

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

MOTOR VESSEL KITION

ALLISION WITH I-10 BRIDGE,

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA,

FEBRUARY 10, 2007

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Docket No.: DCA-07-FM-013

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Interview of: ROGER LANIER

U.S. Coast Guard
Marine Safety Unit
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Tuesday,
February 13, 2007

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
notice, at 10:30 a.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE

APPEARANCES:

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

CHIEF RAY BALL
U.S. Coast Guard

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:30 a.m.)

MR. LARUE: All right, it's Tuesday, February 13th, 10:30 in the morning. This is Liam Larue from NTSB and Chief Ray Ball from the Coast Guard.

CHIEF BALL: U.S. Coast Guard, yes.

MR. LARUE: And we're talking with Mr. Roger Lanier from Apex Oil.

INTERVIEW OF ROGER LANIER

BY MR. LARUE:

Q. If you could just --

A. All right. This little incident as to vessels departing Dock number two from the Greater Baton Rouge from the Apex loading facility, our discharge. It's been the custom since '81 or so that vessels departing would either go upriver about a quarter of a mile, turn, come back through the bridge fan southbound or, depending on the river stage and the size of the vessel, there have been occasions where they would depart the dock, tug assist to the center of the river and back, go back through the bridge southbound, and in the area of Meal Anchorage, turn for southbound.

BY CHIEF BALL:

Q. Roger, for the record, how long have you been working here?

A. I've been here since I've been Apex, since June 23,

1 '81. I've been in Baton Rouge office here since July 10th of
2 '81.

3 Q. And has Apex been always in the same location, right
4 off of dock number two?

5 A. Apex has always had, well, since '76, when they
6 opened this facility.

7 CHIEF BALL: Okay.

8 BY MR. LARUE:

9 Q. You mentioned an incident back in '80 or '81. Could
10 you tell us about that?

11 A. I understand, prior to my coming here, there was an
12 incident with a vessel leaving the dock, basically swinging out
13 that, as he swung, made contact with the center span of the I-
14 10 bridge. And since that time, as I mentioned before, the
15 turning has been like upriver or back under the bridge,
16 downriver.

17 Q. So when you're talking here, just off the top of your
18 head, how many boats have you seen off that dock and doing the
19 maneuver?

20 A. Several hundred. In the early '80s, we averaged
21 about 30, 40 ships a year. It slowed down since '87. And
22 we're now getting five or six vessels a year now and, in some
23 cases, more. I do have third party customers that will happen
24 to. They are now, I think, utilizing deep draught vessels more
25 than the previous customers did.

1 Q. So you only have five or six ships coming off of that
2 dock per year?

3 A. No, no, no.

4 Q. No?

5 A. In the past -- that was in '87 until about '96 or so,
6 there were just a few ships a year.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. The traffic in the oil had been slowed down
9 considerably. But in the past couple of years, it's been
10 considerably more. I don't know exactly how many.

11 Q. What size ship, generally comes off?

12 A. Anywhere from about a 28,000 tonner to a 48,000
13 tonner, dead weight tons.

14 Q. Okay. What about in terms of length?

15 A. They run 650 to 750, 780. I've had them up to, that
16 vessel in that picture is an 811-foot vessel.

17 Q. Okay. So how would you say this Kition compares?

18 A. It's in the upper length. I think that was 750
19 something feet, as I recall. I don't know offhand, without the
20 records. But I think that's a 48,000 tonner.

21 BY CHIEF BALL:

22 Q. So Roger, in your experience being here at Apex, what
23 would you consider to be a large vessel? From what foot would
24 you consider, hey, this I would consider to be a large vessel?

25 A. A vessel in the 45,000 dead weight ton about.

1 Q. Length?

2 A. Length, 750, 780 or above.

3 Q. Now whenever you said that before that almost
4 exclusively, you would see vessels either go upriver and turn
5 around then come downriver, or you would have other vessels
6 that would just come off the peer and go astern underneath the
7 bridge, then turn around at the Meal Anchorage. Is there any
8 correlation to the water level, like, say for example, if it
9 was high water, normally they would take them up and turn them
10 around, or if it was low river, they would take them up and
11 turn them around? Did you ever notice a correlation with them?

12 A. Basically, the ones that have backed through the
13 bridge, there hasn't been that many. The majority have gone
14 upriver and turned.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. But the few that have backed through the bridge have
17 been the larger vessels.

18 Q. Okay. Since 1981, before you got here, you talked
19 about that one incident with the one vessel who swung out.
20 Since you've been here, have you heard or know of any vessels
21 that have just come off the peer and just swung out?

22 A. There have been a few that have done that, but not
23 that many. There's a few of them.

24 Q. Okay. And those ones that did --

25 A. Were smaller vessels.

1 Q. -- were smaller vessels. Under say 750 feet?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And lower water, slower water.

5 CHIEF BALL: Slower water. Got you.

6 BY MR. LARUE:

7 Q. So have you ever seen any larger vessels swing
8 straight out like that?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Even in low water?

11 A. No, not vessels of this size. Now, bearing in mind
12 that I don't see all the departures.

13 BY CHIEF BALL:

14 Q. Okay. And we definitely understand that. And I will
15 for the record show that we definitely understand. What we're
16 looking for, Roger, is your experience. What you know of. I
17 mean, we're not looking for hard-core facts.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. We're just looking for what you know and what you've
20 experienced. So, all of this is subjective, of course.

21 Have you ever noticed any correlation with the
22 draughts of these vessels on how they would do things? You
23 said that normally the larger vessels would back down. Have
24 you noticed any correlation with the draughts?

25 A. No, not really because normally the vessels that come

1 in, I load them anywhere from 36 to 45 feet draught.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. So it's somewhere within that. And as correlations
4 as to their mannerisms of departure, no, I haven't.

5 Q. Okay. So whenever you load them from 36 to 45,
6 that's normally in regards to what the river is doing?

7 A. Well, that and the customer's orders for what he
8 wants and the clearance on departure, whether or not we can
9 load to a 45 foot draught. Normally 40 is the, up above the
10 Sunshine Bridge, it's a 40 foot, but they advertise 45 to Baton
11 Rouge. But that depends on whether or not the pilots will, you
12 know, go south with them or if it's a daylight hours only
13 departure, something like that. But that's usually the
14 customer's call.

15 Q. Yes, sir. Roger, what would you consider to be low
16 water and high water in the Baton Rouge area?

17 A. Low water would be four to eight feet on the Port
18 Allen scale.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. High water, anything above 25 feet on the scale,
21 bearing in mind that 35 feet is what they consider flood stage.

22 Q. At the Port Allen scale?

23 A. Right.

24 BY MR. LARUE:

25 Q. Do you do anything differently here at the Port when

1 it's on that, when you're actually at high water? Are there
2 any requirements for the Port itself?

3 A. Well, what I would do, in high water tie-up, I
4 require additional lines, depending on the lines they have, if
5 it's wires or if it's 11 to 12 inch lines, or something like
6 that, it's the number of lines we put out.

7 BY CHIEF BALL:

8 Q. In your experience during high water, have you
9 noticed that these motor vessels would have extra tugboats to
10 assist them, or is it normally the same amount --

11 A. No.

12 Q. -- regardless of the water?

13 A. It goes anywhere from two to three. And sometimes
14 during high water, depending on the vessel and the ship's
15 captain or pilot, they may call for standby tugs to push in
16 while we're loading.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. That's pretty much up at the north end of the dock,
19 when we have it there. But I have had the ship's captain say,
20 well, you know, I'm not comfortable at the River stage and the
21 speed of the current, and he's required tugs to hold him in or
22 standby.

23 BY MR. LARUE:

24 Q. So whose call is it on the number of tugs that come
25 out to assist?

1 A. The captain and the pilot.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Normally the pilot makes the call.

4 Q. And so what was the number you said was the usual for
5 coming off?

6 A. Normally two tugs. Two tugs normally handles them.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But in considerable high water and so forth, they'll
9 call for three.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I don't recall any more than three coming out.

12 Q. Wait. Did you actually get to see the Kition taking
13 off?

14 A. No, I didn't.

15 Q. In just your experience, if you were there, what do
16 you think, if you were just coming out there, what way do you
17 think they would have turned off, just from your experience?

18 A. How he turned off?

19 Q. Not knowing what they were planning or anything, what
20 would you be looking out there and expecting them to do?

21 A. Go upriver, turn, and come down.

22 MR. LARUE: Okay.

23 BY CHIEF BALL:

24 Q. Roger, was there anyone else in your company that was
25 out there on the dock when the incident occurred?

1 A. I don't think so. It was 7:30, I think, in the
2 morning, whenever they dropped their lines. The only ones that
3 would have been there, at that time, would have been the line
4 handlers.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And these are contracted by the agent --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- that handles the ship.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Excuse me just a minute let me get the file on this
11 vessel, arriving and loading and so forth.

12 MR. LARUE: We'll take a quick time out on recording
13 here. It's 10:42.

14 (Whereupon, at 10:42 a.m., the interview in the
15 above-entitled matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Motor Vessel Kition
 Allision With I-10 Bridge
 Baton Rouge, Louisiana
 February 10, 2007
 Interview of Roger Lanier

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-FM-013

PLACE: Baton Rouge, Louisiana

DATE: February 13, 2007

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kimberly J. Zogby
Transcriber