

Statement of Joseph Carson

My name is Joseph Carson, and I have been employed by Crescent Towing for 44 years. I was working as Captain of the SOUTH CAROLINA on March 27, 2023. On that day, the ship SIROCCO broke free from CMT, a cargo facility on the East bank of the Mississippi River.

I was in my bedroom on the SOUTH CAROLINA getting ready to come on watch at 0300 when the wheelman, Zack banged on my door and said the ship is breaking out of CMT. I put my shoes on and went to wheelhouse. Zack was in the chair and the lines were being let go. I saw a ship sideways in the river.

Zack continued to run the boat and I made navigational decisions and maintained a lookout ready to relieve him if necessary. SOUTH CAROLINA went to the port bow of the ship, ahead of SAVANNAH. As soon as we got alongside, we started pushing hard, straight in. The ship was broadside at that time.

We started to see the bow check up so SOUTH CAROLINA slowed our engines down. Soon thereafter the SAVANNAH dropped back to check the stern from continuing to swing towards Ergon. We were still falling down river favoring the West bank side of the Mississippi river.

I did not know anything about the starboard anchor. NOBRA 17 said to try to get the ship to drop their anchors. I could see the port anchor was still in the hawsepipe and not dropped. Zack called the ship to relay the suggestion of NOBRA 17. I heard no response from the ship. After several more requests and after some time, I saw the ship's port anchor drop. Some chain was lowered but I do not know how much. The ship was still falling downriver even though it's bow was pointed up river and steady in the current.

There was a pipeline crossing a mile downriver from our position. I was concerned that the SIRACCO may drag her anchors over the pipelines. I told Zach and Zack told the SAVANNAH there were pipelines below us. SAVANNAH went to push on the transom to stop the sternway. After the ship was steady in the river, and seemed to be set in her anchors when I saw the angle of the anchor chain change

3-31-23
Date


Joseph Carson


on the port anchor. The port anchor chain had an aft lead. Then the bow started to swing to starboard, toward the East bank. I saw the anchor chain was jumping as the anchor was dragged across the bottom. When the chain is jumping, the flukes of the anchor are not holding on the bottom. Zack was running the boat at that time. We were standing by on the port bow. We stayed alongside with the ship.

After the ship went toward the East Bank and came back, I took over to relieve Zack. He went down below. A Bisso Boat arrived. A NOBRA pilot went aboard the ship. The ship had no ship lines in the water on the port side so we were able to put a line up after the pilot was aboard. The SAVANNAH let the pilot know where they were and it took a long time for the crew to pick up the lines and after the lines were up, SAVANNAH put a line up.

After the SAVANNA had a tug line up on the starboard and we had a tug line up on the port of the SIROCCO, we had no further problems with the job. We escorted the ship to Grandview anchorage.

3-21-23

Date


Joseph Carson

Statement of Hunter Daniel

My name is Hunter Daniel, and I have been employed by Crescent Towing for 4 years. I was working as Engineer on the SOUTH CAROLINA on March 27, 2023, when the ship SIROCCO broke free from CMT.

I was sleeping when South Carolina's wheelman, Zach, opened the door and said get up a ship's breaking out. I got up and told Zack I would let the boat go. I went on deck and released the bow line. I saw a ship was sideways in the river. I saw the SAVANNA was pushing on the ship. It was dark outside.

I stayed on deck until we went along side. SOUTH CAROLINA went on the port bow of the ship ahead of SAVANNAH. The ship was falling toward Ergon. Then I came inside and went to the wheelhouse, awaiting instructions. Zack was running the boat. Capt. Joe Carson was up in the wheelhouse too.

I saw that the tugs were successful keeping the ship off the west bank. Eventually, the ship was straight in the river. I heard a pilot tell Zack to try to get the ship to drop its anchors. I heard Zack relay that suggestion to the ship. I saw the ship drop its port anchor.

Everything was kind of steady. Joe and Zack swapped so Capt. Joe Carson was running the boat. When that happened, Zack went to bed. I went to bed too. I woke up the next morning and we were tied up somewhere else. I never saw there was any collision between the ship and anything else.

3-31-23

Date


Hunter Daniel

Statement of Zachary Saupe

My name is Zachary Saupe, and I have been employed by Crescent Towing for 7 years. I was working as wheelman of the South Carolina on watch on March 27, 2023, when the ship, SIROCCO, broke free from CMT.


I was maintaining a radio watch when I heard some broken English which I could not understand. A few second later I received a call on Channel 77 from Eddie Laine, NOBRA 17, who said he heard a discussion on the radio and the ship is breaking out of CMT and in need of assistance (Convent Marine Terminal). He was on a ship somewhere in the area.

We went to help the ship in distress. It had no pilot on board, no tugs and had no power at that time. I started the South Carolina's engines and let go the stern line. I woke up Captain Joe Carson and the South Carolina crew. I went to the helm. South Carolina's engineer, Hunter Daniel, let go the bow line. We went to the SIROCCO which was sideways falling into Ergon. Savannah was already there pushing on the bow but Savannah could not stop the fall alone. We went alongside the SIROCCO on the port bow, above Savannah and pushed hard. We stopped the ship's bow's fall to port. The ship never hit anything on the West bank. Savannah dropped to the stern to try to keep him straight in the current.

At some point, NOBRA 17, Pilot Eddie Laine called back and I discussed the situation with him. He said to try to get the ship to drop its anchors. I tried, repeatedly to get him to drop his port anchor. I could not see if SIROCCO'S starboard anchor was out but after a long time and several requests by me, SIROCCO dropped its port anchor. When SIROCCA dropped the port anchor, there was not enough chain to hold the ship and I saw the anchor chain skipping. I suggested he let out more chain on the port as we were falling down toward the pipelines.

3/31/23

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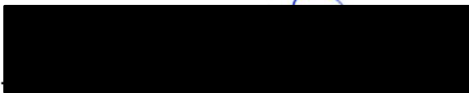

Zachary Saupe

The ship had no power at that time. We had the ship stable in the river with his head upriver. He was drifting downriver. Captain Joe Carson was in the wheelhouse advising me what to do. He confirmed pipelines below us. The ship was falling downriver. I relayed this to the Savannah. Savannah went on the transom of SIROCCO to slow the sternway. We had him stopped.

At some point it looked like his anchors stopped skipping which helped keep SIROCCO stable but he may not have had enough anchor chain out on the port. Then the ship came ahead. I told the captain of the ship you are running over your anchors. He did not respond. He drove ahead over his anchors putting his bow into the current which caused him to veer hard starboard and begin falling down toward the east bank. Once the current was hitting his port side, we could not help him. There were ship lines in the water preventing us from getting alongside to assist on the starboard side of SIROCCO.

After the ship went back in the middle of the river, a pilot boarded SIROCCO, NOBRA 83, J. Austin. Once pilot Austin came on board, I handed over the conn to Capt. Joe Carson and went below.

3/31/23
Date


Zachary Saupe

Statement of Christian Breithaupt

My name is Christian Breithaupt, and I have been employed by Crescent Towing for over 7 years. I was working as Deckhand of the SOUTH CAROLINA on March 27, 2023, when the ship SIROCCO broke out from CMT.

At about 2 am, I went in the shower. After I was in the shower, I heard the SOUTH CAROLINA's engines start. That was a surprise because the job for SOUTH CAROLINA was scheduled for about an hour and a half later. Minutes later, Zack, the wheelman on the SOUTH CAROLINA said get out of the shower. I got out of the shower. Captain Joe Carson then told me to put on my boots and get ready in case we needed to put a line up. I waited in the galley for instructions for a while. When there were no instructions, I went up from the galley to the wheel house to see what was going on but to be ready to go on deck if needed. When I first came up to the wheelhouse I noticed we were going to touch up on the port bow of a ship that was sideways in the river. I went back down to the galley. Later, I heard Goat, from the Savannah, say there were ship lines in the water on the starboard side, so don't go on the starboard side of the SIROCCO.

I did not know there was a collision. I recall a Pilot came on board the ship and that is when I put up a tug line to the ship's port bow. We flipped the ship downriver and the ship anchored in Grandview anchorage.

3/31/23
Date


Christian Breithaupt