

Statement of Daniel Hudson

My name is Danny Hudson and I have been employed by Crescent Towing for 18 years. I was working as captain of the Savannah on March 27, 2023. On that date, the Sirocco broke out of CMT.

I was sleeping. I woke up when I heard Goat yelling to Chris Gould. The Sirocco broke out of CMT and was sideways in the river falling towards Ergon. I went up to the wheelhouse. By the time I got up there Goat, Mark Usey, had the engines running and Chris Gould had released the bow line. We were underway to the bow of the Sirocco. We started pushing on the bow and the South Carolina joined us. Together we were able to keep it from falling into Ergon. I was in the wheelhouse handling the radio and making navigational decisions while Goat was running the boat. We worked well together to prevent the Sirocco from falling into the West Bank even though it was not under power. After we checked the swing of the ship's bow to the West Bank, I could see that the stern was swinging towards the West Bank quickly. I ordered Goat to bail, so that we would not be trapped between the Sirocco stern and the West Bank. The Savannah came off the ship and went toward the stern. Then I realized we had enough space to attempt to stop the swing of the stern and still get to safety if needed. I instructed Goat to go to the port side of the stern of Sirocco and push. He was able to check the stern's swing towards Ergon. After we had the Sirocco steady and head up in the current, we went to the transom favoring the port side because of lines hanging down into the water from the starboard side of the ship.

3-28-23

Date

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Daniel Hudson

We pushed on the transom to stop the ship from falling down river. The ship was not under power at any time from when we arrived until we had it steady while we were on the transom. After things were under control, the propeller of the Sirocco started turning and the ship's wheel wash blew us off the transom. The ship took a dive toward the East Bank and struck a barge at Uncle Sam. After the collision, the ship was still running its engines and took another dive out into the river where the South Carolina and Elizabeth B checked up the swing to port and the Savannah went toward the starboard side. I observed two lines running along the starboard side. One was a larger diameter than the other. The smaller diameter line was white. The white line went from the forecastle to somewhere between mid-ship and the stern quarter. The larger diameter line ran from the forecastle to a point about 30 feet past the stern end of the ship. The larger diameter line had an intact eye on the end.

The pilot boat dropped off a pilot on the ship's port side. After the ship's crew picked up their lines, we sent a tug line up to the ship's starboard bow where the ship's crew made fast the line. From that point forward, we had no further problems.

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Daniel Hudson

Statement of Tommy Dickerson

My name is Tommy Dickerson and I have been employed by Crescent Towing for about 33 years. I was working as the engineer on the Savannah on March 27, 2023 when a ship broke away from CMT dock. I heard the engines for the Savannah crank up so I knew something was happening during the early morning hours. Chris Gould came in my room and told me a ship broke out of CMT dock. We went to push on the forward end of the ship which was falling into Ergon on the West Bank. The South Carolina pushed on the port bow after it came up a few minutes later. I was concerned that we were going to get trapped between the ship and Ergon. We were able to stop the ship from falling into Ergon or anything else on the West Bank.

After the ship's bow swing to the West Bank was checked up, I was concerned that the stern was going to swing to Ergon. Savannah dropped back and checked up the stern while the South Carolina stayed on the port bow. After the ship was steady with the bow upriver, I was concerned that the ship had sternway. The Savannah dropped back and pushed on the transom. When we went below the ship I noticed lines hanging off the starboard stern. The crew of the ship was pulling in their stern lines that were on the East Bank side of the ship. There was no wheel wash coming from the ship at this time. We positioned on the port transom. I noticed we were passing trees and felt like the ship was falling down river. The ship propeller started turning and wheel wash pushed us off the transom and the bow of the ship then turned to the East Bank and went into Uncle Sam.

3/28/2023

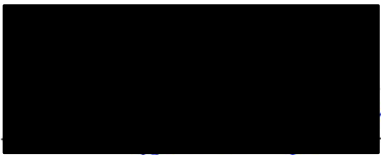
Date


Tommy Dickerson

Savannah blew its horn before the wheel wash, and the horn stuck, sounding until sometime after ship hit a barge at Uncle Sam. There was no mechanical problem with the Savannah except that the horn stuck. After the ship hit the barge at Uncle Sam dock and was back in the middle of the river, we came around the stern to the starboard side, and I noticed two long lines running down the starboard side of the ship. I pointed them out to Mark Usey so they would not get in our propellers.

3/28/2023

Date

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Tommy Dickerson

Statement of Mark Usey

My name is Mark Usey and I have been employed by Crescent Towing for 18 years. I was working as wheelman on the Savannah on March 27, 2023 when the Sirocco broke out of CMT dock. I was tied up at Ergon St. James during the early morning hours waiting for a job scheduled for 3 a.m. I heard a voice on channel 77 requesting marine assistance in broken English. I perked up and looked around and saw that the Sirocco was coming off the dock at CMT. I woke up the crew, started the engine from the wheelhouse, and by the time I had the second engine running, my deckhand, Chris Gould, was ready to release the bow line. I could see that the Sirocco was falling down the river and was sideways in the river moving toward Ergon's dock. I went to the port bow and started pushing to try to keep the ship off the West Bank. I was joined by the South Carolina which also pushed on the port bow, and together we were able to stop it from falling into Ergon. After the swing of the bow to port was checked, Captain Danny Hudson gave me the order to bail. We backed off of the port side and went down the side of the ship to make sure that we could get out. When we realized we had enough room to escape, we went to the stern and checked it from coming into the West Bank. I positioned the Savannah on the transom favoring the port side. I observed that there were lines from the ship hanging in the water off the starboard side of the ship. Zach Suape, who was running the South Carolina, told me on channel 77 that the ship had anchors out but they weren't holding. Zach mentioned on the radio that there was a pipeline crossing the river downriver from us. I pushed on the stern transom to try to stop the ship's sternway.

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Mark Usey

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It seemed we had him stable. He was not under power. Then his propeller started to turn and we were blown off the stern of the ship. The ship's bow started taking a run towards the East Bank. The ship made contact with some barges at Uncle Sam. After the collision and after the ship was in the middle of the river, we held him there stable until the pilot, NOBRA 83, Jared Austin, was on board the Sirocco. The pilot was trying to get the ship's crew to pull in lines hanging in the water from the starboard side of the Sirocco. The pilot asked us to go on the starboard side, but I could see the lines still in the water and advised the pilot that the ship's crew needed to get the lines up before we could go alongside. One of the very long lines had an eye on the end, which I could see when it was heaved up near the forepeak. After the ship's lines were up, we brought the Savannah alongside and put a line up as directed by the pilot. From that point forward there were no further problems.

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Mark Usey

Statement of Christopher Gould

My name is Christopher Gould, and I have been employed by Crescent Towing for over 5 years. I was working as deckhand on the Savannah on March 27, 2023, when the ship Sirocco broke free from CMT. I was asleep but “Goat,” Mark Usey, woke me up. It was nighttime. He said a ship broke out of CMT and was sideways in the river. I put on my life jacket and went on deck. I released our bow line when told to do so and we went to push on the bow of the Sirocco as it was falling into Ergon on the West Bank of the Mississippi River. We arrived alongside first. South Carolina followed and also pushed on the port bow of Sirocco. I observed that we successfully kept the Sirocco from falling into Ergon. The Sirocco never touched anything on the West Bank.

The ship seemed under control for a while even though it had no power, but it was dragging anchors downriver. Savannah moved to the transom favoring the port side and pushed to stop the Sirocco from falling downriver. Then the ship propeller started turning and the wheel wash blew us off the transom. The bow of the ship then turned to starboard and the ship went into Uncle Sam on the East Bank. I saw “Lurch,” Danny Hudson, push the horn button on the Savannah, and the horn sounded for a while leading up to the contact between the Sirocco and some barges at Uncle Sam. After the contact, I went on top of the wheelhouse to turn off the air to the horn.

3-28-2023

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Christopher Gould

After the Sirocco struck the barges at Uncle Sam, we went toward the starboard side and I saw lines coming off the Sirocco that would be a hazard if we went alongside. I saw that one of the lines from the ship's bow extended past the gangway on the Sirocco on the starboard side. I heard the pilot on the radio saying that they were picking up their lines. We waited a long time while the ship was picking up their lines. I saw that one of the lines had an eye on it. Once the pilot was aboard and the ship picked up their lines we were able to come alongside and give our tug line to the ship's crew at the starboard bow. Other tugs joined us and we assisted the Sirocco going to Grandview anchorage. There were no problems after the pilot came aboard.

3-28-2023

Date

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Christopher Gould

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