in standby at the Covent Terminal and if that was discussed, Mr. Olin said that was to the master's discretion.
- When asked where the conversation between him and the master took place, Mr. Olin said the conversation about the aft tug took place on the bridge. The crew did not have channel 77 on their hand-held radios so they had to use the radios on the bridge to communicate with the tugs.
- Mr. Olin said when he looked at the mooring lines and arrangement, it looked good. Just the lines were slack for which he informed the master they must be always kept tight.

End of summary