



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594  
Office of Marine Safety

## Interview Summary

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**Accident:** Contact of *Amber Brittany* tow with vane dike (DCA24FM025)

**Date:** March 27, 2025 about 1342 EDT

**Location:** Telephone Interview

**Person Interviewed:** Patrick Springer, Pilot of *Amber Brittany*

**Interview Conducted By:** D. McClay, NTSB  
T. [REDACTED] USCG (civ)

**Summary Provided By:** D. McClay, NTSB

Mr. Springer was interviewed by telephone in conjunction with the investigation into the contact of the towing vessel *Amber Brittany* and tow with the vane dike near Louisville, KY on 08 March, 2024. The text that follows is not a verbatim record of the conversation. It has been developed from hand notes from the phone conversation.

### INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Mr. [REDACTED] contacted Mr. Springer via phone to ask him questions about his experience as a towboat operator on the Ohio River and the McAlpine Locks. Mr. [REDACTED] asked if it would be ok to add Mr. McClay to the phone call, to which Mr. Springer agreed. Mr. McClay was then added to the phone call.

Mr. McClay began by asking Mr. Springer what specifically his experience on the Ohio River and the area near the McAlpine Locks and Dam was. Mr. Springer stated that, prior to boarding the *Amber Brittany*, he had never operated a towing vessel on the Ohio River, including the McAlpine Locks. He then stated he's never lied about matters like this. He also mentioned that he doesn't know why the company that hired him (Imperial River Transport LLC) would say he had experience on the Ohio River, if in fact they did, because he never told anyone at the company that.

Mr. McClay also asked about his experience in general operating vessels and tows of a similar size prior to being hired on to the *Amber Brittany*. He stated he was very experienced with vessels of a similar size and horsepower, and often pushed 15 loaded barges of in a similar, 3x5, configuration as the *Amber Brittany*, on the Arkansas River where he previously worked

while employed by Jantran, Inc. He stated he had been driving towboats for about 10-15 years. He noted that while he may have never pushed 15 barges loaded with coal, he has often pushed 15 barges loaded with other cargo of similar weight and size. Mr. McClay also asked if he was familiar with driving through lock channels, and the concept of "outdraft." Mr. Springer replied that, yes, he was familiar.

Mr. McClay asked if Mr. Springer could recall if had been using his cellular phone prior to the incident. Mr. Springer stated he did not, except maybe to play music. Mr. [REDACTED] asked Mr. Springer if he recognized two phone numbers, to which Mr. Springer replied they were his and his wife's. Mr. Springer said that he couldn't remember if he used his phone, but that we (USCG and NTSB) could probably look it up. Mr. [REDACTED] then noted that we had already obtained the cellular phone records.

In addition, Mr. Springer expressed regret about the mishap, explaining again that he had never been through that portion of the Ohio River and didn't anticipate the currents the way "the river was running so bad." Mr. McClay asked if he could recall anything about the watch turnover with the captain prior to taking the day of the contact. Mr. Springer stated he could not remember. He also noted that his transition on to the *Amber Brittany* had been somewhat rushed and chaotic because of the vessel being recently boarded by authorities.