



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

April 9, 2019

Attachment 1 – Taquan Air Interview Transcripts

OPERATIONAL FACTORS/HUMAN PERFORMANCE

ANC18FA053

This attachment contains the following transcripts of interviews with Taquan Air personnel:

- Michael Hudgins Senior Pilot, Accident Pilot
- Chuck Perkins Senior Pilot
- Michael O'Brien Senior Pilot, Check Airman, Flight Instructor, Safety Manager
- Clark Hassell Senior Pilot, Check Airman
- Adam Weiland Senior Pilot, Flight Instructor
- Leah Klinger Flight Coordinator
- Michael O'Connor Chief Pilot
- George Curtis Director of Operations
- Kevin Roof Former Director of Operations
- Brien Salazar CEO and Owner

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T

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OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

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Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: MICHAEL J. HUDGINS

APPEARANCES:

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY
Federal Aviation Administration

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

MICHAEL O'BRIEN
Taquan Air

BOB RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. Hudgins)

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:16 a.m.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Okay, so we're on the record at 8:16.

Mike, like I've said before, my name is Shaun Williams, the Operations Group Chairman with the NTSB. NTSB, we're a federal agency that determines probable cause of accidents to promote transportation safety; not a part of the DOT, not a part of the FAA. We have no regulatory or enforcement powers. We're just here to try to figure out what happened.

As the Operations Group chairman, I'm just looking in -- my focus is on the operation to see how we got to this point, where we're here. Everybody around here has a different specialty, and that's why everybody comes together in just a party process. So I'm going to let everybody kind of introduce themselves now.

DR. SILVA: I'm Sathya Silva. I am the human performance investigator on this case. We've been helping Operations and working together to figure out what you know and how to prevent this.

MR. HUDGINS: Okay.

MR. RIGSBY: I'm Matt Rigsby out of the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation. Our office is Fort Worth, but we're based out of D.C., and we're here just for the safety end of it, assisting Brad, who's mainly in the FAA coordinator, the IIC role, the investigator in charge for the FAA. Just to put you at ease that we're not here for enforcement. We're not allowed to use

1 anything that we -- that you say in here for enforcement, so don't
2 panic that way. You know, with the black hat of the FAA sometimes
3 it's --

4 MR. HUDGINS: Okay. Good.

5 MR. SIPPERLEY: And Brad Sipperley. I've talked to you on
6 the phone before.

7 MR. HUDGINS: Okay.

8 MR. SIPPERLEY: And Matt pretty much just described what I'm
9 doing here. I'm the investigator in charge for the FAA on this
10 one and I get to wear the white hat this time, so --

11 MR. HUDGINS: Yay.

12 MR. SIPPERLEY: Yeah.

13 MR. HUDGINS: Left your black hats at home.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: So, Mike, are you okay talking with all of us
15 in here today?

16 MR. HUDGINS: I am, yes.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. We'll be using a tape recorder to
18 record the interview. It'll be sent for transcription. The
19 transcript, not the audio recording, will be made a part of the
20 public docket when it's all done.

21 Like I said, the purpose of the investigation is safety, to
22 help determine probable cause and try to figure out what happened,
23 why it happened, and what we can do to prevent it from happening
24 again. Our role here is not to assign fault, blame or liability;
25 it's a part of the fact-finding phase of the investigation. We

1 cannot, however, offer any guarantee of confidentiality or
2 immunity.

3 Each of the group members will have a chance to ask
4 questions. We'll ask questions one at a time. No one is going to
5 interrupt anyone else. There will be an opportunity for each
6 member to ask follow-up questions at the end. We'll probably do
7 two rounds.

8 Please answer all the questions to the best of your
9 recollection, best you can remember. If you don't understand a
10 question, just ask to have it repeated or explained. If you
11 realize you misstated or you need to correct an answer, please do
12 so. Since it is an audio recording, be sure to be verbal. It's
13 hard not to nod and shake your head, but if you could just
14 verbalize your responses there.

15 You are entitled to have one representative of your choosing.
16 Is there someone you would like to have?

17 MR. HUDGINS: Bob.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

19 MR. HUDGINS: Richmond.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Bob, you may direct Mike not to answer a
21 question or to request a short break to confer with him; however,
22 you may not answer any questions for him.

23 MR. RICHMOND: Fair enough.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Do you have any questions before we begin?

25 MR. HUDGINS: No.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. What I'm going to do is I'm going to
2 pause just a second. It looks like Mike O'Brien is coming in for
3 the company, so Sathya is just kind of briefing him on how we run
4 the interviews and things.

5 MR. O'BRIEN: Hi. How you guys doing?

6 MR. RICHMOND: Hi, Mike.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: So, Mike, we just went around and kind of
8 introduced everybody. If you could state your name and your title
9 for the record here?

10 MR. O'BRIEN: Okay. Michael O'Brien, senior pilot, Taquan
11 Air.

12 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL J. HUDGINS

13 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

14 Q. So, Mike, if you could, state for the record, state your name
15 and your title.

16 A. Okay. Michael J. Hudgins, senior pilot, Taquan Air.

17 Q. And how long have you been at Taquan?

18 A. This is my fourth year.

19 Q. Can you give me an overview, kind of, of your background,
20 certificates, ratings, how you got here?

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. Cliff Notes version.

23 A. All right. Well, I went through navy pilot training in the
24 tactical jet pipeline and got my wings in February 1972. And then
25 I was what they call a plowback, advanced jet flight instructor,

1 in A-4s, in the navy, and then in a squadron in Hawaii, in A-4s
2 again. And along in there somewhere I got my float rating just
3 sort of as a fun thing. I never did anything with it until years
4 later. So I stayed in the Navy Reserves, first of all in A-4s,
5 and then in A-3s or KA-3Bs, out of Alameda.

6 But I was flying, first of all, commuters and twin Cessnas
7 and 402s and 404s, mostly, in Hawaii; then got hired by Orion
8 Airlines. They were flying UPS DC-8s at the time, so I got a
9 flight engineer rating, and then co-pilot on the DC-8 at Orion.

10 And then Hawaiian Airlines, a little bit more primitive model
11 of the DC-8. And then from Hawaiian to Japan Airlines, a DC-10,
12 as a co-pilot, and then captain, which is on my Japanese license.
13 I don't have a 10 type on my U.S. license. And then a 747
14 classic. And then right at the -- that was for 18 years I was at
15 Japan Airlines. And then 747-400 right at the very end of that.
16 So just really a few hundred hours on the 7-4 models.

17 And along in there somewhere -- well, let's see. I got my
18 CFI on floats in a 206, straight floats, in Honolulu, and then
19 started -- then got checked out in the Beaver and started flying
20 tours, and then a little bit of flight instruction in the Beaver
21 and the 206. And retired from Japan Airlines group -- actually,
22 they had a whole separate section that was called -- I called it
23 the cheap foreign labor division at Japan Airlines.

24 I flew a little bit in Caravan freighters for a couple of
25 companies, and then got hired at Promech about 7 years ago. Did 3

1 years at Promech, and then came here for the next season after
2 that. And I'll say I've been in here now for about three and a
3 half seasons.

4 Q. Are you a check airman or a flight instructor at Taquan?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Do you fly outside of work at all?

7 A. No.

8 Q. So I want to go back to the day of the accident. Take your
9 time and just really think about it. Like if you can kind of walk
10 me through from the time you got here in the morning until the
11 accident occurred, kind of what you can remember, what happened,
12 routes you took, sights, sounds, whatever you can recall.

13 A. Well, okay. We had kind of an early show because we had this
14 6:15 launch to Steamboat, so I was probably on the property a
15 little bit before 6 for the 6:00 show, to pre-flight the airplane.
16 And it didn't really take all that long because I had done a lot
17 of things the night before. I did the windshield, pump floats,
18 various things like that. I had to configure the cabin because we
19 had four passengers and a little -- I think 500-and-something-
20 pounds of bags. So that probably, really, took most of the time.

21 And then, well, I had checked weather when I woke up in the
22 morning, but I looked again at the weather stuff and the AVCAMS.
23 And somewhere along the lines there, Leah told me that they were
24 reporting between 500 and 800-foot overcasts at Steamboat, so I
25 said okay, thanks.

1 And I had that risk assessment form to check out. And then I
2 got the airplane loaded and got my four passengers and away we
3 went. So I think Chuck was gone ahead of me in 959, and then me,
4 and then Mike O'Brien in 409. And away we went.

5 So my route was across the channel. I'm having a senior
6 moment remembering the inlet over there, but I went towards Skowl
7 Arm and over Pass Lake, and so down that way. Sorry, I'm just
8 trying to remember exactly. I believe Trocadero.

9 Q. There's the sectional. I don't know if it'll help you out a
10 little.

11 A. So, yeah, so Skowl Arm and Polk Inlet, Skowl Arm and across
12 the lake, and then -- Pass Lake and then across and down Trocadero
13 and over toward San Fernando Island. And so that was where the
14 clouds were kind of the lowest. But I went in between San
15 Fernando Island and Lulu Island. And there was quite a bit of
16 rain over Lulu Island and west of me right there. And as I got to
17 the north end of Lulu Island, then, from there on, it was pretty
18 clear. When I came around and landed in Steamboat Bay, just about
19 calm wind and great visibility and ceiling, so no problem there,
20 really.

21 I sat on the water there a little bit because I thought I was
22 going to be the freighter coming back. I think that was the
23 original plan. But Chuck reconfigured his airplane to take, I
24 think, whatever it was, four people or something, and freight.
25 And so I got into the dock and got my stuff off of there, and then

1 reconfigured my cabin to take 10 people out of there. Anyway, 10
2 people, and I think I was taking off just about the time that Mike
3 was arriving, or maybe a little bit after.

4 Mike, you were sitting there already when I got there, or
5 when I was ready to leave.

6 Okay. So back around and, again, a little bit of ceilings
7 and rain, nothing really serious. I headed over toward Klawock, I
8 guess, with the main idea of going up Klawock Lake to the Harris
9 River dogleg. But I looked at what they call Big Salt, Big Salt
10 Lake, and there was a bit of rain on, say, the west end, southwest
11 end of Big Salt, so I chose not to go that way. I was also able
12 to look up the other end of Klawock Lake and it looked like there
13 was rain up in the dogleg. So I turned around and headed over
14 toward Craig and went past Craig, with the idea of looking up
15 Trocadero toward the, what we call the 12-mile pass mostly, but
16 just the top 12 miles. And there was rain there, too.

17 So about that time, Mike called to say that he had gone up
18 over Big Salt, which would be kind of a northerly route, around
19 toward Thorne Bay. And I said, well, I'm already south of Craig,
20 heading south, so I'm going to continue south. And Mike had said
21 that it was good that way but, again, that's an area, going around
22 that way, I've only done a few times and I'm not really that
23 familiar with it.

24 So this time, I went around Waterfall and through Meares
25 Passage. And so, there was rain and pretty low ceiling in --

1 right around the Waterfall area. But, again, I've been there
2 several times, so I knew right where I was. And sure enough, when
3 I went around the corner and through the Meares Passage, it
4 cleared up really nicely so that I could see Hydaburg. It was
5 quite a few miles away from there, whatever that is, probably 4 or
6 5 miles, anyway. So that was good, and I headed over toward
7 Hydaburg.

8 So, from Hydaburg, the route would be to fly up, say, the
9 Hydaburg River over to Hetta Inlet, and then around the corner to
10 Sulzer Portage. And the ceiling was starting to come down over
11 there. There was some light rain when I got to Hetta Inlet and
12 went past the dogleg. I didn't mention that I had called off of
13 Steamboat through Ketchikan radio, Sunny Hay, a remote site. And
14 then along in there someplace is where Chuck said that the weather
15 was good through the portage.

16 So I got past Dog Salmon drainage, (indiscernible) creek, and
17 then I had been looking for about 1100 feet so that I -- because I
18 knew that going through Sulzer Portage requires something like
19 that. It's a pretty narrow valley that is -- has been logged on
20 both sides, but there's trees right down the stream, which goes
21 right down the middle of it. So I sort of consider that my
22 minimum altitude to go through that.

23 And just in a very few seconds, I was in heavy rain and in
24 cloud. At least I think I was in cloud. So from expecting to be
25 able to go forward and in what I'd call rapidly deteriorating

1 circumstances, it did take a second or two to realize that there
2 was no way that I was going to be able to continue that way. I
3 started a right turn to do the 180-degree turn to get out of
4 there, and I also started -- along in there someplace I started a
5 pretty steep climb, with the idea of getting into a wider part of
6 the valley.

7 So at some point in the turn, I -- again, I'm sorry, I
8 completely have no idea, I still don't have any idea exactly where
9 I was. I'd have to say I completely lost situational awareness
10 right there, disoriented. At some point I saw what I took to be
11 water. And I'm not sure, I think I was thinking of the Hetta
12 Inlet. At some point I looked at my moving map display and didn't
13 see anything that looked familiar, which was another little thing.
14 But I saw this water and leveled the wings and started heading
15 towards what I thought was water. And then it rapidly became
16 apparent that I was headed straight for a mountain and that was
17 just a patch of snow.

18 So then I did level the wings, just put the prop and the
19 power full forward. It felt like -- I saw about 75 knots on the
20 airspeed and just sort of mushed in. It felt like it just kind of
21 did a little bit of a fall, a mush into the side of the mountain.
22 So there was no post-crash fire. The floats did their job as far
23 as I was concerned. It came to a stop almost immediately. And
24 opened the doors, the two front doors, and started helping people
25 out of the airplane. So should I keep going from there?

1 Q. No, that's --

2 A. No? Okay.

3 Q. That's good there. I want to go back and fill in a little
4 bit here with some questions that I have.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: Brad, do you have the copy of the risk
6 assessment, please?

7 MR. SIPPERLEY: That's it right here, and the other side.

8 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

9 Q. So looking at the copy of the risk assessment here, you
10 mentioned that when you got here in the morning, and talking with
11 Leah, that there was a report from Steamboat as far as the
12 ceilings, 500 to 800 overcast. So is there anywhere on here that
13 that should have been captured?

14 A. Oh. Well, now that you mention it, I do not see a specific
15 ceiling thing. This unreliable weather source got a 4, which is
16 fairly high, but I don't see it. I don't see it. I just went by
17 what she told me. And I assume this is printed sometimes a few
18 minutes ahead of time; sometimes they're printing it when I'm
19 ready to go. So she said she just talked to them over there, to
20 say I was going by her words.

21 Q. Okay. Do you go over the flight risk assessment with the
22 flight coordinator prior to it being printed out and departing, or
23 how does -- explain to me the flight risk assessment, how this
24 works.

25 A. Well, not usually, not specifically this thing. If they, say

1 if -- they have to sign it. If I have a question on it, I can
2 truly ask them. And usually, they're coordinating with, say, the
3 safety officer, for example, Mike, and they're talking about the
4 weather the whole time. And Leah's really good about that. She
5 almost always says something about the weather and would even
6 throw in some comments usually about you don't have to get in
7 there, you know, if you want to turn around, no problem, you know,
8 that kind of thing. So there's quite a bit of give and take.
9 Basically, more informal than, say, let's go over this risk
10 assessment or anything like that.

11 Q. So do you check the weather yourself?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. What kind of things are you looking at?

14 A. Well, there's -- well, first of all, there's the weather
15 cams, say, for the Harris River pass and Craig and Klawock and
16 Hydaburg, and give a really good idea of what I'm going to be
17 seeing in a few minutes. Actually, I use, I personally use,
18 usually, Weather Underground. Or quite a bit of time there's a
19 computer right outside the dispatch office there, and they'll have
20 the National Weather Service weather up on it. So you can see
21 things like the Hydaburg weather, Klawock weather report, things
22 like that.

23 Q. Do you ever talk to --

24 A. So you --

25 Q. Sorry, go ahead.

1 A. Go. No, go ahead.

2 Q. Do you ever talk to the folks over at Steamboat yourself?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Do you know when you departed Steamboat, any idea about what
5 your fuel load was?

6 A. Oh, it would have been -- I'm going to have to make a
7 guesstimate here. I'd say in the neighborhood of 150 gallons,
8 maybe, at the most. The reason I say that, I would say when I was
9 getting close to the Hydaburg area, I did check fuel, and that was
10 right at 120 gallons, which would have been better than 2 hours.
11 We figure 2 hours -- we figure 60 gallons an hour in the company,
12 but I think in cruise it's better than that.

13 Q. So you mentioned when you were approaching portage, I think
14 you said near Sulzer, the ceiling started to lower?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. Do you know about what it was lowering to, what it looked
17 like?

18 A. Well, not really, because I had to be at -- like I said, I
19 had to be around 1100 feet and I had to see if the ceiling was
20 going to be better than that. And there is a difference between
21 being in rain and being in cloud. And I thought I could tell the
22 difference, but I think it went -- as I say, right after Dog
23 Salmon, I think either the rain got very heavy and I could not
24 tell or the cloud did come down below that so that I entered
25 basically IMC conditions.

1 Q. So when you entered IMC, you mentioned that you started your
2 right turn to 180, started a steep climb to try to get up into a
3 wider part. What is the CFIT procedure at Taquan? Can you
4 describe that for me, please?

5 A. Oh, sure. Well, it's supposed to be a level 180-degree turn
6 to reciprocal heading, and then on the turn or in -- excuse me --
7 at completion of the turn, look for a clear area, which is water,
8 and then start a descent. Then you point it toward that to 300
9 feet and then set up for a glassy water landing, and continue
10 below 300 feet until you arrive at the water, or break out of the
11 cloud, I assume.

12 Q. So is there a different procedure for overland flights versus
13 overwater flights?

14 A. Not really. Not really.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. As far as I know. The point -- I think the point would have
17 to be driving toward a clear area before you descend. So that
18 would have to be a big part of it.

19 Q. What about the -- we've got pictures from after the accident
20 that the TAWS switch was still in the inhibit position.

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Does it live in the inhibit position?

23 A. Yes. Yes. Actually, I do forget if my training included
24 turning it to the uninhibit position for this particular maneuver.
25 I did not do that. I considered that more of a distracter. If

1 I'm trying to fly on instruments and not bump into things and
2 things like that, that's probably the last thing on my mind.

3 But generally, yes, it lives in the inhibit position. The
4 TAWS warning, I think, was originally set to start activating at
5 500 feet, and that was changed to 300 feet, but it activates every
6 single time that we land. It activates fairly regularly when
7 we're in a valley or something like that. So if we're not at a
8 runway that's in the database, which is every single time we land,
9 then the TAWS warning goes off. And I believe in some airplanes,
10 maybe some Beavers, that TAWS warning can be heard by the
11 passengers in the cabin also. So, yes, it generally lives in the
12 inhibit position.

13 Q. The Chelton units in front of you, so there's different pages
14 it can be on, different displays up. Do you remember how you
15 normally fly? Do you keep the map up? Do you keep --

16 A. Well, the PFD is the regular flight instruments scan, and on
17 the MFD is the moving map display. I tend to keep that on the 5-
18 mile scan, which means I have a 2½-mile ring to sort of gauge
19 what's coming up next. So that's my normal. Actually, looking
20 for traffic, also, 5 miles is a good one to start seeing traffic
21 on the ADS-B portion.

22 Q. So let's go back to you came on property a little before 6.
23 What day in your sequence was this? Was this the start of your 5
24 days on? Was this the last day? Where was it within your --

25 A. I would have to -- well, actually, I could -- mind if I look

1 in my --

2 Q. No, absolutely.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. Please.

5 A. Let's see how close I can come to saying it was probably
6 about my third day.

7 (Pause.)

8 Okay, so it looked like it was my -- I didn't write it down
9 -- 10. So it looks like it was my second day at work.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Because it's 5, 6 -- let me see. The 3rd; I was off the 4th;
12 5, 6, 7 I worked; off the 8th; and then 9th and 10th. So my
13 second day.

14 Q. So if you showed up a little before 6, do you remember about
15 what time you got up that morning?

16 A. Not specifically. I usually have the alarm set for 4:15.

17 Q. About what time do you go to bed the night before?

18 A. Well, it's at least by 9:00, and sometimes as late as 10.

19 Q. What about quality of sleep? Do you feel you were well-
20 rested? Do you remember feeling tired, like I can't believe I'm
21 up at 4:15 again?

22 A. No. No. Actually, for the last few years, I've been
23 sleeping almost exactly 6 hours a night. And I close my eyes and
24 I wake up and it's 6 hours later, so I think it's good sleep.

25 Q. So are you a morning person, night person?

1 A. Morning person.

2 Q. I still haven't been able to get there yet.

3 A. Same for my wife.

4 Q. So the day before -- I know you just had your book out, and
5 I'm sorry you just put it away. Do you remember about how much
6 you flew? Was it kind of normal? Was it a lot the day before?

7 A. It was pretty normal. I think I just did a bunch of Mistys.
8 Yeah, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 -- five Mistys, 5.3. So that's maybe a little
9 bit above average but not so bad.

10 Q. So, have you been involved prior to this in any other
11 accidents or incidents?

12 A. Well, I think there was a thing called an incident in the
13 1980s sometime, which was intentional nose gear-up landing. It
14 was a Cessna 402-B, where the track cylinder broke off of the
15 airplane and so the nose gear would not come down and lock. So I
16 just went and landed with the nose gear up, slid to the stop. I
17 think that was called an incident.

18 Q. So prior to the accident, do you remember any issues with the
19 airplane? Was it running great?

20 A. Yes, the airplane was running great.

21 Q. So how do you like working for Taquan?

22 A. I really like it. I really like it.

23 Q. What do you like about it?

24 A. Well, they have a very conservative approach to flying around
25 there. As you've probably noticed, like yesterday, the weather

1 can be really bad. I think that they are very conservative about
2 the way that they approach that. They just say no, we're just not
3 doing it. So either shut down the operation or send people out on
4 a weather check. So they give us numbers and say, okay, we're not
5 doing it; can't do it legally, we can't do it safely. And it
6 seems to me that they think a lot about the new guys who might not
7 know the area quite as well and kind of make their decisions based
8 on that level. Actually, Mike has made those kind of decisions.

9 I have never been in the safety pilot position there in the
10 dispatch room, but that would probably be the number one thing
11 that I like about it. The airplanes are very, very well
12 maintained. That would be another thing. And it just seems like
13 they have a way of hiring good people so that's more of a family
14 sort of an atmosphere. So those are probably the three big
15 things.

16 Q. Anything you don't like?

17 A. Not really.

18 Q. Have you ever felt any pressure from the company to take a
19 flight?

20 A. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. Just the opposite.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: So I'm done for right now. I'm going to pass
22 it off to Sathya.

23 BY DR. SILVA:

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Okay, Sathya.

1 Q. How are you feeling? Need a break?

2 A. No.

3 Q. All right.

4 A. I guess I'm doing okay. Hanging in there.

5 Q. Good. And just let us know if you do need a break.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. Regarding the weather conditions that day over at Steamboat,
8 how often do you say -- would you say that you take flights in
9 those conditions where the ceilings are in that 500 to 800 range?
10 How often, if you can --

11 A. Well, this year, I'd say maybe, just taking a really wild
12 guess, it would be a quarter of the time. There are years, like I
13 say, last year, where it might be half the time. So in southeast,
14 it's not abnormal weather at all, I'll put it that way.

15 Q. Do you feel like the lower ceilings that are above FAA
16 minimums increase risk at all, or do you think, for example, that
17 that should be on the risk assessment? Or are things good as they
18 are?

19 A. Well, I suppose it wouldn't hurt to be on the risk
20 assessment. A lot of times, it would have to be something called
21 in by the pilots since these are a lot of remote areas where
22 there's really no weather reporting facility, say, in the passes,
23 something like that. And it would be very hard to estimate from
24 the weather cameras. Those are really good for visibility, or
25 lack thereof, but it would be kind of hard to get an idea of

1 ceiling. And again, you know, it changes.

2 Q. Along those lines, when you look at the weather when you're
3 making your decisions, your flight decisions, whether it's before
4 or in flight, what are you looking for?

5 A. Well, it's kind of either a go/no-go decision or a route
6 decision, or simply a place to be aware of. So, say, if Leah says
7 there's a 500- to 800-foot ceiling, I kind of go, oh, okay, well,
8 and maybe go on around some of those islands instead of over an
9 island. I'd like to be 1500 foot over an island. I'll just go
10 around it instead. That would be more of a fuel type of a
11 problem, also.

12 Q. So, in this case, how did the knowledge about the 500- to
13 800-foot ceilings, how did that factor into your decision making
14 during the flight?

15 A. Well, exactly in that way; that if it really was a 500-foot
16 ceiling, well, then okay, that's doable, but the question is rain.
17 Let's say, well, there's rain showers in the area. Again, the
18 rain may or may not be there when I get there. So I would just
19 have to go and look for myself. If they were calling something
20 like they say around here, 300 broken, I'd say, well, I can't go,
21 or I'd better have a backup plan.

22 Q. What minimums are you looking for when it comes to the
23 weather?

24 A. 500 and 2.

25 Q. Okay. Does the company have other minimums outside of the

1 prescribed --

2 A. Well, yeah, for tours, they want 4 miles, 1,000/4, I think.
3 But again, that's more of a practical thing, also. Tourists can't
4 see much at 500 and 2, so --

5 Q. How often would you say you encounter rain flying in the area
6 near the --

7 A. There have been months when I have rain on the windscreen
8 every single day of the month. Like I say, this is southeast.

9 Q. So pretty routine?

10 A. It's very routine.

11 Q. Are there any difficulties that come specifically with rain
12 compared to IMC or ceilings, or are those --

13 A. Well, first of all, IMC and ceiling, you absolutely
14 positively have to stay out of cloud because then you can't see at
15 all, and we are a day VFR operation. Not being able to see is a
16 really bad thing. So then, the rain is a judgment thing. That's
17 where the 2 miles comes into play. And I'm talking mostly
18 summertime, not snow flurries and things like that.

19 Q. Do you live in the area here?

20 A. I do not, no.

21 Q. So where are you based?

22 A. Right now, I live in Key West, Florida. I just moved there
23 from Hawaii.

24 Q. Oh, okay.

25 A. Been there about a year and a half or so.

1 Q. So do you come up to Alaska just for the summer?

2 A. Yes, seasonal.

3 Q. Is your family here with you?

4 A. No.

5 Q. How much -- when was the last time -- actually, let's start

6 with are you IFR current right now?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. When was the last time you were IFR current?

9 A. Well, it's been at least 7 or 8 years.

10 Q. So before you came to Alaska. Were you at any point current

11 after you started operating here?

12 A. Oh, no. That's when I would have gone out of currency.

13 Q. Okay. Do you have an approximate number of hours in Alaska?

14 Can you estimate that?

15 A. Not with me, but I'm going to say in the neighborhood of

16 3,000 hours.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Very roughly.

19 Q. That's fine. How many times do you -- have you gone through

20 the Sulzer Portage area before this flight?

21 A. Well, again, very, very rough estimate. I may have to do

22 some multiplication, okay? I'll say a couple of dozen times.

23 Q. Okay. And that's throughout your entire career flying in

24 Alaska or --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Did you feel comfortable -- do you feel comfortable
2 with that pass, flying through that area?

3 A. I did.

4 Q. You did, yeah. Good answer. Because that's what we're
5 trying to get at, right, before -- your decisions before the
6 accident.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. I'm sure a lot has changed since then. You mentioned that
9 you chose 1100 feet to go through. Can you elaborate a little bit
10 more on why 1100 feet was your minimum?

11 A. Yes. I think I -- I don't know if I specifically said that,
12 but I did that because of the trees down the stream, right in the
13 middle of the valley.

14 Q. Was that because it wouldn't have been a good landing spot in
15 the case you needed it?

16 A. That's correct. It would not have been a good landing spot
17 going through there.

18 Q. So, would 1100 feet have gotten you to the other side? Is
19 that the --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. So you mentioned you had to climb to 1100. Do you
22 recall what kind of altitude you were at before?

23 A. Well, not really. It would have been around 6- or 700 feet,
24 I guess.

25 Q. When you were executing your 180-degree turn, or even once

1 you realized that you were in IMC, can you give us an idea of what
2 your scan looked like in terms of instruments, your moving map,
3 outside looking for references?

4 A. Well, not very well. I could see the compass card moving. I
5 think I said I looked down at the moving map display and that was,
6 say, another shock, that I did not recognize anything on the
7 moving map display. Probably the majority of my time was looking
8 outside, looking for something that looked familiar.

9 Q. Were you able to see the ground in that turn?

10 A. No. Not from the time I entered the heavier rain, no.

11 Q. And you mentioned you normally keep your moving map around
12 2.5 miles of range. Is that what it was set on that day?

13 A. Well, normally, it's 5 with a 2.5 mile --

14 Q. Oh, the inner ring.

15 A. Inner ring.

16 Q. Okay, got it.

17 A. So I don't really remember.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I flipped on --

20 Q. Regarding this risk assessment form, do you use this in terms
21 of your decision making? And if you do, how do you use this? How
22 does it come up, I guess, in your operation?

23 A. Well, yeah. I'm supposed to sign it or initial it or
24 something before every flight. And so, if I see a big number, I
25 generally look and see why, and then that goes into my decision

1 making.

2 Q. Have you ever been in a situation where information on the
3 sheet was a surprise to you?

4 A. Not that I can remember.

5 Q. Have you ever had to -- has there been any case where, let's
6 say, if a sheet indicated lower risk and you had to cancel a
7 flight on your own, outside of this?

8 A. I do not remember any time like that.

9 Q. Did you receive any training on the form itself?

10 A. I could probably say back in the dim past, as a new company
11 employee, I'm sure I got that training.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Specifically, I couldn't name a date.

14 Q. So you mentioned you were at Promech for 3 years. Why did
15 you leave Promech?

16 A. Well, on the negative side, I thought that they did push it
17 with the weather quite a bit. And an example, one example would
18 be that you had to fly a revenue trip in order to get paid for
19 that day. So I think that there was -- even though they would
20 say, you know, the obvious, don't fly if the weather's bad and
21 stuff like that, there was definitely, let's say, a desire to fly
22 by every pilot there, I think. So that's the negative part of it.

23 The positive side was that I just liked what I saw at Taquan.
24 I have friends up and down the waterfront and Taquan sounded like
25 a good deal. I knew, specifically knew the chief pilot here and

1 the director of ops, and so I saw that as a very positive step.

2 Q. What year did you join Taquan? Do you recall?

3 A. It must have been 2015. I'm just counting on my fingers.

4 Q. Yeah. 2015. Did you switch in the middle of the season or
5 was that when you came back?

6 A. No. I put in my application, came at the beginning of that
7 season.

8 Q. All right. Have there been any major changes in your life in
9 the last year?

10 A. Not in the last year, but I'd say a year and a half. Moving
11 to Key West, Florida.

12 Q. Any changes in your health, financial situation, personal
13 life?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. How would you say your health is?

16 A. I'd say I'm very lucky. My health seems to be very good.

17 Q. How would you characterize your vision?

18 A. Well, it's old guy vision, I guess. I'm wearing bifocals and
19 wearing corrective lenses for my medical certificate.

20 Q. Were you wearing the lenses at the time of the accident?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Any issues with color vision at all?

23 A. Never.

24 Q. How is your hearing?

25 A. It's probably a little reduced in some frequencies.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Being around jet noise and so forth.

3 Q. Any trouble -- does it cause you any trouble in terms of
4 operating the aircraft, hearing passengers, anything along those
5 lines?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Do you take any prescription medicine?

8 A. Say again?

9 Q. Do you take any prescription medicine?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There's the hearing test.

11 MR. HUDGINS: Yeah. Well, when trucks are nearby -- yes.

12 BY DR. SILVA:

13 Q. Okay. What do you take and for what condition?

14 A. Well, okay, tamsulosin and finasteride, those are both for --
15 again, I call it old guy plumbing, enlarged prostate, and bladder
16 relaxing for that.

17 Q. Any other prescriptions?

18 A. No, not on a daily basis.

19 Q. Do you drink alcohol?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. It's been a while, but do you remember the last time before
22 the accident that you had a drink?

23 A. Not really.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I'd say at least 2 or 3 days.

1 Q. Okay. How often would you say you drink?

2 A. Well, about three beers a week, something along those lines.
3 Sometimes a shot of whiskey.

4 Q. Do you smoke tobacco?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Do you use any illicit drugs?

7 A. No.

8 Q. And in the 72 hours before the accident, did you take any
9 kind of prescription or non-prescription medicine that may have
10 affected your performance?

11 A. No.

12 Q. And regarding -- just to follow up a few questions that Shaun
13 already mentioned -- what did I -- sleep section. Ah, it's right
14 here. I know it's been a while, but regarding your sleep schedule
15 the days before, do you recall if that was normal or if there were
16 any kind of interruptions or early mornings, late mornings?

17 A. Well, right, I don't remember any abnormalities at all.

18 Q. And do you feel like 6 hours of sleep is enough for you to
19 feel rested?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Were there any squawks on the airplane, do you recall?

22 A. No. That's part of the preflight, check the book.

23 Q. Okay, no squawks that day. How'd you feel that morning
24 before you flew?

25 A. Fine.

1 Q. How would you describe the safety culture here?

2 A. Well, again, it's excellent safety culture.

3 Q. Does the company have a safety program?

4 A. Well, yeah.

5 Q. How would you describe that program? What does it mean to
6 you as a pilot?

7 A. Okay. Well, again, it's excellent. Mostly, for me as a
8 pilot, it's important to have safety meetings and talk about
9 incidents that have happened to other companies or people up and
10 down the waterfront, and maybe just some reminders about taxiing,
11 taking off and landing around the harbor, and things like that,
12 and always allowed for pilots to throw in their experiences and
13 things like that.

14 Q. How often do these safety meetings happen?

15 A. I could say as needed. If we have a day of not flying, it
16 seems like a safety meeting gets scheduled often on those days.

17 Q. Is this once a month, a couple times a month?

18 A. I don't know. Could I ask Mike? Let's say at least once a
19 month, it seems to me.

20 Q. Okay. That's fine. Have you ever called in sick or fatigued
21 for a flight?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Did you ever feel like you should have?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Would the company have been receptive if you had called in

1 sick, based on what you know?

2 A. I'm sure they would have.

3 Q. So let's say that you observe a safety issue during a flight.
4 What would you do with that information? Is that something you
5 would normally bring to the company or -- and if so, how would you
6 bring it to the company?

7 A. Well, yeah. As a matter of fact, that's required by our
8 operations manual as one of the things we're supposed to report
9 in, I mean, anything that would affect the safety of the flight.
10 And that's especially for people who would be following behind us,
11 I guess. But yeah, of course.

12 Q. Have you ever filed a report for anything?

13 A. Oh, I'm sure I have. And it's not exactly filed a report.
14 I've called in because I could not get to some places.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Coffman Cove or something, let's say the weather's down, I'm
17 turning around.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Something as simple as that.

20 Q. If you wanted to file a report, let's say anonymously, is
21 there a way to do that?

22 A. Anonymously. Yeah, we have this S3, I think is the form.
23 There's a form to fill out. It says on the form you don't have to
24 put your name on it.

25 Q. As far as you know, do people use that or is that kind of

1 just something that --

2 A. Yeah, I think a lot of people use that, a lot.

3 Q. Who's in charge of safety here?

4 A. Well, I think every one of us, really and truly.

5 Q. Okay.

6 MR. HUDGINS: Mike, do you see yourself as the safety guru?

7 But everybody, you know. There's always a chief pilot or
8 whoever. You can go to anybody here.

9 DR. SILVA: Okay, I will pause here. Do you need a break.
10 How are you feeling?

11 MR. HUDGINS: I'm okay.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay, Matt?

13 Okay. Because it's been about an hour and a half -- yes,
14 about an hour and a half.

15 MR. HUDGINS: Does anybody else --

16 MR. RIGSBY: Yeah, but it looks like you guys are almost
17 ready to summarize here, so, you know --

18 BY MR. RIGSBY:

19 Q. So you're doing okay?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. I may have missed it, and I apologize. The total time
22 that you -- your total flight time?

23 A. Over 27,000 hours.

24 Q. And how many in the twin Otter that you're flying, in the
25 type that you were flying the day of the accident?

- 1 A. Oh -- well, the single-engine Otter.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. DHC-3T, that was around 306.
- 4 Q. On your compensation package, are you paid whether you fly or
5 not here?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. There's a longer answer, but yes.
- 9 Q. Okay. Do you get paid for a sick day, if you call in sick?
- 10 A. I don't know. I've never called in sick.
- 11 Q. Okay. When you -- on your -- how many days do you work a
12 week? Is there a set schedule?
- 13 A. My guess is the company starts off with a set schedule, and
14 then there has to be modifications based on who's here, what
15 airplanes are available, and all kinds of things like that. So,
16 yes. It's supposed to be 5 or 6 days a week. I'm happy with 6
17 days a week.
- 18 Q. Can you fly all the aircraft here? Are you checked out in
19 all the aircraft Taquan has?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. So you could fly a Beaver one day, and then an Otter the
22 next?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 Q. Okay. At Steamboat, obviously that's not a Taquan facility,
25 but is there a place that if you had -- as you're coming in and

1 you do see that weather is closing in, does Steamboat have a place
2 that you could maybe get off the aircraft and go in, pull up a
3 computer to look at the weather cams again?

4 A. Well, I don't know that because I've never done it, but I'm
5 certain that they have a sat phone or some telephone link to the
6 company.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Because we do get our weather information from them. We're
9 not an authorized facility, of course, but yeah, generally --

10 Q. How long do you typically stay at Steamboat? I mean, once
11 you're on the ground, drop passengers off? Is it a pretty quick
12 turnaround?

13 A. Well, it could be as little as 10 minutes if I'm dropping
14 people and loading people; longer if I'm just loading fish, if I'm
15 a freighter, fish and baggage. This last time was longer than
16 that because the airplane in front of me reconfigured, and then I
17 reconfigured after I was unloaded. So however long that was.

18 Q. Okay. When was the last time -- or have you ever flown with
19 one of the FAA inspectors that has been here at Taquan? Has he
20 observed you during a flight or given you a check ride, anything
21 like that?

22 A. Yes. I would have to look in the logbook. There have been
23 two times since I've been at Taquan where I think the FAA
24 inspector was inspecting, checking the check airman.

25 Q. Sure.

1 A. I think Clark was one of those.

2 Q. Was that this year, last year? Do you recall?

3 A. I don't recall. I think last year.

4 Q. Were you wearing your glasses the day of the accident?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. On the preflight risk assessment, I know we've talked about
7 that, have you ever -- you know, after Leah or whoever flight
8 coordinator fills it out, have you ever gone back, looked at it,
9 and said, hmm, I'm not comfortable with that, we need to give it a
10 higher rating or I'm not comfortable with taking a flight?

11 A. I have never done that.

12 Q. Do you have any other tools to look at weather that -- on
13 your person, like an iPad with ForeFlight or XM weather, anything
14 like that, on your phone?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Weather -- okay.

17 MR. RICHMOND: Don't be checking weather now, Mike.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MR. RIGSBY: Yeah, he's going to (indiscernible).

20 MR. HUDGINS: Fits in my pocket.

21 MR. RICHMOND: Yeah. Okay, I know you can't

22 (indiscernible) --

23 MR. HUDGINS: No.

24 BY MR. RIGSBY:

25 Q. Were the passengers -- was there any conversations going on

1 inside the cockpit that -- you know, with the passengers on board?
2 Were they talking to you during this event? Were they expressing
3 any concerns? Were they, you know, just talking to you about
4 their trip, maybe distracting or anything like that going on?

5 A. No. Actually, they do not have any way to talk to me.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. None of them have microphones on their headsets.

8 Q. Okay. I guess, when you guys load the passengers, are you --
9 do you give them a briefing, a safety briefing on seatbelts for
10 taxi, takeoff, all that?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And I think you mentioned it, about once you got to
13 Steamboat, you had to reconfigure the aircraft. How long does
14 that take and, I guess --

15 A. Well, I'd really have to look at my times, if those are
16 written down anywhere, at the dock. But passengers off and the
17 baggage off happens fairly rapidly, and then I would have to stow
18 the cargo net, the big cargo net, move a small cargo net, and then
19 put -- we do it side-to-side, so I'd have to put the seats that
20 had been folded up against the wall, I'd have to pull them down,
21 latch them.

22 Q. Okay. Does your seat -- the seat that you're flying in, is
23 it a -- what type of restraint is it, just a shoulder harness, or
24 is it a four-point restraint?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Shoulder harness?

2 A. Just a one-shoulder harness, yeah, diagonal.

3 Q. And the pax, just lap belts?

4 A. Yes. Well, the passenger and the co-pilot seat has the
5 diagonal restraint, also.

6 Q. Okay. The simulator training I've seen on the CFIT training
7 that you mentioned earlier. How much simulator time do you get in
8 that recurrent training?

9 A. I think Adam said an hour is required, and so we did the
10 hour. We just kind of kept going at it.

11 Q. And you do that -- when do you do that?

12 A. This year, I did it the day after I did my annual Part 135
13 check in the Beaver. So that was May 14th, I believe.

14 Q. So, was that your -- your last inadvertent IMC or CFIT
15 avoidance training, was it in the Beaver?

16 A. Yes. Well, no, disregard. The CFIT training in the Beaver.
17 My -- I guess, safe-for-solo check ride with Clark in the Otter
18 was the last CFIT training.

19 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. Okay, I'm done.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Brad?

21 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

22 Q. We're back from everybody else's notes, so we'll go from
23 fresh to where we started. The CFIT training, you just said the
24 last CFIT training you did in the Otter, actually in the aircraft,
25 was this year or last year?

1 A. This year.

2 Q. This year? Okay. At Steamboat, how many aircraft can dock
3 at Steamboat at one time?

4 A. One.

5 Q. Okay. So if you've got another aircraft waiting for you, is
6 that creating pressure? You know, somebody sitting out and
7 waiting to come in to dock, I mean, for you to hurry? Do you ever
8 feel hurried to reconfigure and to leave? Or if you had a concern
9 weather-wise where you wanted to do another check but you've got
10 somebody else waiting in the bay, does that create any instances
11 where you --

12 A. No.

13 Q. No?

14 A. It takes as long as it takes.

15 Q. Okay. Okay. Let's see. So, with respect to the risk
16 assessment form, you say if you see a big number, you know, that
17 causes you some concern. You don't actually add any numbers to
18 the form?

19 A. No.

20 Q. No? So you don't really take any active participation other
21 than being given the form and assessing what they have given you
22 and seeing if you agree or disagree?

23 A. Right. I suppose it would be my responsibility to say if
24 there's something going on that personal assessment portion.

25 Q. So on the Manpower section there?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Is there anything on the Manpower section there that
3 you may have put in for that day, points that you would have
4 assessed?

5 A. No.

6 Q. You said the day prior to the accident, I believe, you flew
7 five flights, Misty flights?

8 A. Misty tours, yeah.

9 Q. Misty tour flights. How often do you fly the other routes,
10 the longer routes, like the Steamboat and -- or do you normally do
11 Misty flights or do you -- and only occasionally do the other
12 flights?

13 A. This year, it's been a majority of Misty flights, yes.

14 Q. Okay. Prior to the 10th of July, how many times have you
15 flown to Steamboat, Waterfall, those routes, would you say?

16 A. Well, about a total of half a dozen.

17 Q. Maybe a half a dozen times? Okay.

18 A. Yeah. Very much of a guesstimate.

19 Q. So when you're flying the Otter, how much would you say the
20 forward visibility can be reduced in precip, just looking out that
21 front window?

22 A. Well, that's a famous question. So as you know, then, the
23 forward visibility in the Otter can be greatly restricted, and it
24 depends, it seems to me, on the size of the raindrops. So that is
25 definitely a consideration.

1 Q. So with respect to the size of the raindrops, bigger,
2 smaller, what seems to cause you the most problems? Or is it the
3 intensive --

4 A. Well, a lighter rain and medium-sized raindrops seem to stay
5 on the windscreen. Light rain, no. Heavier rain does not seem to
6 be as bad up there.

7 Q. So in those situations where you've got that precip on the
8 window, to maintain situational awareness of where you're at, do
9 you find yourself looking outside the side windows more?

10 A. Yes. For me personally, besides looking out the side windows
11 or maybe turning a little bit, I tend to look out the top corner
12 of the windscreen to see forward. That seems to be better for me.

13 Q. So maybe the top left corner of the windscreen right in front
14 of you?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. That seems to work better for me.

18 Q. Before you departed, was there any forecasts or weather
19 reports that indicated any precipitation along the route of
20 flight?

21 A. Well, I'm not sure where the reports came from. I think
22 there were some rain reports, and they were after departure,
23 reports of other airplanes about other routes.

24 Q. But prior to your departure, do you recall any forecasts or
25 observations that showed precipitation, weather cameras or

1 anything you looked at?

2 A. I don't recall specifically.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. For some reason, I assumed that there was rain in the area.

5 Q. Okay. You mentioned, you know, sometimes the weather's bad
6 and you send out a weather check flight. What normally, what type
7 of weather normally requires a weather check, where somebody will
8 go out and just take a look, what conditions?

9 A. Well, say, marginal weather conditions. I'd say the most
10 common one, going to the Mistys, people want to know -- this has
11 improved because of a couple of new cameras, but the normal thing
12 would be to decide if we can go, or what route to go if we can go
13 to the Misty Fiords.

14 Q. So, would you say, then, most of the weather checks are to
15 check on the Misty Fiords tours versus going west, maybe?

16 A. Yes. Well, that's -- yeah, that would be the majority. We
17 do weather checks to look up the west Beam Canal for bear tours,
18 and they can also see what the straits are doing.

19 Q. Okay. I think I heard you say, and correct me if I'm wrong,
20 that it's 300 feet, that's when the oral portion of the TAWS
21 starts to activate?

22 A. That's what I've been told, yes.

23 Q. 300 feet. Okay.

24 A. It was 500, and I understand that operators were able to get
25 that changed to 300 because of having the nuisance warning

1 constantly going off.

2 Q. So they had that changed through a software change through
3 Chelton, are you aware of, or --

4 A. You know, I don't know the details.

5 Q. Don't know the details. Okay.

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Did you ever find yourself, you know, to just to
8 estimate in-flight visibility, changing the range from, say, 1 to
9 4 miles just on the MFD to try to keep situational awareness or,
10 you know, just to estimate your visibility, in-flight visibility?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Or do you rely more on the range rings?

13 A. I have tried to match them, yes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Calibrate my eyeball, as they would say.

16 Q. Okay. Let's see. I think this is the last one for me: So,
17 before you left -- so you got that initial report from Steamboat
18 of 500 to 800 feet when you first got here; is that correct?

19 A. No, just as I was leaving.

20 Q. Just as you were leaving. Okay.

21 A. To take the flight, with this thing in my hand.

22 Q. Okay. So just going out the door, you were given that
23 report. Okay. Okay.

24 MR. SIPPERLEY: That's it for me for right now.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Mike, do you have any questions?

1 MR. O'BRIEN: I don't think so.

2 MR. HUDGINS: Or corrections.

3 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

4 Q. So I have a few follow-ups here just to go around one more
5 time here --

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. -- and that should be wrapping it up for you. So you
8 mentioned that it kind of starts as a set schedule for you, but it
9 can kind of change throughout the operation, during your time on.
10 Do you have set duty times, or how does that work?

11 A. Yes. The set duty time is a 6:00 show, and that is usually
12 slid to 6:30. But I think that's an ops manual thing, where we're
13 allowed to go from 6:30 for the 14 hours -- or 6:00, rather, for
14 the 14 hours. So 6:00 is the earliest that we can show up.

15 Q. Okay. So, your set duty time, it stays at 6:00, or when you
16 start on day 1, they say, okay, you're going to be here at this
17 time, then 6:30, then 7, or is it from 6 to 4 for however long?

18 A. Oh, I see. Well, it's my understanding that that's the
19 schedule. So I don't know how that works when we show up at 6:30.
20 But we're not allowed to show up before 6 because of the ops
21 manual, the ops specs.

22 Q. Okay. So when you're trying to determine the adequate
23 routes, what method are you -- are you kind of going back to 8 and
24 24? How are you determining required routes per regulations?

25 A. Yeah, you know what, it just never comes up in this

1 particular operation.

2 Q. So you fly in both the Beaver and the Otter. How does the
3 switch between them work? Do you fly multiple aircraft a day?
4 When you start in the Otter, do you stay in the Otter, and the
5 same with the Beaver? How often do you bounce between the two?

6 A. Usually, you're in the same airplane all day long. It can
7 change. I've switched from one to the other in the middle of the
8 day occasionally but rarely.

9 Q. What about the day of the accident? Were you just in the
10 Otter?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. Have you noticed any -- when you do switch back and
13 forth, any negative transfer performance-wise: Oh, I forgot, I'm
14 not in the Otter; it doesn't perform -- you know, the Beaver
15 doesn't perform like that? How are the performance differences?

16 A. No, I have not noticed a problem, to answer that one. The
17 performance differences going to the Beaver is planning the climb
18 a lot closer because it's got a lot slower climb. And I don't
19 know, going to the Otter, I can't think of anything particularly.
20 That kind of lands and takes off on the number, by the numbers.

21 Q. You mentioned that the passengers don't have mics on the
22 headsets. What about the front right passenger, is there a mic on
23 his headset that's sitting right beside you, or no?

24 A. No, there was not. Some of the airplanes have them sort of
25 left over from a check flight or an exclusive flight, so-called,

1 but generally, there are not, no.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Sathya?

3 BY DR. SILVA:

4 Q. Okay. Just a little more -- I'm curious about the
5 differences between the Beaver and the Otter. Can you highlight,
6 when you're doing the transition, what were the main things that
7 you -- that are different when you switch between the two?

8 A. Well, for me, the main thing that was different was docking,
9 because the Otter does have reverse pitch and the Beaver doesn't.
10 And the Otter, once you shut the PT-6 down, it would take a while
11 to start it, where the Beaver can pretty much be started
12 instantly. So approaching the dock takes a little practice as far
13 as when to shut the engine down, when to pull it into beta to stop
14 the airplane. The two airplanes are quite different in that case.
15 So, to me, that was the main thing.

16 Q. Okay. Do you remember the last time you went to Steamboat
17 prior to the accident?

18 A. No, I don't.

19 Q. How would you characterize your workload that day, for that
20 flight?

21 A. I'd consider it a pretty light workload day.

22 Q. In what way?

23 A. Well, as opposed to the Misty flight tours the day before,
24 briefing passengers on what they're looking at, listening to the
25 tape playing and talking in between the tape, and things like

1 that. There's a lot more talking going on as opposed to just
2 flying along.

3 Q. Do you prefer one kind of flight over the other?

4 A. Not really. I've been enjoying both this year.

5 Q. Can you describe what the CFIT training was like when you
6 went through it this year?

7 A. Well, yeah, actually, it was pretty thorough. This was with
8 Adam. Again, my memory is not a hundred percent, but we did some
9 things in, I think in Thorne Bay where we get to takeoff because
10 the weather in the pass out of Thorne Bay was way down. So he
11 said, okay, well, that counts, that's good. So he pulled it up a
12 little bit so that I could takeoff, and then you put it back down.
13 So I think I turned around then.

14 And then I think we did it even again, maybe, where the
15 weather got bad as I got out into -- around the little island and
16 back out to the straits. And then I think we switched to, maybe
17 to Rudyerd Bay and the Misty Fiords. And we did a couple of turns
18 there, maybe through the narrows going to the head of Rudyerd,
19 something along those lines. I'm a little hazy on where the haze
20 was there, but we did a few things around Rudyerd Bay, also.

21 Q. How was the flight with Clark afterwards? Did you say you
22 had a flight with --

23 A. Oh, for CFIT?

24 Q. Yes.

25 A. Well, okay, that was at altitude, as I recall, 2,000, 2500

1 feet or so. And I forget when exactly I had the foggles on, but
2 we had to do unusual attitudes with the foggles. And then the
3 CFIT in the Otter was just a simulated place. I don't think we
4 were actually in a valley. I'm not sure because I had the foggles
5 on when he said, okay, do your turn -- or I'm sorry, go with your
6 procedure. And so, I did the turn.

7 And he actually had me descend, as I recall, back over water,
8 and this is up Carroll Inlet, and do the descent and set up for
9 the glassy water landing. I don't even remember if we touched
10 down on the glassy water or did that as a go-around.

11 Q. Did you get any feedback from him or Adam regarding the CFIT
12 flights, sessions?

13 A. I really don't remember. I'm sure that he debriefed me.

14 Q. When you're loading/unloading cargo, is that you actively as
15 the pilot, or do they have people doing that, the loading and
16 unloading?

17 A. Well, both.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. See, I loaded suitcases and things here for Steamboat, which
20 is pretty common, and the young guys at Steamboat unload and load
21 the plane, which is normal. And then we come back to the airport
22 dock, they have young guys over there that will unload the
23 airplane for me.

24 Q. Do you recall whether during the accident flight kind of how
25 the seas were? Did you have an option of landing in the water if

1 you couldn't make it through the pass?

2 A. Yes. Well, on that particular route there are so many
3 islands to block waves, or the seas, I'm guessing. I mean,
4 there's just not very much fetch at all for the seas to build up.

5 Q. So that day --

6 A. It would almost always be okay. There are places in the
7 straits out here where it would be a really bad idea to land. And
8 every once in a while wind and seas are coming into Steamboat and
9 a couple of other places that would prevent landing into the bay.
10 I've never experienced that myself.

11 Q. During the accident flight, did you ever consider landing in
12 the water, waiting it out?

13 A. No.

14 Q. And the other question that I had was, can you talk through
15 your decision making on how you decide whether to turn left or
16 right for the escape maneuver?

17 A. Well, it depends on what you're doing at the time. So, in
18 this case, I felt like I was closer to the valley wall on my left.
19 Whether I was or not, as I say, I was completely unclear on my
20 position. But yeah, it depends on what you're doing. If you're
21 going into a place where you want to look to the left and you
22 might be over to the right, take a peek, and if you don't like
23 what you see, then you're ready to turn. Something along those
24 lines.

25 Q. And regarding -- you can point it out on the sectional, too.

1 Where is the last point along that route that you'd say you had
2 confidence in where you were?

3 A. Oh, okay. Well, I'd say Dog Salmon drainage.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So, let me see.

6 Q. Dog Salmon.

7 A. (Indiscernible) river, so yeah. Yeah, I saw the Dog Salmon
8 drainage right here.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So right about in there someplace.

11 Q. Okay. Was that off to your left?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. If you could change anything about your job, what
14 would it be?

15 A. About my job?

16 Q. Um-hum. Anything you could change.

17 A. I love my job. I'll leave it at that, if that's okay.

18 Q. Sure. Have you ever gotten any pressure from passengers or
19 people on the ground to complete a flight or to take a flight, not
20 necessarily here but maybe at some of the other bases?

21 A. Oh, not really. I've heard of tourists complaining because
22 they can't go to the Mistys and you kind of go, what are you
23 thinking?

24 Q. Right.

25 A. Local people understand. Some of my -- say people going to

1 Point Baker, Port Protection, going up there, up the straits,
2 they'll say, where are we? Well, this is Coffman Cove. They'll
3 say, I don't like Coffman Cove, that's where we always turn
4 around. And so that sort of thing.

5 Q. I see. Okay.

6 A. Which I've done.

7 DR. SILVA: All right, I think that's it for me.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay, Matt?

9 BY MR. RIGSBY:

10 Q. Just two.

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. In either Promech and Taquan, have you ever had an FAA
13 inspector do an en-route inspection with you, do you recall?

14 A. I don't recall ever having that. I've been ramp-checked a
15 couple of times. I don't recall the actual --

16 Q. While you're here at Taquan?

17 A. Both.

18 Q. Both? Okay. Also, do both aircraft have a checklist, in the
19 Otter and the Beaver?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. Are you a checklist person? I mean, just -- I mean,
22 there's no --

23 A. Not too much.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Not too much.

1 Q. You're more of a commit to memory and do it type man?

2 A. Yes. If I work out a flow like in an airliner.

3 Q. Sure.

4 A. A flow and then maybe confirm on a checklist, yeah.

5 Q. Okay. You kind of call and confirm yourself, in your mind?

6 A. Yes.

7 MR. RIGSBY: That's it.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Brad?

9 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

10 Q. Just a couple of questions. So, with respect to the Chelton,
11 do you feel that the terrain features, the avionics or the
12 graphics display is adequate? Or do you use any personal device
13 of your own to help with situational awareness, or you basically
14 rely on the Chelton and then just looking outside?

15 A. Well, my main thing is looking outside. I feel like I've got
16 to see. And I do not consider the Chelton particularly reliable.
17 Sometimes they switch off at 90 degrees or just go to the blue
18 screen, or don't show a moving map at all. So I'm really -- you
19 could say I'm out of the habit of looking at it.

20 Q. How often would you say you have any one of those glitches
21 you just mentioned? Is it often enough to --

22 A. Actually, pretty seldom.

23 Q. Pretty seldom?

24 A. Pretty seldom.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. But it happens.

2 Q. Okay. And just my last question is with respect to the risk
3 assessment process. Do you think it's effective in identifying
4 and mitigating risk, this process here?

5 A. I do. I think it's a way of kind of getting your attention
6 to say I should pay attention to this, it's not going to be a
7 blue-sky type of flight, high-altitude, blue-sky flight.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I'll be looking, yeah. You know, it goes along with all of
10 the other stuff, the cameras and so forth.

11 MR. SIPPERLEY: Okay, that's all I have.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Mike, do you have any questions?

13 MR. O'BRIEN: No questions.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Mike, is there anything else that could kind
15 of help us out, anything you'd like to add as far as what
16 happened, anything that can give us a little bit more insight into
17 the event that we haven't covered here already?

18 MR. HUDGINS: Well, I guess not. I think we got the high
19 points. If you do come up with something else, let me know.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Sathya, you have one more?

21 BY DR. SILVA:

22 Q. Yeah, I just wanted to follow up on the checklist aspect.
23 What's the company's policy on the use of the checklist? Is that
24 something they advocate? Is that something that you don't get
25 feedback on?

1 A. Well, what we're talking about, there's two ways of running a
2 checklist, which is like doing it by memory and confirming, or do
3 it item-by-item. And there's different checklists that should be
4 done different ways. But as far as I know, the way I do it is
5 okay.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I do a scan and then confirm.

8 Q. You've never gotten any kind of feedback from the company
9 regarding how they would want it to be done?

10 A. No, not that I know of, no. I know that the right thing to
11 do is, obviously, to look at the checklist. And if I can make
12 sure that I look at the checklist, even if I've done things
13 already, then as far as I know, that's acceptable.

14 DR. SILVA: Okay. Sorry. That's it.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right. Thank you, Mike.

16 DR. SILVA: Thank you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thanks, Mike.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: We appreciate it.

19 MR. HUDGINS: Sure.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: So we are off the record at 10:08.

21 (Whereupon, at 10:08 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Michael J. Hudgins

ACCIDENT NUMBER: ANC18FA053

PLACE: TAQUAN AIR, KETCHIKAN, AK

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Lisa Fuerstenberg
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T

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OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

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Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: CHUCK PERKINS

APPEARANCES:

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

BOB RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. Perkins)

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I N T E R V I E W

(12:36 p.m.)

MR. WILLIAMS: We're on the record at 12:36.

DR. SILVA: Welcome, thank you for agreeing to talk to us. I'm Sathya Silva, I work with the NTSB, I am a human performance investigator.

MR. PERKINS: Okay.

DR. SILVA: So, Shaun and I are working together to really piece together what happened in conjunction with the FAA. And I'll let them describe what their roles are here in relation to enforcement as well.

So, we'll start with introductions. So, Shaun?

MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams, I'm the operations group chairman for the NTSB based out of Anchorage. Like Sathya said, we're working together trying to figure out, I'm looking at the operational side and kind of the circumstances and facts that could have led to the accident.

MR. PERKINS: Um-hum.

DR. SILVA: Matt?

MR. RIGSBY: I'm Matt Rigsby out of the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation out of D.C. Strictly here for the safety end of it, there's no enforcement that we can do as a result of anything, you know, that's said in here.

MR. PERKINS: Um-hum.

MR. SIPPERLEY: And Brad Sipperley (indiscernible) from

1 Fairbanks.

2 MR. PERKINS: Um-hum.

3 MR. SIPPERLEY: I'm the investigator in charge for the FAA
4 side.

5 MR. PERKINS: Okay.

6 DR. SILVA: All right. So, again, the purpose of this
7 investigation is safety. We're not here to assign blame,
8 liability, fault, anything of that said. That said, we are a
9 public organization, so we can't offer any confidentiality or
10 immunity as well.

11 MR. PERKINS: Um-hum.

12 DR. SILVA: This interview is being recorded and what will
13 happen is the recording will be transcribed and a copy of that
14 transcription will become available on our public docket. So,
15 it's the transcription, not the audio recording that will become
16 public.

17 You are entitled to have a representative sit here with you.
18 Can you speak up for the record?

19 MR. PERKINS: My representative with me.

20 DR. SILVA: Okay. Who is your representative?

21 MR. RICHMOND: (Indiscernible).

22 MR. PERKINS: Bob Richmond, Bob Richmond.

23 DR. SILVA: Okay. As we go through this interview just
24 remember you're the expert here. We all come with our own
25 backgrounds, but we're here to learn from you. So, keep that in

1 mind. If you have any questions regarding what we're asking, feel
2 free to stop us and ask for clarification. If you need a break
3 also, feel free to ask it's pretty informal in that sense. And if
4 you don't know the answer to something, I don't know is a
5 perfectly good answer. Any --

6 MR. WILLIAMS: For, one thing, just make sure because it is
7 being recorded that you speak verbally instead nodding or anything
8 like that, just so the recorder can pick it up, please.

9 MR. PERKINS: Okay.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Thanks.

11 DR. SILVA: Great. Any questions before we start?

12 MR. PERKINS: No.

13 DR. SILVA: Okay.

14 INTERVIEW OF CHUCK PERKINS

15 BY DR. SILVA:

16 Q. Can you state your full name, please?

17 A. Charles Norman Perkins, III.

18 Q. Okay. And can you run through a brief background in terms of
19 your aviation experience? Kind of where you started and how you
20 got here.

21 A. I started here in Ketchikan in 1996. I've worked for
22 multiple operators, worked a little bit in Juneau, worked a little
23 bit in Anchorage as well, but this has been home base.

24 Q. So, you started flying in Alaska? Is that what you said?

25 A. Um-hum.

- 1 Q. So, how much time do you have total?
- 2 A. About 10,400.
- 3 Q. Okay. Is that all in this area?
- 4 A. About 85 percent.
- 5 Q. Okay. Are you IFR current?
- 6 A. No.
- 7 Q. Do you recall when the last was that you were current?
- 8 A. Current, 2002.
- 9 Q. Okay. What were you doing at that point?
- 10 A. Getting recurrent.
- 11 Q. Okay. Was that with a specific operation?
- 12 A. No, it was just on my own.
- 13 Q. Okay.
- 14 A. My family lives in Vermont, so I went up with a flight
- 15 instructor during a winter break.
- 16 Q. Um-hum. What other companies have you worked with in this
- 17 area? In Ketchikan?
- 18 A. I worked for the original Taquan Air, run by Jerry and Candy
- 19 Scudero from '96 through the end of '99. 2000, 2001 I worked for
- 20 Kevin Hack, operator of Promech Air. And then I was absent and I
- 21 went to Anchorage and Juneau and then I returned in 2007 worked
- 22 for Promech Air, change of ownership to Marcus Sessoms and Ken
- 23 Dole, and I worked there '07, '08, '10, '14, '15.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. 2016, I came over to Taquan when former Promech Air was

1 dissolved and people and assets were reacquired by other
2 operators. So, I worked '16, '17, '18 here.

3 Q. What's your formal title?

4 A. Pilot.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Line pilot.

7 Q. Do you fly both the Beaver's and the Otter's?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. How much time would you say you have in the Otter?

10 A. 4,000 plus.

11 Q. Do you fly outside of work?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Um-hum. When was the last time you flew outside of work?

14 A. Last October.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I have a Cessna 180, I flew it from Vermont where it was in
17 storage and it's for sale now in Pierce County.

18 Q. Here? Okay.

19 A. Washington, so it was a quick cross-country trip.

20 Q. Yeah. In the summer, do you also fly recreationally while
21 you're working here?

22 A. I used to years back.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Having a wheel plane in seaplane country doesn't make a whole
25 lot of sense, weather is marginal and you get the idea.

1 Q. Okay. Understand. Let's see, were you flying the day of the
2 accident?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. Can you run through, from the point that you came to
5 work, from when you landed after, after the other aircraft had had
6 the accident, can you run through what you were doing, thinking,
7 looking at? Just from the very beginning.

8 A. I was asked to put together a synopsis of the flight, and it
9 was four pages, that I forwarded.

10 Q. Okay. Who did you send that to? The --

11 A. You have a copy right here.

12 DR. SILVA: Okay. Let me see this. (indiscernible) this?
13 We got that?

14 MR. WILLIAMS: I think we have it. Just going to brief --

15 BY DR. SILVA:

16 Q. Yeah, no, we can, we can, we'll take a look at this, but
17 again, if you can start from the beginning there and we'll ask you
18 follow-up questions at the end for clarification.

19 A. Okay. Because that was done the day after --

20 Q. Okay. Do you -- uh-huh.

21 A. -- it's going to be probably --

22 Q. That's understood.

23 A. -- a little more accurate.

24 Q. Okay. And we have that on the record.

25 A. Okay. So this is going to be a very brief --

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. -- version. We were going to Steamboat. Normally that's a
3 6:15 departure. We fly from here across Clarence Strait, across
4 Prince of Wales Island to the west side of Craig/Klawock Airport,
5 about 15 minutes past the Steamboat Bay.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. It's a fishing lodge. Pick up their clients, their fish
8 boxes, their personal belongings, suitcases and fly from there
9 back to the airport. Here at Ketchikan, they're looking to make a
10 flight departure. Normally there's several planes that go, the
11 lodge accommodates roughly 16 people, so by the time you get, you
12 know, 16 people, fish boxes, and luggage, you need multiple
13 airplanes to do that.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. I was one of three Otters doing that trip and I went out; the
16 weather can sometimes be a little challenging in the morning
17 because of the temperature dew point spread. I've flown around
18 here a lot. I have preferred routes I like to work. I'm given
19 liberty to do that and so I went Sulzer on the way out. Because
20 the weather was fairly decent, I didn't have to go through Hetta
21 Inlet and Hydaburg, it was simply Sulzer direct down Deer Bay.
22 And from there, went past waterfall and out to the lodge at
23 Steamboat Bay. Actually I take that back, I do so many flights is
24 why sometimes it's hard to reflect.

25 Q. I understand.

1 A. Okay, that day was decent enough that I ended up going by
2 Craig, not waterfall, I went by Craig. The weather was good. And
3 then from Craig it was pretty much a straight line to Steamboat.

4 Q. Okay. Did you still go through Sulzer Pass (indiscernible)?

5 A. It was near that location. The weather was better that I did
6 not have to go through Sulzer.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I could cut the corner and skip over the mountains.

9 Q. Okay. Do you recall what the ceilings were that day?

10 A. No.

11 Q. No? Do you remember what altitude you were flying into the
12 (indiscernible)?

13 A. No, I fly 6 days a week and I've done hundreds of flights
14 since then. I'd have to go back to the paperwork --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- that you have to be able to give you accurate information.

17 Q. Okay. Okay. So you got to Steamboat, what happened after
18 you left Steamboat?

19 A. Load up my passengers, let's see, I actually had fish boxes
20 and I had three passengers inbound. Two were going to the
21 airport. One was a lodge employee that was coming to Ketchikan.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. And so, it was bring the fish boxes and the luggage and those
24 three passengers back to town.

25 Q. Um-hum. Where were you in the line of aircraft that were,

1 that were going to Steamboat?

2 A. I was the first one.

3 Q. Okay. Do you recall what route you took on the way back?

4 A. Yes, I departed Steamboat Bay and I headed towards Craig.

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. The weather was looking like it was deteriorating some, so I
7 chose to go stay over water and went from Craig to Waterfall and
8 then from Waterfall, from there toward Hydaburg. And if the
9 weather was bad, I would end up going past Hydaburg and then drive
10 up Hetta Inlet but I didn't have to do that. The weather was the
11 most challenging was by Waterfall and once I got just a few miles
12 past Waterfall it opened up nicely. I could go right to Hydaburg
13 at 10 miles plus vis and from there I could right up Deer Bay
14 which cuts the corner and drops you into Hetta Inlet. And then
15 once in Hetta Inlet, you can go up to Sulzer Passage or Sulzer
16 Portage is what it was officially called and even have to do that.
17 Sulzer was open. I wanted to make the quickest flight to town, so
18 you're always following the straight line, magenta line. And so,
19 once I was near Deer Bay, I was already tuning in for my Chelton
20 to direct Vallenar Point, you know, outside of Ketchikan.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And I basically just follow the magenta line. I had good
23 ceilings and good vis.

24 Q. Um-hum. Do you remember any radio calls from the accident
25 pilot that day?

1 A. Yes. There was a, I was monitoring Sunny Hay, Ketchikan
2 flight service on 120.9. The pilot Mike was discussing with Sunny
3 Hay that he was driving up Klawock Lake, the weather was
4 deteriorating and he was making a turn. So he turned back towards
5 Klawock. That route wasn't working for him, I was monitoring
6 120.9 because I thought there might be some questions and I can
7 pass along what I'm seeing as a pilot to another pilot because of
8 their receiver being on top of Sunny Hay Mountain. And so, I
9 passed on that the weather is good here and I'm going back via
10 Hetta Inlet and cutting over to Polk Inlet and its good vis and
11 ceilings.

12 Q. Okay. Did the accident pilot respond to that? Do you know?

13 A. I don't believe so. It was just a call in the blind on Sunny
14 Hay radio.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. When I heard their conversation.

17 Q. Did you, do you recall giving a flight assessment? Doing a
18 flight risk assessment form before that flight?

19 A. It's frequent, it's normally a standard practice before we
20 fly.

21 Q. Okay. How do you use that form and the information on it?

22 A. Have you looked at our form?

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. Okay.

25 DR. SILVA: Do we have a blank one? Well --

1 MR. SIPPERLEY: (Indiscernible) dig one out.

2 DR. SILVA: Thanks, Brad.

3 MR. PERKINS: Okay. So there was, Mike O'Connor had asked me
4 for the form that I had. This looks like Mike Hudgins writing
5 here. But basically it says, it's highlighting areas of potential
6 risk and then assigning a number and then the number corresponds
7 with certain types of actions. Whether it involves a management
8 persons signoff before you, before you fly.

9 BY DR. SILVA:

10 Q. Okay. So how do you, as a pilot, use that form? Do you fill
11 it out? Do you use the information specifically on it?

12 A. The form is filled out by dispatch. My job is basically to
13 review it and then sign. Obviously, the higher the number or
14 you're looking at the boxes of where potential risks would be. We
15 have very experienced dispatchers.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I've worked with them many, many years. But, it's still a
18 piece of paper. The most important thing is what you're looking
19 out the window. Conditions change. This is just a point in time
20 before you launch that flight.

21 Q. Um-hum. Have you ever gotten a risk assessment and then
22 decided that it was too, it was too liberal and you needed to
23 cancel the flight? Or wanted to be more conservative?

24 A. No, I have no issues with the risk assessment forms or with
25 how it's being handled.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I rely more on personal experience.

3 Q. Okay. So have you ever, in any instance, have you had to add
4 any numbers to this? Have you had to change any of the input that
5 you've been given?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Do you think that you, do you feel like you could per
8 policy?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Do you have any training on the form itself and how to use
11 the form?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. What does that training look like?

14 A. It's discussed during new pilot hire. In the spring we have
15 lots of new faces that come on. We ramp up with more people
16 during the summer season and this is a topic that's reviewed and
17 Mike O'Connor's the one who is directing it. The form, how it's
18 used, who's filling it out, what our job is, how long they are,
19 you know, kept on record.

20 Q. Okay. Does the company have a safety program?

21 A. Which one?

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. There's lots of safety programs.

24 Q. Can you describe them for me?

25 A. S-1 forms.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And say, anonymous reporting of safety hazards, operations,
3 maintenance issues. Those are right down by the breakroom.
4 George Curtis, we've met many times and emphasized if you see
5 things, fill out an S-1 form so that we can address it.

6 Q. Um-hum. Have you ever filled one out?

7 A. Many.

8 Q. Okay. Can you give some examples of the kind of issues that
9 you may have reported?

10 A. Usually for me it's more dock related because that's kind of
11 the location I work. It might be, you know, a fuel hose that's
12 showing abrasion. It might be an oil tank, a waste oil tank
13 that's getting near full. It's basically a way of communicating
14 with other folks in the company who would be addressing those
15 issues.

16 Q. Um-hum. So what happens once you submit the report?

17 A. They're collected by management and reviewed.

18 Q. Have you, do you get feedback regarding the status thereof or
19 if it's been fixed or, as the reporter?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. How does that usually come?

22 A. More often than not, it's like hey I got your S-1 form, we're
23 working on that area, just wanted, you know, follow up with you as
24 we complete that issue. For me, the biggest thing was involving
25 fuel hoses and nozzles.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And the fueling system and so, the hose has been replaced,
3 the nozzles been replaced.

4 Q. Okay. Have you submitted any safety issues relating to
5 safety of flight?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Many times it's, paperwork sometimes gets tossed in corners,
9 ends up in a file folder. Most often for me, I find the best way
10 is just go directly to my supervisor.

11 Q. And who is that for you?

12 A. My chief pilot, Mike O'Connor.

13 Q. Um-hum. And how is he to work with?

14 A. Excellent.

15 Q. How would you describe the safety culture here?

16 A. Very good.

17 Q. What's your favorite part of working here?

18 A. No pressure to complete flights.

19 Q. If there is anything that you could change about your job,
20 what would it be?

21 A. I like working here. I don't really have anything I'd want
22 to change.

23 Q. So you've seen, throughout your time in and out of Taquan,
24 you've seen quite a spread of operations between, you said 1996?

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. And now. How has the company evolved, in your opinion?

2 A. The ownership from '96 was a different owner. That company
3 ceased to exist for the most part by the end of 1999.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. They'd gotten too big and there was finance issues and so it
6 was dissolved. The company was resurrected, and I guess this
7 involves insurance companies and finance companies, I'm not an
8 expert on that. But Brien Salazar and father resurrected it.

9 Q. Yeah. Okay. And then you joined 2016, so that's 2 years
10 ago?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. When you check weather before a flight, what are you looking
13 at and what are you looking for?

14 A. I check weather before I even leave the house.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I have numerous apps on my cell phone and so I use those for
17 determining weather. I'm looking at webcams. I'm looking at
18 TAFs, METARs. I'm looking at just an overall weather for
19 Ketchikan and comparing maybe with other cities, you know, what's
20 it doing in Juneau? What's it doing in Prince Rupert? And I'm
21 just trying to get the big picture.

22 Q. Um-hum. So what are you assessing the weather for?

23 A. Whether we're going to launch.

24 Q. Okay. And what are you looking for to make that decision?
25 What information?

1 A. Winds.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Ceilings, (indiscernible), visibility.

4 Q. Okay. Do you have a cutoff for any of those? For go/no-go?

5 A. Me personally, yes, but it's not something I can put in

6 numbers.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Depends on the route. If you're over water, you have more

9 options. If you're going over, if you're trying to cross Prince

10 of Wales, you're going to want higher ceilings. You're going to

11 want better visibility. Each location's going to have certain

12 parameters that are going to be red flags that would make that

13 decision not to go.

14 Q. Okay. Does the company have prescribed minimums?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. What are those?

17 A. It varies whether you're going over land or over water.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. They're more conservative for going over land.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Versus over water. I have no issues with the company's

22 safety culture. Years back, they used to be a little bit more

23 aggressive, not with this company, but going back 20 years.

24 Things have gradually tightened and become much more conservative.

25 And it's just been an evolution.

1 Q. Um-hum. Do you know what the minimums are for the company
2 (indiscernible)?

3 A. Well, ideally 500 and 2 is kind of your rock bottom, but
4 ideally that's not used. We're looking for higher minimums than
5 that.

6 Q. Okay. Do they have a number on top of that? Or are you
7 familiar?

8 A. You would need to discuss that with O'Connor and dispatch. I
9 have a certain set of numbers I'm looking for, but really a number
10 is just a number. I'm looking at, I want to look at a webcam. I
11 want to see multiple webcams in order to develop, is this weather
12 that's going to move in and become a problem for trying to return
13 the flight. This is something that's very much a concern in the
14 morning and late flights when your temperature dew point spread is
15 either opening or closing. And so, you can't throw one number and
16 say this is a go or no-go, it's like what type of day is it, you
17 know.

18 Q. Um-hum. How would your personal visibility minimums change
19 based on your destination or your route?

20 A. A lot involves precipitation. Are you, do you have clear
21 weather? Do you have light rain? Do you have rain fog? Those
22 variables will make you either want higher ceilings, or are going
23 to make you want to stay over water. Again, it's not, you can't
24 put one number on it. You have to kind of look at the big picture
25 and then build your risk assessment on that. And the more

1 experience you have, you're going to feel more comfortable maybe
2 with a little bit tighter risk than someone who has never flown
3 here who is just flown up from Georgia to work here for their
4 first summer.

5 Q. Um-hum. Can you expand a little bit on the different types
6 of precip and how that changes your decision-making?

7 A. Well I could write a book on this. You don't want
8 (indiscernible).

9 Q. Briefly.

10 A. Sometimes it depends on, rain fog is my biggest issue.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Forward visibility is more of an issue with certain aircraft
13 than others. And so, I mean whether I'm driving a Beaver, whether
14 I'm driving an Otter, that's a factor that comes into play.

15 Q. Okay. Which would be more conservative in that, in that
16 case? The Beaver or the Otter?

17 A. The Otter.

18 Q. Okay. Let me see, how do you use the TAWS system?

19 A. I spent 3 hours with you folks in 2015, TAWS was a big topic.
20 Unfortunately, we keep revisiting the same topic and refuse to
21 move forward and say the system doesn't work appropriately for
22 what it's intended to be used for. I do not use it, it's in
23 inhibit mode. It gives too many false alarms. We are not, we are
24 taking an IFR system that's meant for flying above terrain and now
25 we're using in a situation in amongst the terrain. There are too

1 many warnings that are completely irrelevant. And so, as any
2 piece of equipment, if it becomes a continuous nuisance, it'd be
3 like you driving down the road and dealing with a car with a
4 seatbelt warning chime constantly (indiscernible) going off. Even
5 though I'm wearing my seatbelt, I'm doing everything I'm supposed
6 to be doing, the chime keeps going off. You're going to begin to
7 ignore it and it's not a tool at that point. It's actually
8 becoming a hindrance.

9 Q. Does the company have any policy regarding the use of the
10 TAWS? As far as you know?

11 A. The company has a policy in certain situations, but it's not
12 one that's really heavily focused on. For me, I've used the
13 system from 2005. I'm using a piece of equipment that was
14 designed and first operated in 1999. We're trying to use a piece
15 of equipment that is pushing 20 years old, that we know has had
16 issues over that time and we keep revisiting whether the switch is
17 in the enabled or disabled. We've had 20 years to assess this.
18 It doesn't work.

19 Q. Um-hum. You mentioned that there are certain scenarios the
20 company encourages use. What scenarios are those?

21 A. I will let you work with Mr. O'Connor on that topic.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. It's not something that I've really been forcibly encouraged
24 to have to use.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I've been doing this a while. I have what works for me.
2 I've got a track record, I haven't broken planes and that's how I
3 operate.

4 DR. SILVA: Okay. Great. Shaun?

5 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

6 Q. So I think I remember you're interview from 2015 discussion
7 about the TAWS, things like that. We made recommendations
8 following that to help with group safety. We've made them again
9 recently with another accident out in central, southcentral
10 Alaska.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. How would you change the TAWS to make it effective? To make
13 it an effective and useful tool for the environment that you're
14 operating in?

15 A. I like that question. Right now, you have nothing but a
16 piece of equipment that says terrain, terrain, pull up, pull up.
17 If you've got a 3,000-foot mountain in front of you and your
18 airplanes going to climb at 500 feet a minute, you're going to
19 smack the mountain even though you're doing what the tool says to
20 do, pull up. You know, we can see what happened, you know, a
21 month ago when you pull up, you still hit the mountain. Whether
22 it's enabled or disabled.

23 So we really need a tool now that would say you're pointing
24 at a mountain and you've got clear area left and right, turn the
25 aircraft 90 degrees now. Something short, simple, direct, that a

1 pilot's going to realize, danger ahead, turn, you know, and give
2 me a heading if you want. Give me a, whether you want me to turn
3 30 degrees, 90 degrees, 180 degrees. I'm not a designer of this
4 stuff, but I think some place having pull up for the mountain is
5 not effective. If it, if we could avoid hitting the mountain by
6 turning to the right or to the left then that would be a helpful
7 tool.

8 Q. Okay. Sorry, I'm just trying to think about that, how that
9 would, how that would look, how that could work. Okay. What
10 about the Chelton unit?

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. Talk to me about, a little bit about the, how could that
13 be --

14 A. It's a computer essentially. And as computers have evolved,
15 we get more pixels on our screens and we get a higher definition.
16 The Chelton does not have the detail that you can find on newer
17 equipment. The equipment has got a faster CPU's, higher memory
18 cards. You're working with a box that's got certain limitations
19 in its design, other than fully replacing it.

20 Q. So have you flown an aircraft with TCAS? Are you familiar
21 with kind of TCAS oral alerts and things like that?

22 A. No. My aviation limitations are pretty much this is, you
23 know, an Otter, Twin Otter is the biggest thing I've flown.

24 Q. The reason I'm asking is, on a TCAS it won't do turns. It
25 does climb, in the sense of Climb, Climb Now, that sort of thing.

1 It can actually peg what that climb rate would be.

2 A. Um-hum. I think your approach is good, but the problem is
3 that we don't have two big turbo fan engines that have tons of
4 thrust. If I take a Beaver and I've got six big people in it, if
5 I get 200 foot a minute climb rate on a certain day, especially a
6 hot day or a day where we're climbing in the mountains, our fix
7 isn't going to be efficient when we don't have the performance
8 numbers that the aircraft can deliver.

9 Q. Right. And I understand that. Kind of what I'm getting at
10 is if it, if you had something, because I'm trying to think about
11 what technology is already out there that could at least be
12 somewhat beneficial. And I know a Beaver cannot do 2,000 feet a
13 minute in the middle of summer in the mountains.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. We know it's not going to happen.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. But would something like that almost show you that, you know,
18 almost that you're too close, that you're not going to be able to
19 make that climb. To kind of trigger the, that's not going to
20 work, I need to turn. Or do you think that would be --

21 A. I'd prefer a more detailed map.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Versus equipment saying to, that performance, the engine
24 performance isn't going to map what we need.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. So if we can simply keep me from hitting something, and
2 starting off a map. I use ForeFlight as my backup. Now that's my
3 insurance policy. The Chelton is old. The system has crashed over
4 the time and it doesn't matter who will operate her. It's dated
5 and something that is on an iPad, an iPhone. You got, look at the
6 memory you have in these phones nowadays, that's the direction as
7 far as how to make things safer, is better mapping and having that
8 moving little icon of your airplane on that map can be much more
9 helpful.

10 Q. So when you fly your personal aircraft, like Sathya asked you
11 about outside flying and things like that. So you use ForeFlight
12 and use your iPad, do you use, does it do the synthetic vision as
13 well? Do you have that set up where you can look at your iPad and
14 see that?

15 A. No. I'm pretty old-school as far as technology, as far as
16 that being the most current. The synthetic vision I don't have a
17 whole lot of faith in, from what I've seen. Certainly it's been
18 overemphasized with the Chelton. It doesn't work to my liking.
19 The mapping is good, but it's not detailed enough. So let's put
20 it this way, I flew my own personal plane, with a Garmin296, a
21 Garmin430. What I use, I use my iPhone. It gets more detail.
22 Look on those maps on those earlier pieces of Garmin equipment.
23 They're not detailed the way I can get on an iPhone.

24 Q. Okay. I think what I'm referring to as synthetic vision is
25 on ForeFlight, on the iPad, it'll actually be essentially you in

1 the airplane and it shows the mountain peaks. It's not a flat, 2D
2 display. It's a 3D, so you see the peaks around you.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Clear of weather and you can see kind of if you're going to,
5 you know, what's actually in front of you, not on a flat panel
6 like the Chelton. And it's highly detail, high resolution.

7 A. Um-hum. I'm not very skilled with the ForeFlight. I use and
8 operate in T-2 dimensional mode. What you're mentioning is great,
9 something I need to look into for enhancing my own knowledge base,
10 but I would think that down the road would be my suggestion as far
11 as how to make pilots more aware of their position.

12 Q. Perfect. Thank you. Yeah, that's what, that's what I just
13 trying to figure out different ways, different suggestions that we
14 could do in different recommendations on trying to improve the
15 software. Because like you said, we are seeing some of the same,
16 some of the same events with the same software. And it doesn't
17 matter if it's Chelton, if it's Honeywell, if it's Garmin. It
18 doesn't matter.

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. There's still areas for improvement.

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. And so, that's why, you know, that's why we're here. That's
23 why, although you've, you know, you've written the statement,
24 things like that, we can gain a lot more information by still
25 being able to sit here and talk to you about it. Like Sathya

1 said, you're the expert around here flying around this stuff. We
2 all have different backgrounds.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Mine is not flying in southeast Alaska. So it helps paint a
5 picture and it helps us see the big picture and improve it.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: So thank you. That's all I have right now.

8 DR. SILVA: Okay. All right. Matt?

9 BY MR. RIGSBY:

10 Q. Okay. Chuck, are you a check airman with, or senior pilot?

11 A. I mean, they gave the title senior pilot. Basically we have
12 a lot of new faces that come in and while I'm not necessarily a
13 check airman, I'm basically a person that would accompany a new
14 pilot as a right seat and provide guidance.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Look for this rock, you know, avoid this ridgeline, should be
17 switching over to this radio frequency at this location, those
18 situations.

19 Q. Sure. How long do you spend with a new pilot doing that on
20 average?

21 A. This is a difficult question because this is something I was
22 just introduced to this spring.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And so, we had essentially six pilots that I would be asked
25 to fly with on their initial operating experience. I was not a

1 check airman, I did not evaluate them to hire or to sign them off
2 as good to go.

3 Q. Okay. Would they be signed off on a flight to go somewhere
4 that you haven't gone with them?

5 A. I don't have a good answer for you on that.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Mike O'Connor would say, hey, Chuck, I'm going to give you
8 Forest today. We'd like to -- we've got a couple of mail flights,
9 go with him to Met, go with him to Hollis, and then later on have
10 him kind of take you over the George Inlet lodge like he would be
11 doing if he was doing the first of his tours during the beginning
12 of the cruise ship season. We're trying to use scheduled mail
13 flights as a way of getting these people up to speed.

14 Q. Okay. You mentioned something about the reporting points.
15 Are those, do you know, are those something that you do on your
16 own or are they a company required reporting point as you're
17 transiting to an area?

18 A. I need a little more information.

19 Q. I think you said you had, as you're approaching the pass,
20 does the company require you to call in at specific points on a
21 specific route?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Flight following is to make contact with company every 30
25 minutes.

1 Q. Every 30 minutes. Okay.

2 A. Now, certain airplanes have more powerful radios, or they
3 work better than others and so, as a result when you're flying, if
4 you're flying low, you're going to need to make a call sooner than
5 30 minutes. Because if you're at low altitude and you're a long
6 ways, your signal isn't going to hit the repeater for the company
7 to be able to talk to you. So 30 minutes is the rule, on the
8 other hand, if you're flying low on a weather day you might only
9 be able to get 15 minutes out and have to make a call because if
10 you went 30 minutes, they will never hear you. So use your
11 judgment based on your altitude and the weather day.

12 Q. Okay. Does the company provide, like going to Steamboat, is
13 there a specific route that you fly? Or are you allowed to just
14 kind of go where you think the best way that you determine to go?

15 A. Preferred is Harris River, but if Harris River route is not
16 workable --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- then there are other alternatives that we use, and it's
19 based on what the pilot is seeing.

20 Q. Okay. Do you know, does the company write that down anywhere
21 or train that, I guess if you're bringing a new pilot on?

22 A. It's not something that's in written form. (indiscernible)
23 write something, you immediately put blinders on.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. You need to think sometimes outside the box. Weather is

1 fluid, so you can't just say we're only going to go this route.
2 So the idea is the newer pilot is going to talk to the chief
3 pilot, he might talk to a senior pilot, they would coordinate with
4 dispatch, and there'll be a consensus of multiple people of
5 experience that will help determine that decision on which route
6 you take.

7 Q. Okay. Have you ever had, has operational control ever been
8 delegated to you?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Who typically has operational control for the company?

11 A. Mike O'Connor and Mike O'Brien and Clark Hassell. Basically,
12 Mike O'Connor is in charge, but if he is out or if he is on
13 vacation, then one of the other two will step in and they are
14 assigned in advance.

15 Q. Okay. You mentioned, and I just want to make, you mentioned
16 that you kind of have your own personal minimums but they're not,
17 you don't have a set number like 1200 feet you're not going to, is
18 that correct?

19 A. I'm still limited to the company's minimums.

20 Q. All right. Okay.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. When was the last time, have you ever taken a flight with an
23 FAA inspector onboard?

24 A. Yes, but I don't recall the most recent time.

25 Q. Okay. Was it this year? Last year or just don't remember?

1 A. I had, the closest I would have was a U.S. Forrest Service
2 inspector for determining, as far as us being carded for hauling
3 U.S. Forrest Service employees. Because we have a check airman
4 here that can go out and do our annual flight checks, I've not
5 dealt with an FAA check airman. But when I worked in Anchorage in
6 2002 and when I worked in Juneau in 2005, because those companies
7 that I worked for did not have a check airman. They were smaller.
8 There was an FAA designated person that we had to ride with.

9 Q. As far as here, have you seen an FAA inspector here in the
10 last year?

11 A. Tom Tilson would have been the most recent one.

12 Q. Can you recall when that was approximately?

13 A. A year and a half ago.

14 Q. Okay. Do you ever do any instruction with the CFIT training
15 device, the (indiscernible)?

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. Okay. But have you been to that training?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yes, it's just across the parking lot here. We have a room
21 that that equipment is provided with in Baldwin, in Medallion.

22 Q. Okay. About how long is that training?

23 A. Normally, it's a minimum is an hour and there are two pieces
24 of equipment in there that are used. One is more of a VFR which
25 would be for like a new people to be able to see the route. Let's

1 say they wanted to Misty Fjords, you can actually fly it. It's
2 kind of like a Microsoft flight simulator program. And the other
3 program is where there's a instructor who is able to dial you in
4 precipitation, clouds, lowering your ceilings and kind of build
5 scenarios in which the applicant is being asked to use their pilot
6 judgment and determine to turn around or to change their course.
7 Don't hit the mountain, that's the idea.

8 Q. Okay. And how often do you get that training?

9 A. It's generally done in May.

10 Q. Okay. Have you had it in the airplane? Like during a check
11 ride?

12 A. Yes, Clark Hassell did it with me in a Beaver check ride.
13 This would be 2 years ago that we actually, well we do it each
14 year, but it was 2 years ago was much more in-depth and Clark
15 Hassell did a good job on that. We'd be taken up in pairs, you
16 have a view limiting device and you basically drive up a valley,
17 it's like okay you just -- (indiscernible) is saying you just went
18 dark.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. All right. What are you going to do? And so, okay reduce
21 power, hold your altitude, look at your heading, make 180-degree
22 turn, fly back out in the opposite direction towards safe
23 visibility.

24 Q. Okay. And I think you've answered this, but I just want to
25 make sure. On the ForeFlight and your iPhone, you take that on

1 company flights too, not just your private?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. So you use that as part of your --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- decision-making process?

6 A. Most pilots, particularly the younger generation, you want to
7 use an iPhone, go find a younger kid. We've got quite a few young
8 ones.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. And they're very, very savvy. I mean, it's brought up in all
11 the schools now. You know, as far as using these cell phone-based
12 apps and I, I bought an iPad specifically because I went to a
13 flight school to, I was working on my CFI, I saw all these young
14 guys running around this stuff and I was out of the loop on it.
15 It's like yeah look at this and it was like holy shit, I need to
16 get me one of these things. So I went out and, plunked down the
17 600 bucks and bought an iPad 2. It was the most modern thing
18 then. Well, what I found was there are limitations. You can't
19 charge it in the airplane. I need a wall plug, 120. And so, I was
20 a little discouraged with it; and then I saw when I was buying a
21 new cell phone and I saw ForeFlight you could get on an app. I
22 bought that and now it's like, don't leave home without that. You
23 know, I always have a charging cable, it's your insurance policy.

24 MR. RIGSBY: I think that's it for me.

25 MR. PERKINS: Great. I'm going to have to bolt here shortly.

1 DR. SILVA: Brad?

2 MR. SIPPERLEY: Okay. Oh, I'm going to take my time. No,
3 add pressure to the flame.

4 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

5 Q. You and I have had a lot of talks already, so I'm not going
6 to ask you a bunch of questions I've already asked you. Before
7 you did provide a very detailed thing. I do you, you know, we
8 were talking about synthetic vision.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. I do think it's something we need to all look into. I do, I
11 use my iPad with synthetic vision on ForeFlight and I think it's a
12 pretty effective tool. You say you use, you take your own
13 personal phone as a backup, as kind of insurance. Do you think
14 that should be something that everybody has with them on these
15 type of flights with the operation you do?

16 A. Most, I can't really say whether it should be mandatory or
17 not. You know, you've got people here, there's late 60's, 70-year
18 old's that are flying airplanes and you've kids who are 22 years
19 old. So you've got a different spread as far as how tech savvy,
20 you know, and it's kind of a generational thing. I'm kind of
21 smack dab in the middle. But I think for a pilot, any modern
22 pilot who's reading publications has got to have been exposed to
23 these phone apps. I mean, if you went down to the breakroom, your
24 going to find two AOPA pilot magazines sitting there on the shelf
25 with my name on it and I'm flipping through and looking at the

1 stuff. So I would think if you're a pilot, you would probably
2 have already gone out and bought one of these things and have it
3 with you. Most of us run around with iPhones specifically because
4 it was the first thing to come out with the ForeFlight.

5 Q. Okay. As far as the CFIT training on the simulator over
6 there, how long has that been in place that you could do the CFIT
7 on that simulator over there? And is it, has anything changed
8 since day one?

9 A. Good question. I was first introduced to it when I was
10 flying for Promech. And we would come over, we had to get a key
11 from this company because they had the key to the building there
12 and we would go upstairs, we would log in, there's an hour meter
13 thing there, and basically it was an hour that you would play with
14 it. And the machine has not changed at all since then. We are
15 using the same equipment that I was 5 years ago or so when I was
16 first introduced to this.

17 Q. So as far as, we're talking about technology keeping up.
18 There's been nothing added to that training other than a visual,
19 the screens going gray, I need to 180 degree turn to do a
20 reciprocal heading and that's it. There's been no, no upgrades to
21 that.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. Okay. Let's see, on the day of the accident, prior to
24 departure, do you remember identifying any weather risks yourself?

25 A. No, because it was good weather as I was heading over there.

1 You know, you look at Harris River. Harris River you need, you
2 have a greater distance if you're over land. In Sulzer Portage ya
3 got 70 seconds. I timed it one day. So if I got ceilings that are
4 going to be questionable, and I want to stay over water, you know,
5 got a runway underneath me the whole time. I'm going to take the
6 area that is going to be the least risk.

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. And so that's why I go there. And I having flown here 20
9 years ago when we were having logging, I was always going through
10 there.

11 Q. Okay. So you mentioned in the morning, morning flights
12 usually were difficult because of the dew point spread. When
13 you're looking for that as one of the identified risks on your
14 form, the risk assessment here, is it you're just looking at your
15 departure? Or, you know, where that is along your route?

16 A. You're looking along your route, but again this is just a
17 piece of paper with some ink on it.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. This is, there's more focus being put on this and not enough
20 on the pilot looking at the webcams and basing it, his decision on
21 those.

22 Q. Okay. So do you remember on the day of the accident seeing,
23 noting any precipitation on the webcams prior to departure?

24 A. The Harris River was the red flag for me. And yet, because
25 you looked at the camera and you're looking to see where dogleg is

1 and whether you're going to be able to drive down to Klawock Lake.
2 Then you're going to be looking at the Klawock camera which is
3 where the airport is over there which is looking towards the
4 dogleg from the opposite direction. And the dogleg is where you
5 have an S curve and that's your choke point. So you want to see
6 it from each side. You look at those cameras and then you say
7 nope, that's not looking too healthy. But, I got a straight-line
8 right through Sulzer Portage and I got water and I only got 70
9 seconds over land. I can go direct whole flight over water other
10 that one 70 second spot.

11 Q. Okay. So was there an precip? I mean, and the reason I'm
12 asking this question, we have, we have a form that's, you know,
13 identifies, supposed to identify risk before we go. So we say
14 okay we just kind of sprung load for these things, but it doesn't
15 seem to be effective.

16 A. Precipitation does not seem to an issue I recall from that
17 day.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It's cloud heights, and forward visibility would be the
20 issues. Not whether we had rain or not. Because I didn't have, I
21 didn't have rain during that flight.

22 Q. So let me ask you this question then. So this form, in its
23 current format here, if you had any input into improving this,
24 could you find any way to improve this? I know, I understand what
25 you're saying, this is just a piece of paper, it's ink on paper,

1 but it's, you know, the purpose of the tool is to help you kind of
2 identify things before you go.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Is this helpful in its current format and with the
5 information it's asking?

6 A. It's helpful for me because when I see a larger number, it's
7 going to make you start asking questions. The lower the number,
8 the less risk involved. It's basically kind of queueing you,
9 okay, yeah add something, maybe I need to take a second look at
10 it. I need to look at another camera, I need talk to another
11 pilot. I need to kind of figure out if it's like a wind issue,
12 how big a load am I moving out, is it a confined area. Again,
13 it's a piece of paper then we go to many, many, many different
14 locations to have variables. But it is a good tool in the sense
15 that it makes you ask maybe a second question, look at that camera
16 one more time, ask another person who's got more experience or has
17 been there. Look at your weight and balance and decide, you know,
18 does this plane have enough oomph to be able to move this load or
19 should we be considering an Otter on a day when we got higher
20 gusty winds versus a Beaver that's going to be fully loaded.

21 Q. So on the day of the accident, do you, in your opinion, was
22 weather a factor in the accident?

23 A. It was not for me.

24 Q. Not for you. Okay. Let's see, so your go/no-go has never
25 been based on this?

1 A. No.

2 MR. SIPPERLEY: I don't think I have anything else.

3 BY DR. SILVA:

4 Q. Do you have a safety person in the company?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Who is that?

7 A. Mike O'Brien.

8 Q. Okay. You also mentioned that you look at weather on apps on
9 your phone. Do you know what apps those are?

10 A. Yes. This one here.

11 Q. Okay. Do you know what it's called?

12 A. It's tied in with AOPA.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Oh, did it go blank on you?

15 Q. No, no, no.

16 A. Okay. It's FlyQ InSight.

17 Q. Okay. Okay.

18 A. But you also got the Weather Channel, you know, that's the
19 first thing I'm looking at. You know, what's the percentage of
20 rain I'm going to have potentially today?

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. You know, if it's going to be heavy rains in the afternoon,
23 let's try to get these morning flights out early.

24 Q. And when it comes to CFIT avoidance, when you're doing this
25 maneuver, what information do you use in order to decide which way

1 to turn in a CFIT avoidance?

2 A. Good question. I've never really thought about that.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I don't have a good answer. I don't have an answer without
5 really thinking about that question and pondering how I would
6 respond to it.

7 DR. SILVA: Shaun, do you have anything?

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Just one real quick. You mentioned, as far as
9 Clark Hassell being one that could have operational control. Do
10 you remember a time when he's had it?

11 MR. PERKINS: Last winter.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Last winter? Okay.

13 MR. PERKINS: Yes, probably other times, you know, it's not
14 something that's usually in my role as a line pilot. But Mike
15 O'Connor was on vacation, Mike O'Brien was on vacation last
16 winter. I mean, we bust our butts all, you know, hard all summer
17 and Clark was the most senior person.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: That's all I have.

19 DR. SILVA: Do you have anything else, Matt?

20 MR. RIGSBY: No.

21 DR. SILVA: Brad?

22 MR. SIPPERLEY: No.

23 DR. SILVA: All right. Thank you.

24 MR. PERKINS: You're very welcome.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: So we're going off the record at 1 --

1 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

2

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Chuck Perkins

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA053

PLACE: TAQUAN AIR, KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

DATE: AUGUST 15, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Sonya M. Terry
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T *

OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN *

Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018 *

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Interview of: MIKE O'BRIEN

APPEARANCES:

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY
Federal Aviation Administration

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

MIKE O'CONNOR, Chief Pilot
Taquan Air

ROBERT RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. O'Brien)

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:53 p.m.)

MR. WILLIAMS: All right, so the recorder is started --

MR. O'BRIEN: Okay.

MR. WILLIAMS: -- at 3:53. So Mike, thank you for coming here --

MR. O'BRIEN: Sure.

MR. WILLIAMS: -- and talking with us today. I'm going to introduce myself. My name is Shaun Williams. I'm the operations group chairman at NTSB based out of Anchorage, Alaska.

You know, I'm here -- my purpose is we're looking at the operational aspects and factors, and how they contributed to the accident and what could have been there, and what we can do from that and learn from it in order to prevent it from happening again.

MR. O'BRIEN: Okay.

MR. WILLIAMS: NTSB is the federal agency in charge of determining probable cause of transportations accidents and promoting safety. We're not a part of the DOD or -- excuse me, the DOT or the FAA, and we have no regulatory or enforcement powers.

So we've got a few people here. We're going to go around the room, let everyone introduce themselves and let you know, kind of, their role in the investigation and why they're sitting here.

DR. SILVA: Sathya Silva. I am the human performance

1 investigator on this case, so we work very closely with operations
2 together, kind of, to look at decision-making, factors that
3 influenced decision-making, corporate culture, things like that.

4 MR. O'BRIEN: Cool. All right.

5 MR. RIGSBY: Matt Rigsby out of the FAA's Office of Accident
6 Investigation. I'm up here assisting Brad, the FAA coordinator on
7 the accident. Just to let you know, we're from the safety end of
8 it. We don't have any -- no enforcement action can stem from
9 anything you say here during this interview, so it's -- feel
10 comfortable.

11 MR. O'BRIEN: Oh. Very well. Thank you.

12 MR. SIPPERLEY: And I'm Brad Sipperley out of Fairbanks.
13 (Indiscernible) the last time I was here and -- yeah, I'm the
14 investigator in charge for FAA side.

15 MR. O'BRIEN: Okay. Great.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Mike O'Connor. I'm here as the NTSB party rep
17 and chief pilot for Taquan Air.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: So do you have any objection to any of us
19 being in here?

20 MR. O'BRIEN: No, sir.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So today, we'll be using a tape
22 recorder to record the interviews, which will be transcribed. The
23 transcription, not the audio recording, will be made part of the
24 public docket. Okay?

25 The purpose of the investigation is safety. It's to

1 determine probably cause and prevent, like I said, the accident
2 from happening again. Our role is not to assign fault, blame or
3 liability. This interview is just part of the fact-finding phase
4 of the investigation. We're still early on in the investigation.
5 We cannot, however, offer any guarantee of confidentiality or
6 immunity.

7 The way we'll run this, each of the group members will have a
8 chance to ask questions. I'll start and then we'll kind of go
9 around the room, most likely two rounds. Seems to be what's
10 worked out so far. We'll ask questions one at a time. No one
11 will be interrupting or anything like that, so take your time and
12 answer to the best of your ability.

13 MR. O'BRIEN: All right.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Please answer all the questions to the best of
15 your recollection. If you don't understand a question, ask to
16 have it repeated or explained. If you realize you misstated or
17 want to change an answer, please do so. Since we are using a tape
18 recorder --

19 DR. SILVA: I got it.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: -- you -- be verbal, not necessarily the
21 visual cues like nodding your head or shrugging.

22 MR. O'BRIEN: Understood.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: You are entitled to have one representative of
24 your choosing. Is there someone you would like to have as your
25 representative?

1 MR. O'BRIEN: Mike's fine.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

3 MR. O'BRIEN: Is that --

4 MR. RICHMOND: He means me too.

5 MR. O'BRIEN: And I (indiscernible) too.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: So who is your representative? Do you have
7 one?

8 MR. RICHMOND: I'm your representative. Mike sits here as a
9 party rep (indiscernible).

10 MR. WILLIAMS: He has to answer.

11 MR. O'BRIEN: Oh, okay. Okay.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: So who is your representative?

13 MR. O'BRIEN: This gentleman right here. Robert Richmond.

14 MR. RICHMOND: Nice try, Shaun. It was a pretty good try.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: And Bob, you may direct Mike not to answer a
16 question or request a short break to confer with him. However,
17 you may not answer a question for him.

18 MR. RICHMOND: I haven't done that for anybody else, so I'm
19 not going to start now.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: And do you have any questions before we begin?

21 MR. O'BRIEN: I don't think so.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

23 INTERVIEW OF MIKE O'BRIEN

24 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

25 Q. So for the record, if you could please state your name and

1 job title?

2 A. Michael Francis O'Brien, senior pilot, Taquan Air.

3 Q. And what certificates and ratings do you hold?

4 A. I have an airline transport certificate with multi-engine
5 land privileges and commercial privileges for all the others: the
6 single-engine land, single-engine sea, multi-engine sea.

7 Q. About what is your total time?

8 A. Roughly 11,000 hours total time.

9 Q. Okay. In Alaska, about how much?

10 A. I'm going to guess about 7000.

11 Q. Okay. Can you just give me a general overview of your
12 background?

13 A. Yeah, sure. I went to college, graduated in 1994 from San
14 Jose State University. Flight operations, minor in business
15 administration. I received my private pilot certificate in 1991,
16 I believe. Instrument rating in 1992, commercial certificate in
17 1996. Certified flight instructor certificate -- forgot to
18 mention that -- 1998. My seaplane rating, single-engine sea and
19 multi-engine sea in 2001. My Lear Jet 3555 type rating and an
20 airline transport pilot certificate in 2004. And then returned
21 here in 2007 to work for Taquan Air.

22 Q. Okay. So you said you returned here.

23 A. Yes, I worked one summer in 2001 in Juneau. Company called
24 Wings -- it was, it was Wings of Alaska at the time. And then
25 went back to California to fly the jets. That's where the jets

1 came from. And I came back here in 2007.

2 Q. So who did you fly the jets for?

3 A. Company called SP Aviation out of Hayward, California.

4 Q. Okay. And then you came back here in 2007?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. Okay. And "here" as in Taquan or "here" as in Ketchikan?

7 A. Here as in Taquan. And Ketchikan, of course.

8 Q. Okay. So what are your, what are your duties and
9 responsibilities?

10 A. Well as a senior pilot, obviously I fly the line. I also
11 kind of act as a safety manager. I, kind of, back up the chief
12 pilot and director of operations in, kind of, managing the general
13 safety culture of the company.

14 Q. So what is a normal day in the life of Mike when you're at
15 work?

16 A. I come in in the morning, preflight my airplane, fly the line
17 as required. If there's time, I might assist the chief pilot, and
18 maybe making sure all the airplanes have updated weight and
19 balance information or some such. I'm also kind of known as -- I
20 also work on the airplane ropes. It's kind of one of my
21 specialties. So little chores like that, sometimes I will do,
22 time permitting, the flight line.

23 Q. So how does the safety manager thing kind of work into your
24 daily routine?

25 A. Well I'm -- like I said, I'll back up Mike or the DO. And

1 for instance, like, making sure planes have proper paperwork and
2 some -- and such like that.

3 Q. So were you flying the day of the accident?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Which aircraft were you in?

6 A. I believe it was -- would have been 409PA.

7 Q. Okay. Walk me through what you remember from that day, from
8 the time you got in until the time you learned of the accident.

9 A. The time I got into work?

10 Q. Yes.

11 A. Let's see. I believe I did write a report about this. Came
12 in. Went through the preflight procedures. Obtained weather
13 information, determined that it was acceptable at the time most
14 likely to go. Collected our passengers. Departed. We took off.
15 I believe the route I took was past Hollis over toward Control
16 Lake, and then over by Big Salt and then past Craig to Steamboat.
17 The weather was, I would say, slightly above marginal at the time.
18 And it looked like it was improving. So we continued to
19 Steamboat.

20 Mr. Hudgins in 52B left prior to my going to dock, because
21 only one Otter could fit there at a time. I went in, deplaned my
22 passengers. Planed my returning passengers. Left Steamboat and
23 noticed the weather had risen in the direction I was going in, so
24 I continued.

25 I remember hearing on a frequency -- and unfortunately, I

1 don't remember which frequency it was -- that Mr. Perkins in 959
2 had returned via the Hydaburg area, and that Mr. Hudgins was going
3 to try to follow him after failing to go through the Harris River,
4 failed to make it through the Harris River. I observed the
5 weather was acceptable and improving in the direction that I had
6 come, which was Control Lake and Big Salt. So I continued in that
7 direction.

8 As I neared Caamano, I heard from Mr. Hudgins that he was
9 coming through Sulzer Portage. At that time, I switched our
10 frequency and initiated the contact with flight service station
11 and the arrival procedure as normal. And then, as I was taxiing
12 from the airport -- after dropping my passengers off over to
13 Taquan, I heard that I was needed in dispatch immediately. And
14 that's how I came to learn about the accident.

15 Q. Okay. You said prior to departure, checked the weather,
16 found it acceptable at the time most likely. Do you remember --

17 A. Well we always have that most likely frame of mind. Because
18 even if the weather -- if the people say there that it's good and
19 the cameras say that it's good and we think it's good here and the
20 forecast says it's going to be good, we're always in that mindset
21 to turn around if necessary. So I'm always in that most likely
22 mindset. Or maybe, if it's not likely, then chances are we might
23 not go anyway. So I kind of look at that as my mindset anyway.

24 Q. So did you talk to the folks out in Steamboat?

25 A. I believe I talked to my dispatcher, who had talked to the

1 folks out in Steamboat.

2 Q. So when you spoke with the dispatcher, did you fill out a
3 risk assessment?

4 A. I believe so, yes.

5 Q. So do they fill out the risk assessment, or do you fill out
6 the risk assessment?

7 A. They do, and we observe it and we sign it. They fill it out.

8 Q. Do you go back and verify what's on there on your own, or do
9 you just kind of essentially take their word for the weather and
10 things like that?

11 A. I look and see. I kind of give it the -- give it a -- I scan
12 it and look at it.

13 Q. Do you remember what the weather -- you said it was slightly
14 above marginal at the time.

15 A. It was -- the worst spot weather-wise was between Craig and
16 Steamboat, and it was perhaps 500 to 700 feet broken visibility
17 about 3 to 5 miles.

18 Q. So do you have any operational control here at Taquan?

19 A. Occasionally I do. Frequently when Mike is not around,
20 they'll defer to me.

21 Q. What does that entail?

22 A. Basically it entails making a decision about sending other
23 people out into weather, as well as maybe taking a flight myself.
24 But it basically involves a pilot -- a senior pilot -- making a
25 decision about general operations.

1 Q. Was there any specialized training that you went through
2 prior to being told that, you know, as a senior pilot, now you'll
3 have -- you can take operational control at times?

4 A. I was given some training involving, perhaps, check airmen,
5 check pilot.

6 Q. Are you a check airman?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Are you also a flight instructor for the company?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. So when you have operational control, if you see
11 something, are you able to terminate the operation? Do you need
12 to check with the DO? How does that work?

13 A. I have authority to terminate the operation.

14 Q. Okay. So do you fly on the days that you have the
15 operational control?

16 A. Occasionally.

17 Q. So what happens when you're on a flight?

18 A. Can you rephrase that?

19 Q. If you have been delegated operational control and you're
20 flying, then who has operational control? Do you still have it
21 while you're out of touch?

22 A. I may still have it, but I'm still communicating with
23 dispatch trying to, kind of, assess weather (indiscernible) areas
24 that I cannot see. For instance, if I'm on a flight into the
25 west, I might still be curious about what people have to say about

1 the weather to the east, for instance.

2 Q. Do the flight followers have any sort of operational control?

3 A. I don't believe so.

4 Q. Are you familiar with Mr. Hudgins? You guys know each other?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Can you -- tell me a little bit about him. Is it just a work
7 relationship? Do you guys have an outside friendship?

8 A. Mostly just a working relationship. I've probably had a few
9 dinners with him.

10 Q. Did you talk to him on the day of the accident?

11 A. I do not remember.

12 Q. When there's multiple aircraft going to the same location, do
13 you guys sit down on a -- normally and chat about, okay, here's
14 what I'm thinking, here's what I'm seeing, how are -- you know,
15 kind of bounce ideas off from each other?

16 A. Yes. We do that.

17 Q. You just don't recall if you did that on this --

18 A. No, I don't recall. I do recall talking to him on the radio,
19 but, like, not as just that day, that morning prior to --

20 Q. Remember what you were talking about on the radio?

21 A. I think I asked him where he was, and that's when he told me
22 he was coming through Sulzer Portage.

23 Q. Can you describe the company's approach to managing safety?

24 A. Extremely vigilant.

25 Q. Okay. Can you elaborate?

1 A. I can say that I don't think I've ever worked for a company
2 that was more conscious of safety. I think I can say that, if I
3 had not started working for this company, I may not have lasted on
4 Alaska. In other words -- I guess -- I don't know. I don't want
5 to elaborate too much over the reputation of other companies, but
6 I do appreciate the fact that I work for a company that is very
7 adamant about turning around, about not taking off in the first
8 place, about -- I can say that I've never, ever been made to feel
9 like I failed for not completing a mission, for instance.

10 Q. I want to talk a little bit about the -- your role as a
11 flight instructor and a check airman.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. Pull up the (indiscernible) I want to look at here so I can
14 discuss it on an intelligent level here with you. So walk me
15 through CFIT avoidance training, how that, how that's done by the
16 company.

17 A. Well we do initial and recurrent simulator training. We do
18 training in the air as well, about maneuvers to escape -- to avoid
19 IMC and to escape inadvertent IMC.

20 Q. Okay. What are those procedures?

21 A. The simulator training, I believe, is 2 hours for initial,
22 one hour for recurrent. We take them to known locations in the
23 sim. We have them avoid a situation as the visibility drops. We
24 have them avoid a situation as the ceiling drops. We have them
25 make a 180 solely by reference to instruments. And we do very

1 similar training also in the air. We have a maneuver where we
2 have them turn around under the hood, under the view limiting
3 device. And then we have them descend as if they were trapped in
4 IMC, trapped in the weather. And the proper safe landing
5 procedures if necessary and avoidance of terrain and use of the
6 GPS.

7 Q. Are there any standards for the 180-degree turn?

8 A. As long as it's not -- as long as it's under control, serious
9 -- the outcome of the maneuver never seriously in doubt might be a
10 standard, I would say.

11 Q. Is there a specific banking or anything you're looking for?

12 A. I teach about 20 degrees.

13 Q. Is that in any manuals, as far as what the company --

14 A. I think it's in our training manual.

15 Q. Okay. And then on the check ride, when you do check rides,
16 you do 293(a)s and (b)s?

17 A. I'm sorry?

18 Q. You do 293(a) and (b), the oral and the flight?

19 A. I'd have to look that up.

20 Q. I meant you're a check airman, so you give check ride, right?

21 A. Right. Yeah. So oral and --

22 Q. So you test them on the oral and the --

23 A. Yes, yes, yes. Yes, we do.

24 Q. When you do this, do you use a plan of action?

25 A. I have one. I wrote, I -- just a lesson plan thing, sort of.

1 I based it on the manual and the FARs and the check ride sheet.

2 The 8410, I believe it is.

3 Q. So is it for the oral and -- do you have one for the oral and
4 the flight, or do you just use one?

5 A. It's the whole -- just one.

6 Q. Just one? Okay. It covers both? Okay. So on the check
7 ride form, it lists hood work, recovery from unusual attitudes and
8 the 180-degree turn.

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. With the unusual attitudes, do you take control of the
11 aircraft? Do you let the pilot, kind of, put themselves in one?
12 How do you do that?

13 A. I usually take control of the aircraft. Have them put their
14 head down like this in the hood and all that.

15 Q. And for hood work, what are you -- what do you normally do
16 when you do hood work?

17 A. What do I normally do when I do hood work? I usually will
18 have them -- see, how's it go? I usually start the hood work
19 portion at the check ride with basic maneuvers. And then I'll
20 usually go to unusual attitudes. And then -- I'd have to look on
21 my form to be sure, but I believe that I, kind of, break it into
22 two spots. So I would do it -- the other thing is we'll do a
23 descent, like an emergency landing descent. And then I'll set
24 them up for a potential CFIT. And then have them wear the hood,
25 and then (indiscernible) IMC, and then they have to look down.

1 And then, okay, what do you do? And I wait for their response.
2 (Indiscernible) and I watch them do a 180. And then I say, okay,
3 you're still in IMC; what do you do? Well I start to descend.
4 Okay. What about your terrain clearance? Oh, I can look at this
5 and see the -- I make sure that they're going through the steps
6 that they would have to do to avoid the CFIT.

7 Q. How do you evaluate judgment?

8 A. Oh, this must be a balloon popping.

9 Q. I hope.

10 A. Making sure that they're situationally aware and juggling and
11 prioritizing. For instance, don't hit the Earth. You know, make
12 sure that you're not going to go into a valley instead or
13 something like that. I'll just watch that.

14 Q. What about the TAWS system? How do you teach TAWS? What's
15 the company stance on TAWS and --

16 A. I believe that we have them turn it on. That's one of the
17 things we can do, is have them turn it on if they go into IMC.

18 Q. Where is the switch normally?

19 A. It is just below the Capstone screen, I believe.

20 Q. Well I mean, is it normally in the --

21 A. It's normally off, and there's a reason for that.

22 Q. And that reason would be?

23 A. Is if you fly these airplanes -- well, although the flying we
24 do does require flight closer to terrain than the designers, I
25 think, originally meant, so it becomes a distraction if it's on

1 all the time. For instance, if we're landing on a tour, it would
2 become a distraction on landing.

3 Q. What about the visual aspect of it? On the Chelton display?
4 Were you in an Otter or Beaver?

5 A. I was in an Otter.

6 Q. Okay. So the Chelton display shows terrain and changes
7 colors. Do you --

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. What page do you normally have that on?

10 A. I usually have it on moving map.

11 Q. You have it on moving map page.

12 A. I do. On my default.

13 Q. Are there any limitations with that that kind of -- how do --
14 talk to me about that. Does it seem helpful, the way it displays
15 terrain and things like that? Are there --

16 A. I think so. I think that it's a good backup.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm going to pass it off to Sathya for right
18 now. I'll probably have some stuff come up here in a little bit,
19 so --

20 MR. O'BRIEN: Okay.

21 BY DR. SILVA:

22 Q. Have you flown with Mike before?

23 A. Can you describe what it means to fly with someone?

24 Q. In the aircraft with him, doing a check or instruction or
25 anything along those lines?

1 A. I don't think so.

2 Q. Okay. You said you started here in 2007. Was this before or
3 after the last accident that Taquan had?

4 A. Just before.

5 Q. Just before. How would you say the company has changed from
6 the time you started to now?

7 A. I'd say that at that time it was a very vigilant and safety-
8 conscious company. And I'd say that since then, we've become an
9 even more vigilant and safety-conscious company.

10 Q. Can you give an example of how the company has become more
11 safety conscious?

12 A. Yes. After the first accident, we raised our visibility
13 minimums on tours or in the fjords from 2 miles per FARs to 4.

14 Q. Are there any other examples you can think of offhand?

15 A. I don't think so.

16 Q. Okay. Has there been any changes in procedures or policies
17 since this latest accident?

18 A. Yeah. We are implementing 4 miles visibility as opposed to
19 two any time we're over land, tour or not.

20 Q. Anything else?

21 A. I don't think so. Except that everyone seems a little bit
22 more, just, aware and, I don't know, sobered.

23 Q. How would you characterize morale, let's say, before the
24 accident? I'm sure it's affected by the accident now.

25 A. Refer to my last answer. Just sobered.

1 Q. Okay. What about before the accident? How would you
2 characterize morale around the company?

3 A. Busy but upbeat. But that's, like, any (indiscernible).

4 Q. How often do you fly?

5 A. Two to 3 days a week, 4 to 6 hours a day.

6 Q. Okay. Are you in the office outside of those 3 days?

7 A. Sometimes I am. Sometimes I'm, like I said, doing some more
8 of those chores I was telling you about earlier, but a lot of
9 times --

10 Q. And that's not typically here? Is that --

11 A. It's here. Frequently it's here. And in fact, if -- the
12 more marginal the weather, the more time I spend monitoring that
13 and watching that.

14 Q. Okay. Can you describe in a little more detail what your
15 duties are as safety -- head of safety? I forget how you framed
16 it.

17 A. Let me see if I can give an example. With the last DO, if he
18 had a task that he needed help with -- say, with the Medallion
19 Foundation records -- he might set me to a task and, like -- oh,
20 I'm trying to think of an example offhand. I can't think of one
21 immediately, but usually just backing up the DO.

22 Q. Okay. Do you have any access or do you deal with any of the
23 safety reports that come in?

24 A. Not very much. I've submitted quite a few. And I'm aware of
25 how -- I think I've looked, I've looked at the records a little

1 bit about how we log them, kind of log them in. Every one, every
2 one of them gets logged and looked at. So I know that.

3 Q. What is the nature of the safety issues that you've reported?

4 A. I think it frequently involves passenger safety. Even
5 something -- I don't want to call it trivial, but even walking on
6 the dock, for instance. Well I noticed a board was coming up.
7 It's in this spot; you know, here it is and this is the day I saw
8 it, and stuff like that.

9 Q. How often would you say you file a safety report?

10 A. Me?

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. I'm not sure. Maybe once a month. Maybe more.

13 Q. Do you get any feedback? What happens to it after it gets
14 sent off?

15 A. I know they get logged. And I know that certain of my
16 reports have been responded to and solved within a week or two.
17 Not all of them. And I guess being short-staffed without our DO,
18 that has affected that a little bit. But I'm actually pretty
19 impressed with what happens with most of the reports. It seems
20 like they do want to follow up.

21 Q. Okay. Do you -- do they personally follow up with a reporter
22 if -- I guess, do you know what the (indiscernible) reporter is or
23 --

24 A. I believe that's the policy.

25 Q. Okay. And are you involved, kind of, at all on the other

1 side of the process in terms of resolving safety concerns?

2 A. Not specifically.

3 Q. Okay. Have you had any kind of formal training on safety
4 management, risk assessment, anything along those lines?

5 A. A few years back, we all took a -- several of us took a
6 Medallion TapRoot instruction class.

7 Q. What did that comprise of?

8 A. It was based on the TapRoot system, about how you
9 methodically go through the factors that led up to the problem.
10 And then you can -- it's like -- was like flow charts, and you can
11 decide, okay, this one -- is it this problem or that? Okay, it's
12 this one. Okay, we eliminate those, and so on and so forth.

13 Q. Okay. Do you know if we -- if you have a safety manual at
14 Taquan?

15 A. I believe we do.

16 Q. Okay. Who is in charge of maintaining that?

17 A. The director of operations.

18 Q. Okay. So you mentioned on the day of the accident that the
19 weather was okay to leave. Do you recall what the, what the
20 weather looked like?

21 A. I remember being most concerned about the weather west of
22 Craig, and that everywhere else was much better.

23 Q. Okay. Like, clear VFR. What were there --

24 A. Like, 2000 to 3000 feet scattered or broken. Kind of like
25 how it is out there right now.

1 Q. Okay. Do you remember what altitude you took or what
2 altitude you flew when you crossed over the island?

3 A. I'm going to estimate between 2000 and 3000 feet, and then
4 down to about 500 feet, 500 to 600, when I got to Craig. When I
5 got past Craig. Klawock, I guess, is more accurate.

6 Q. Okay. Was it similar on the way back?

7 A. It was better.

8 Q. Better? Okay.

9 DR. SILVA: So can I use sectional again?

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

11 BY DR. SILVA:

12 Q. So on your route back to Ketchikan, can you just trace it out
13 for me?

14 A. Sure.

15 Q. So we have an idea of what that looked like.

16 A. Let's see. There's Salmon Lake right -- can you see that?

17 Q. Yeah. Go ahead.

18 A. So then, like, I believe my course did something like this on
19 the way out. Across the straits. Don't know what that is.
20 Through Kasaan Bay. And past Sandy Point (ph.) through here. Now
21 I was intending, actually to go -- see, I remember (indiscernible)
22 intending to go through this pass right here and head this way.
23 This is Big Salt over here.

24 Q. I see. So you intended to go --

25 A. That was my intent. But what I was watching was this was

1 actually getting lower as I was watching it. So it was -- I'd
2 call it the typical fast-changing Alaska weather. So I was high
3 enough. Ceiling was good. So I altered course to the right, came
4 this way instead. Came around like that instead. That was
5 isolated. And then down here, got down to about 500 to 600 feet
6 about here by Klawock, and then proceeded this way. Again, most
7 likely, right? Ready to turn around, of course. But then I think
8 this was the worst spot right here that I encountered on the way
9 out. And then I came up to about 5 or 6 miles here, and we landed
10 here.

11 Q. So what were the ceilings that -- around this area when you
12 actually got there?

13 A. Five to 600 feet.

14 Q. Five to 600.

15 A. Something like that. And then once I got -- once I complete
16 the operation at the dock, took off, and basically came back the
17 same way. And as I said, the ceilings here were higher. They'd
18 come up a little bit.

19 Q. They had come up a little. Okay.

20 A. Yeah. And right about here is where I was -- I, kind of,
21 overheard conversations about Mr. Hudgins coming out of Harris and
22 then following Mr. Perkins down this way.

23 Q. Okay. So were you in the same area that he turned back when
24 you (indiscernible)?

25 A. I was more over here, and he was more over here.

1 Q. Okay. So you were a little further north.

2 A. I was a little further north.

3 Q. Okay. Over -- is that Wadley Island (ph.)?

4 A. I'm not really sure. I probably, I probably never call it
5 that, but yeah. In this area, yeah, for sure.

6 Q. Okay. And did you see the weather that he was referring to?

7 A. I could see the -- I couldn't see into it very well. But he
8 was reporting the oncoming like that, and I saw, I saw his mark on
9 the, on the GPS. We have ADS-B, so sometimes you can see other
10 airplanes, so -- and I saw him proceed in this direction down that
11 way, and then I proceeded over here.

12 Q. Okay. So let's say you were faced with a similar situation
13 when -- if you had tried to go this way. How would you have made
14 your decisions to get back?

15 A. Oh, I --

16 Q. What would you have done?

17 A. I wasn't there at that time on that day. But I do make my
18 decisions based on always having an ability to make that turn
19 toward a visual reference that I can see, a.k.a. not the water.
20 Water, particularly calm water, can be difficult to see with gray
21 conditions.

22 Q. Okay. So you're looking --

23 A. I'm looking for landmarks.

24 Q. -- on land. Okay.

25 A. I'm looking for landmass that I can see at all times. Like

1 for instance, suppose this is my landmass over here, and this --
2 okay, visibility isn't so good, so good, no good. I don't like
3 that. I'm turning around. But I always turn around before I lose
4 sight of that landmass. I always try and put myself in a position
5 to turn around before I can't, for instance. So I have no choice
6 but to assume that, if I were in here and I was seeing something
7 like that, I probably would have turned around, come back out,
8 just as Mr. Hudgins did.

9 Q. Okay. Would you have gone south -- made that same decision
10 to go south? Is that a normal procedure?

11 A. I can't answer that, because I don't know what Mr. Hudgins
12 heard from Mr. Perkins.

13 Q. Okay. Because he had come on the other -- he had gone the
14 other way.

15 A. He had, he had come through. I assume that he came down this
16 way like this, then came through like that. That was his path.

17 Q. Have you flown --

18 A. Now I don't know what he saw. And when I was here, I had no
19 idea how Mr. Perkins' weather situation here compared to mine over
20 here.

21 Q. Have you flown through this pass before?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Can you describe, kind of, what it looks like, what altitudes
24 you would fly comfortably? Well let's say the minimum altitude
25 you would fly comfortably.

- 1 A. My personal minimum altitude for flying through there?
- 2 Q. Yeah. If there is company or -- that's fine too.
- 3 A. I like 1500 feet.
- 4 Q. 1500. Okay.
- 5 A. That's what I like.
- 6 Q. Okay. What's the reason for 1500?
- 7 A. Because 1500 feet allows, in my opinion -- you got water here
- 8 and you got water here and you got land in between. 1500 feet
- 9 allows you to either turn around if you have a problem, like an
- 10 engine failure, and land in water. Beyond a certain point, now
- 11 you're going forward. Now if I have an engine failure, I'm going
- 12 over -- I'm going forward to the water over this way. So that
- 13 altitude, in my opinion, gives me enough leeway where I don't have
- 14 to worry about landing in the trees if I had a catastrophe or
- 15 something like that.
- 16 Q. Right. In terms of typical fuel loads, is there any -- oh,
- 17 sorry. Is there any limitation in terms of how far you can
- 18 deviate? Let's say, if you notice that a majority of these passes
- 19 were closed in.
- 20 A. We do usually have typical fuel loads we take over there,
- 21 which are always above what you might call FAR minimums. And on
- 22 days like that, we often take a little more. And we adjust our
- 23 weights accordingly.
- 24 Q. Let's say -- can you give me an estimate on how much extra --
- 25 A. I don't exactly --

1 Q. -- or how much extra time you can fly?

2 A. Well, yeah. We usually equate the number of tanks with the
3 number of hours. I don't remember exactly, but I think the amount
4 of fuel I had that day would have allowed me to fly for 3 hours.

5 Q. Total?

6 A. Total. Yeah.

7 Q. How long does it take to get over to Steamboat?

8 A. In an Otter, I'm going to say 35 to 40 minutes.

9 Q. Okay. Let's see. And a clarification here. You mentioned
10 that the TAWS was a distraction. Can you elaborate on that, on
11 how it was a distraction?

12 A. I think, I think so. On a tour, frequently when we land in
13 the fjords, we're near terrain that sets it off. And so as you're
14 going through your pre-landing flow and your checklist and
15 everything, you're -- it's going, terrain, terrain, pull up, pull
16 up, terrain, terrain, pull up -- over and over and over again.
17 And I don't think the passengers can hear it.

18 Q. Okay. That was my next question.

19 A. I don't think they can hear it.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. But it -- to me, it's like -- you know, and I don't -- and I
22 know a lot of other people feel that way as well.

23 Q. Is there a certain altitude that that happens at?

24 A. I don't -- I'm not quite sure what it is. But there's
25 probably some sort of cue that clicks off, and (indiscernible)

1 that sets it off.

2 Q. So do you typically fly with it inhibited all the time?

3 A. Usually. Again, like I said, if it's different weather or we
4 have to, we inadvertently -- you know, that's kind of the
5 procedure, I believe, is -- what we're implementing is, if it's
6 marginal and you feel like you need it, turn it on. But normally
7 it is off.

8 Q. Have you ever uninhibited it?

9 A. I don't think so. No.

10 Q. Okay. And in terms of the procedure now to un-inhibit it in
11 IMC, where does that step fall within the CFIT avoidance maneuver?

12 A. Toward the beginning of the maneuver, as long as it doesn't
13 take away from your attention in performing the maneuver, as I
14 recall. I think. Yes.

15 Q. When did that procedure take effect?

16 A. I think we were -- I think we implemented this summer. I
17 think.

18 Q. Do you recall training that part specifically?

19 A. No, I don't remember. Actually I don't recall training that
20 specifically.

21 Q. Okay. Did you do CFIT training this season?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. So when you say the beginning of the maneuver, is that
24 -- can you run through again what the maneuver is and where that
25 would fit?

1 A. I'm not sure. Yeah, I'm not sure. Sorry.

2 Q. No. Perfectly good answer.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. How many hours can you approximate that you've flown in
5 Alaska?

6 A. Close to 7000.

7 Q. Are you IFR current?

8 A. No.

9 Q. When was the last time you were IFR current?

10 A. Summer of 2006.

11 Q. Was that prior to coming back up here?

12 A. Yes. Yes, it was.

13 Q. And the last question I have for now is regarding this risk
14 assessment. You mentioned that you scan what the dispatchers give
15 you, or the flight coordinators give you. Have you, have you ever
16 taken what they've given and disagreed with it?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. So you're usually in agreement?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Have you ever had to cancel a flight per your own -- with
21 your own authority as a pilot in command?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. What was that reason?

24 A. Weather was not sufficient for me to feel comfortable
25 launching any planes. The ceiling or visibility. Perhaps winds.

1 Perhaps one destination was good but another was not.

2 Q. Okay. How did the company, the management, react to that
3 kind of decision?

4 A. Complete support from management and dispatchers. Complete
5 support.

6 Q. Do you have any interaction at all with the customers? Not
7 the passengers themselves, but the -- let's say the cruise lines
8 or lodge management, things like that?

9 A. Not usually, no.

10 Q. Okay. So your interaction is purely with the passengers?

11 A. My interactions would be the passengers, dockhands, people
12 like that.

13 Q. Do you -- have you ever felt any kind of pressure to complete
14 a flight from anywhere, whether it's management, passengers,
15 customers?

16 A. No more than that urge to please the customer. But none that
17 was, like, so overt that I felt like I was going to be in trouble
18 or anything like that.

19 Q. Yeah. All right.

20 DR. SILVA: Okay, thank you. I will take a break now.

21 MR. O'BRIEN: Okay.

22 MR. RICHMOND: You want to take a break?

23 DR. SILVA: Do you want to -- how are you feeling? Do you
24 need a break?

25 MR. RICHMOND: Why don't you take 5 minutes? How much do you

1 have, Brad, do you think? (Indiscernible).

2 MR. SIPPERLEY: (Indiscernible).

3 MR. RICHMOND: That clock is (indiscernible) take a quick
4 break.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

6 DR. SILVA: Let's take 5 minutes.

7 MR. RICHMOND: I bill on the hour, and that clock has not
8 moved for an hour and a half.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: They told us to pull the battery
10 (indiscernible).

11 MR. RICHMOND: So yeah. Well this is a problem. You got
12 some extra batteries here.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: So we're going --

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We started at 3:53.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: -- off the record at 4:40.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 4:41.

17 (Off the record at 4:40 p.m.)

18 (On the record at 4:50 p.m.)

19 MR. WILLIAMS: So we are back on the record at 4:50. So
20 Matt.

21 MR. RIGSBY: Okay.

22 BY MR. RIGSBY:

23 Q. Mike, when was the last time that you either flew with an FAA
24 POI or saw the POI here?

25 A. Going to say May of this year.

1 Q. And did you fly with him, or did he observe a check ride that
2 you did?

3 A. I believe he observed a check ride we did.

4 Q. Okay. Did he provide you any direct feedback, to the best of
5 your knowledge?

6 A. I don't remember specifics. I remember it was positive.

7 Q. I'm sorry?

8 A. I remember it was positive, but not --

9 Q. Positive. Okay.

10 A. -- anything specific.

11 Q. Okay. Do you remember his name?

12 A. I believe it was Jon Percy.

13 Q. Okay. When you're out there flying, do you have any
14 additional devices, like an iPad, iPhone, XM Weather, anything
15 like that that you use to assist you? It may not be company
16 provided, but it's your own personal --

17 A. I have a map uploaded on my phone.

18 Q. Okay. Does it have XM Weather or anything like that
19 (indiscernible)?

20 A. Not something I use regularly.

21 Q. Okay. You said since of the time of the accident, they've
22 implemented 4-mile visibility over land. Is that something that's
23 written down or --

24 A. I am not certain about that.

25 Q. Okay. Not certain. Okay. Back to the use of the TAWS.

1 When you're using that as a check airman and for your inadvertent
2 IMC, how -- describe how you use that.

3 A. You know, to be honest, I don't remember a lot using it. I
4 don't remember, I don't remember how it fit into the training.

5 Q. Okay. The preflight risk assessment, did you receive
6 training on that, on how to fill it out and --

7 A. Not how to fill it out. Just how to read it.

8 Q. Just how to read it. Okay. So you have your own personal
9 minimums that you fly by? Maybe not -- that may not meet the
10 company -- that are above the company requirements and the 2
11 miles, 500 feet, 2 miles that you feel comfortable flying at?

12 A. Maybe in a few specific areas, but generally, the company
13 minimums are very high as they are.

14 Q. Okay. And had you flown with Mike before? I think they
15 already asked this, but --

16 A. I believe they did, and I don't think I've ever flown with
17 him before.

18 Q. Okay. You ever given him the -- performed any check rides?

19 A. Don't think so.

20 Q. Back to -- what's your role in the safety realm? You
21 mentioned something about that in the very beginning. The safety
22 -- did you call yourself a safety manager or a safety --

23 A. As I said before, I just tend to kind of back up, with
24 household chores, the DO and the chief pilot.

25 Q. Okay. So you back -- kind of a backup to the DO.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Is that -- who's, who's designated the safety manager?

3 A. Who is designated the safety manager? At present it is me.

4 Q. Okay. Do you have regular safety meetings within the
5 company?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. How often are those?

8 A. I'm going to assume every one to 2 months, I'm going to
9 estimate.

10 Q. Do those include everybody, just the pilots?

11 A. They try to include everybody.

12 Q. Try to include everybody. Okay. Mechanics as well?

13 A. Usually it's pilots, but sometimes other people, like
14 dockhands.

15 Q. About how many check rides are you performing on a, on a
16 season? You said mostly in the beginning.

17 A. Cannot answer that, because this is my first season as a
18 check pilot. So as far as normal number of check rides per
19 season, I don't have that yet.

20 Q. So on those S1 forms that you get and assist with, if you get
21 a report in of one of those that brings it up to your concern, I
22 guess, who would be your first point of contact? Say it's a, it's
23 a pilot issue. Say, passenger reports something to a flight
24 coordinator, somebody like that. Say that a pilot -- they had a
25 concern about a pilot. Who would you take that to? Would they

1 come to you, or would they go to -- would that S1 form -- you
2 know, as a safety person.

3 A. The S1 forms normally go into an envelope that the chief
4 pilot or the DO will empty out and --

5 Q. Okay. Do you recall what your -- on your (indiscernible) on
6 the day of the accident? Do you recall what you had, number range
7 that you had on your preflight risk assessment for the day?

8 A. I do not. I'm sorry.

9 Q. Okay. Do they fill those out for each aircraft, each flight,
10 or is there one for -- was there one preflight risk assessment for
11 all three of your flights since you're basically going to the same
12 area?

13 A. They attach one to every manifest based on the pilot who is
14 doing the flight. Each pilot gets one, usually for each flight.

15 Q. Okay.

16 MR. RIGSBY: That's all I have.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

18 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

19 Q. I'm not going to say I just have one question. Okay, so just
20 a -- I do have a number of things. So where does it identify you
21 as a person that can exercise operational control?

22 A. Those days are delegated by Mike O'Connor, the chief pilot,
23 and it's written on the schedule.

24 Q. Okay. With respect to operational control, what does that
25 give you the authority to actually do? In other --

1 A. Make go/no go decisions for myself and all the other pilots.

2 Q. Okay. Let's see. You said that -- so speaking about the
3 Chelton, you said that it's a good backup of the terrain. A
4 backup to just visual?

5 A. Yes. VFR. Visual flight rules only.

6 Q. Do you know what altitude the water starts -- you know, if
7 you got water in front of you and you start descending, the water
8 starts changing from a blue to a brown or a green or some other
9 color so it starts looking like terrain. Do you know what
10 altitudes that thing starts changing colors at?

11 A. You mean the (indiscernible) --

12 Q. The display. So let's say --

13 A. Oh, the display. Okay. The display.

14 Q. Yeah, yeah, so the Chelton display. So you're descending,
15 let's say, and you got the blue water in front of you. That's all
16 you have, and all of a sudden it starts turning brown. It starts
17 looking like an island in front of you, but it's just water. Do
18 you know what altitude that's at?

19 A. You know what? I don't remember the altitude, no.

20 Q. Okay. I want to clarify one thing. So you said in your
21 statement that you'd heard 52B at one point report he was Sulzer
22 for Dog Salmon.

23 A. Yes, I think -- I believe I remember that.

24 Q. So do you remember the Dog Salmon part. I heard you say
25 earlier today the Sulzer but I just want to clarify that --

1 A. Right. Okay. Yeah, I think I do remember him saying that he
2 was Sulzer for -- see. I remember Dog Salmon. I think the way I
3 understood it was that I thought he was going to go through Dog
4 Salmon. I think that's what I understood.

5 Q. Understood.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. But maybe he did or maybe he didn't say Dog Salmon. Okay.

8 A. I'm pretty sure Dog Salmon was said.

9 Q. So if you report Sulzer, then -- if somebody reports Sulzer,
10 is that -- would you be reporting it at the beginning, at the end
11 of Hetta Inlet? Or what point do you -- typically is -- pilots
12 report Sulzer?

13 A. I don't know where he reported Sulzer. I don't know where he
14 was when he reported it.

15 Q. But is --

16 A. If you want to ask where I report it, I would say -- I'll say
17 -- if I'm here, I'll say I'm entering Sulzer. But only if I'm
18 planning to go this way.

19 Q. So there's no --

20 A. But I don't, I don't know what he did, where he was.

21 Q. Okay. So I'm just trying to figure out -- you know, if
22 somebody reports a point, that means they're at that point and
23 they're going for the next point. So that's -- I'm just trying to
24 get spatially an idea of where -- like, if -- you know, the --

25 A. Yeah, so I don't know, I don't know --

1 Q. -- company standard.

2 A. -- where he reported it, though, so I -- because I wasn't
3 there.

4 Q. With respect to weather, you've flown here for 7000 hours now
5 in Alaska. On this route, do you know of any -- I mean, would you
6 consider Sulzer, that area right there, a choke point for weather
7 at all? Or weather just seems to form there, if it's not at one
8 end or the other? Or any other choke points along your route of
9 flight that typically, that -- if you're going to find weather,
10 you find it there?

11 A. No.

12 Q. No? Okay.

13 A. No, I -- no more than any -- no more or less than any other
14 pass. I know it's a narrower pass, but I mean, specifically, no.

15 Q. Okay. So you said in Sulzer, you know, entering through
16 there, 1500 feet is the altitude you're comfortable with.

17 A. It's a personal minimum that I frequently use.

18 Q. It's a personal minimum. Is there any altitude that you
19 would, if you were going through Sulzer to the west arm here,
20 where you would say, okay, I'm at a point where I'm too low to try
21 the 180 and now I'm committed to going straight?

22 A. Are you asking me if there's a certain altitude?

23 Q. Yeah. Would you, would you say 500 feet here is the -- is an
24 altitude that you would feel is safe to execute the 180-degree
25 turn?

1 A. Possibly.

2 Q. Possibly.

3 A. Again, I don't know. I mean, I --

4 Q. Okay. That's a, that's a fine answer. That's all right.

5 A. Okay. Yeah.

6 Q. Let's see. That was already asked. So the 180-degree
7 maneuver you guys practice and you do in your training, it always
8 ends in a landing with -- from my understanding, from what I've
9 heard, to the (indiscernible) glassy water landing.

10 A. Not sure what other people do. Frequently on my check rides,
11 I'll have them set up a glassy water landing, and then I may have
12 them initiate a go-around (indiscernible) often do a go-around.
13 Sometimes I'll do that instead.

14 Q. But the part of that element of the maneuver after you've
15 made the turn is they're expecting to look for water and do a
16 water, a water landing. That was my understanding from other
17 conversations today.

18 A. In the training? I suppose so.

19 Q. Okay. So if you're making a turn and you see water, it
20 wouldn't be uncommon to say, all right, I'm looking where I want
21 to go. Does that make sense?

22 A. I think so.

23 Q. Okay. With respect to turns, do you train or do you have a
24 preference, left or right turn, when you make it? If you, if you
25 ran into -- in that aircraft, you ran into reduced visibilities,

1 do you look for or train or, you know, expect a guy to turn left
2 or right? Does it matter to you?

3 A. That all depends on which side their chosen reference is. If
4 they're flying along the shoreline, for instance, and the terrain
5 is to the right, then I would go to the right. If it was on the
6 left, I'd go to the left. So it all depends on the circumstances
7 at the time. I don't know.

8 Q. Okay. So then would it be fair to say that you're always
9 keeping a reference? Like, you said you always keep your
10 reference out, so when you turn, you make your turn whatever
11 direction, you keep that terrain in sight when you make your turn.
12 And that's -- so in training, is that, is that what you're looking
13 for too, they keep reference to where they're at?

14 A. Frequently yes.

15 Q. Okay. Okay. Let's see. Asked. Asked. On the day of the
16 accident, would you say there were any related weather risk
17 factors prior to departure, according to dispatch?

18 A. Other related risk factors?

19 Q. Yeah. Do you, do you feel there were any risk factors that
20 existed before you departed on that flight? I mean, based on your
21 risk assessment form.

22 A. I don't think so. No. No. No.

23 Q. You said that the risk assessments that are handed to you are
24 based on each pilot?

25 A. Well there -- each pilot gets one for that flight.

1 Q. Okay, so there's five sections for each one of those risk
2 assessment --

3 A. Yeah. Yeah.

4 Q. One of them is for manpower. And so basically, that's a
5 section that -- you know, is that a section you look at too, to
6 make sure that -- for your recurrency and all that? I'm just --

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Do you evaluate the manpower section of the risk assessment
9 form they hand you?

10 A. Not in big detail, no.

11 Q. No, okay. Okay. All right. Let's see. Asked it. How do
12 you train estimating in-flight visibility, or evaluate that?

13 A. We try to emphasize known points. Like it's -- there's this
14 many miles from here to here. You can see this far; you have this
15 much visibility. We also train -- have them back up that with the
16 mileage rings on the Capstone where appropriate.

17 Q. So is that something you do at a -- if you're in a reduced
18 visibility weather situation, is that something you expect pilots
19 to do, is to put that visibility range on the screen so it's
20 always displayed?

21 A. Not necessarily. At that point, it's mostly eyes outside and
22 then estimating the known points.

23 Q. Okay. Okay. Let's see. Already asked you that and asked
24 you that. Do you believe that the risk assessment process
25 currently in effect is effective in identifying mitigating risks?

1 A. Yes. Yes.

2 Q. With respect to the weather you have available -- too, for
3 these routes you flight -- do you use the area forecast as part of
4 your --

5 A. Yes, the terminal area forecast. Yes, I do.

6 Q. Not the, not the terminal forecast. The only terminal
7 forecast would be for Ketchikan.

8 A. Ketchikan. Yeah.

9 Q. I'm talking about the area forecast, you know, the FAA, the
10 National Weather Service puts out. Do you, do you use that at
11 all?

12 A. Sometimes. Sometimes. I usually use more localized weather,
13 but sometimes I use that one.

14 Q. Okay. Do you think that the actual reporting stations at
15 Hydaburg and Klawock and Ketchikan accurately -- can show you
16 accurately what the, what the weather is between here and
17 Steamboat? I'm just trying to see if there's enough reporting
18 points, you know, official reporting points --

19 A. Official reporting points?

20 Q. Yeah, well, I mean, these are --

21 A. Yeah. (Indiscernible). Yeah.

22 Q. So your op specs says these are the ones you can use,
23 basically, for official weather.

24 A. Right, right.

25 Q. So I'm just -- do we have enough official weather out there

1 that's --

2 A. Yeah, I mean, I mean, we'd always like more, but I mean --

3 Q. True, true.

4 A. -- it's -- there's always limitation when -- you know, it's
5 supposed to be good over there; it might not be good over there.
6 It just depends on -- well sometimes you don't know until you get
7 there, and that's why, that's why we always want to turn around.
8 But I mean, but all -- that's difficult to answer. I mean, how
9 many more could we have?

10 Q. Yeah, I guess that was -- I'm just saying --

11 A. Yeah. I mean, I'd like --

12 Q. -- is the current number, is the current number adequate? I
13 mean, this seems to be totally different over here.

14 A. Adequate?

15 Q. I mean, it can be -- yeah, well, it depends on the weather.
16 The day of the accident, the weather, I think, was coming out of
17 the southeast. So Ketchikan's weather, obviously, is going to be
18 a lot better than it is going to be on this side, and I'm just --

19 A. But like I said, I mean, everyone would always like more. I
20 can't answer -- that's a difficult question to answer. I mean,
21 how --

22 Q. Okay. So I'll try not to ask too many weather questions,
23 then. So en route though -- so for weather updates, did you rely
24 more on flight service, or do you get, do you actually get calls
25 from dispatch saying, hey, I'm looking at the cameras at

1 Waterfall, for example; looks like, looks like it's, you know,
2 deteriorating. Do you get those type of updates about --

3 A. We do. We use a wide range of sources, and those are among
4 them.

5 Q. Okay. So you use (indiscernible). All right. Let's see.
6 You said that you lost the -- you were trying to -- attempting to
7 see 52B on the -- his icon at one point?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Is there a, is there an altitude the aircraft can be at where
10 you lose the icon that you, that you're aware of?

11 A. I really don't know. It probably depends on the line of
12 sight. I'm not quite sure how exactly the technical part works,
13 but airplanes pop up and disappear depending on what's in the way.
14 That's my -- that's a guess (indiscernible).

15 Q. Okay. Do you think there'd be any value added -- I know that
16 most, you know, TAWS systems that have oral alerts, they're
17 designed to -- if you're within 5 miles of an airport, it
18 automatically inhibits so you don't get those nuisance alerts.
19 Because your guys are landing on water, obviously that doesn't
20 happen. It does not know. It's not in the database.

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Is there any value -- do you think there's any value in
23 cruise, other than just putting on an IFR during a CFIT scenario,
24 in cruise turning it on? You shouldn't be getting alerts unless
25 you're doing -- you're coming in, taking off or landing from. Do

1 you think it would add any value --

2 A. I don't think --

3 Q. -- if in crews -- no?

4 A. I don't, I don't know. I don't, I don't think so. In
5 cruise?

6 Q. Well because then you wouldn't be getting the nuisance of
7 warnings, but if you were running into terrain, it should, if it's
8 working correctly, give you an oral warning. And at that point,
9 maybe it would be an effective use. And then, as part of your
10 before-landing check, you just turn it off. Departure, you
11 cruise, you turn it back on.

12 A. That's hard to say. I don't know if it would be valuable or
13 not.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) probably.

15 MR. SIPPERLEY: Okay. All right, maybe that's --

16 MR. O'BRIEN: Yeah.

17 MR. SIPPERLEY: -- too wide of a range of questions. I asked
18 that because in the, in the training it says -- you know, one of
19 the number one first thing in there in talks of the training is,
20 train the pilots to react to the warnings. And so if it's always
21 inhibited, is there any value added at all to that training, at
22 least that portion of the training?

23 MR. O'BRIEN: I don't know. No.

24 MR. SIPPERLEY: Okay. I think I don't, I don't have anything
25 else. That's --

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

2 MR. SIPPERLEY: -- what we've asked. (Indiscernible).

3 MR. WILLIAMS: You have any more questions?

4 MR. O'CONNOR: I just had a couple of quick questions.

5 BY MR. O'CONNOR:

6 Q. Mike, when you were taking off from Steamboat, you had
7 mentioned that the weather was lifting?

8 A. It was better in that area coming out than going in.

9 Q. Was that communicated to anyone?

10 A. No.

11 Q. You mentioned you heard 52B on the radio. Were you in
12 communication with 52B?

13 A. I think we had a -- we exchanged a few communications.

14 Q. Do you recall what was said?

15 A. I believe they involved me hearing him come out of Harris and
16 then go toward Waterfall. I believe he told me he was doing that.

17 Q. Was there a response to that?

18 A. I believe I may have told him what I had where I was, the
19 weather I had where I was.

20 Q. Do you remember what that was?

21 A. I think it was -- I think I said -- I told him I could see
22 through to Control Lake. I think I had it in the report. I think
23 I could see through to Control Lake. That's as far as I could
24 see. And I gave him, I think, a ceiling of 2000 feet or something
25 like that.

1 Q. And did he answer you?

2 A. Don't remember what he said, but I did see him follow the
3 path toward Waterfall.

4 Q. One other thing you mentioned. After the accident, the
5 visibility minimums were raised from 2 miles to 4 miles over land
6 routes. Were you asked to do anything else as far as cue-based
7 training? Any changes to our, to our --

8 A. I don't remember specifically having to be asked. I remember
9 implementing some projects, but --

10 Q. What projects?

11 A. I made some maps.

12 Q. You made some maps.

13 A. Yeah.

14 MR. O'CONNOR: I think that's all I have.

15 MR. O'BRIEN: Okay.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you. I don't have anything else.

17 DR. SILVA: I just have a few.

18 BY DR. SILVA:

19 Q. Regarding these maps, what are these maps for that you made?

20 A. Oh. I was kicking around a new study guide for everybody to
21 look at so they could get a good visual reference about what 4
22 miles was and what 2 miles was along a lot of our common routes.

23 Q. Okay. How do you use that risk assessment form when it's
24 given to you? How is it beneficial? Or not?

25 A. I look at it, and I make note that the numbers are going

1 high. I just kind of make sure -- because by the time the numbers
2 are -- they're going high on that risk assessment, I'm already
3 kind of on alert anyway. So I just kind of make sure that it kind
4 of agrees with my own already alert status, I guess.

5 Q. Okay. Has it ever notified you to a risk that's higher than
6 something you weren't already known about?

7 A. Occasionally. I can't think of any examples, but --

8 Q. You mentioned the safety meetings. Are you involved at all
9 with these safety meetings?

10 A. Frequently.

11 Q. Okay. Are you an attendee? Do you organize them? How are
12 you involved?

13 A. I usually am an attendee. And I may add a few points.
14 Again, that backup role for Mike or George or Medio (ph.) or --
15 I've organized a few meetings here and there. I suppose those
16 meetings would have been along -- it's been a while. But those
17 meetings would have been along the lines of more of the, of the
18 manager meetings. Brien, Mike, a dock manager, freight manager,
19 stuff like that. I remember organizing a few of those.

20 Q. But not with the entire pilot group or anything along those
21 lines.

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. Who normally organizes those?

24 A. Mike O'Connor, chief pilot.

25 Q. Okay. How would you describe the safety culture here?

1 A. I mentioned this before. Best I've ever seen.

2 Q. Okay. What's your favorite thing about working here?

3 A. As I said before, the fact that I'm not made to feel as if
4 I've done something wrong by turning around.

5 Q. Okay. If there was anything you could change, what would it
6 be?

7 A. I can't think of anything offhand.

8 DR. SILVA: Okay, that's all for me.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Matt? Brad? Anything else?

10 Okay. Mike, thanks for coming. We do appreciate it. Is
11 there anything that you'd like to contribute that -- maybe we're
12 missing something, or help us out?

13 MR. O'BRIEN: I don't think so.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. You have our contact information, I
15 think --

16 MR. RICHMOND: Took them from me because those were my
17 copies, Mike.

18 MR. O'BRIEN: I got, I got somewhere (indiscernible).

19 MR. RICHMOND: Yeah, you (indiscernible). Okay, great.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: So if anything comes up, you think of anything
21 else --

22 MR. O'BRIEN: Okay.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: -- please don't hesitate to reach out, okay?

24 MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: And we are off the record at 5:18.

1 (Whereupon, at 5:18 p.m., the interview 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: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Mike O'Brien

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA053

PLACE: TAQUAN AIR, KETCHIKAN, AK

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T

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OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

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Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: CLARK HASSELL

APPEARANCES:

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY
Federal Aviation Administration

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

ROBERT RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Clark Hassell)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 DR. SILVA: Okay, welcome. My name is Sathya Silva. I am
3 the human performance investigator on this case. So I'm working
4 with Shaun to really, kind of, piece together what happened, and I
5 will be leading this interview. What you can expect is we'll --
6 I'll start off with a number of questions, and then we'll go
7 around the room, generally twice, to make sure that everyone else
8 has a chance to answer questions.

9 In the meantime, let's go around the room for introductions.
10 Shaun?

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams with NTSB out of Anchorage.
12 I'm the ops group chairman. Just trying to determine, like she
13 said, the operational factors and how that was a part of the
14 accident, so --

15 DR. SILVA: Okay.

16 MR. RIGSBY: I'm Matt Rigsby out of the FAA's Office of
17 Accident Investigation.

18 MR. HASSELL: You're going to have to speak up.

19 MR. RIGSBY: Sure. Matt Rigsby out of the Office of Accident
20 Investigation. And my office is in D.C.

21 MR. HASSELL: D.C. Okay.

22 MR. RIGSBY: And just to let you know, this is a part of the
23 safety investigation. We have no enforcement activity. You're a
24 pilot, you know, so it's purely safety. None of this can be used
25 for enforcement against you or the company or anything like that,

1 so --

2 MR. SIPPERLEY: I'm Brad Sipperley with the FAA out of
3 Fairbanks. I'm the investigator in charge for the accident.

4 MR. HASSELL: Okay.

5 DR. SILVA: Great. So hopefully you know that we're here for
6 safety. We're not here to assign any fault, blame or liability.
7 That said, we are a public organization, so we cannot offer
8 confidentiality or immunity or anything of that sort.

9 We are recording this conversation, and a transcript will be
10 made of this recording. Okay? That transcript will eventually
11 become part of our public docket. That'll usually happen 6
12 months, a year from now once we release factual information.

13 You are entitled to have a representative. Would you like
14 Bob here to be your representative?

15 MR. HASSELL: Yes.

16 DR. SILVA: Okay.

17 MR. RICHMOND: You know, you helped me there, because what if
18 he forgot my name? At least you're able to say Bob. That's a --

19 DR. SILVA: Okay. So we want you to keep in mind you're the
20 expert here. We all come from different backgrounds, but we're
21 here to learn from you. So keep that in mind.

22 If you have any questions about what we're asking, feel free
23 to ask for clarification. If you don't know an answer, feel free
24 to say you don't know. It should be pretty low key here. If you
25 need a break also, just let us know. Sometimes I get in the

1 groove and don't stop, so feel free to interrupt me there.

2 Any questions before we start?

3 MR. HASSELL: No.

4 DR. SILVA: Okay.

5 INTERVIEW OF CLARK HASSELL

6 BY DR. SILVA:

7 Q. All right. For the record, can you please state your full
8 name and --

9 A. Clark Hassell.

10 Q. Okay. And can you run through a brief overview of your
11 aviation history and what got you here to where you are now?

12 A. Born and raised, grew up in Ketchikan and started with air
13 taxis before high school was over, and been here ever since.

14 Q. So did you do all of your training here?

15 A. All except for the certification rides. You have to go down
16 to America to find examiners and formal training for finishing up
17 a license.

18 Q. Okay. What ratings do you have? Certificates and ratings?

19 A. ATP.

20 Q. Is that single engine, multi-engine, land, sea?

21 A. Multi-engine land and sea.

22 Q. Only? Single and multi or --

23 A. Multi-engine land -- well, do you want to -- let's just take
24 a look for accuracy here.

25 Q. Okay, you've got airplane multi-engine land and sea, ATP.

1 What is this BBD700?

2 A. Type ratings.

3 Q. Type rating. What kind of aircraft is that?

4 A. Global Express.

5 Q. Okay. CL65?

6 A. Canadian regional jet.

7 Q. And GV?

8 A. Gulfstream V and 550.

9 Q. Okay. Commercial privileges, airplane single-engine land and
10 sea. Let me get that information. So before you were at Taquan,
11 where were you working?

12 A. Promech.

13 Q. Okay. And how long were you at Promech? What years were you
14 at Promech?

15 A. May of '13.

16 Q. Until?

17 A. Until May of '16.

18 Q. Why did you leave?

19 A. It went out of business.

20 Q. Prior to Promech, where were you?

21 A. A company called Vulcan Flight, Seattle, Washington.

22 Q. What were you flying there?

23 A. Global Express and GV, G550 and Twin Otter.

24 Q. Do you recall when that was?

25 A. 2008 until 2013.

1 Q. How about before that?

2 A. SkyWest Airlines. You guys didn't a copy of my résumé, I
3 guess, did you?

4 Q. No. We can hear it from your own words. That's okay. How
5 long were you at SkyWest?

6 A. 2000 until 2008.

7 Q. And what were you flying?

8 A. CL65.

9 Q. First officer? Captain?

10 A. Captain.

11 Q. Have you flown it first officer also or --

12 A. As well, Brasilia as first officer.

13 Q. Okay. Also with SkyWest?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. Where were you before SkyWest?

16 A. Taquan Air.

17 Q. When was that?

18 A. 1987 to -- well, got to back up one. I was -- Seaborne
19 Airlines in there.

20 Q. When was that?

21 A. That would have been the summer of '99. May of '99 to --
22 well, May of '99 and then Taquan before that. Taquan went out of
23 business.

24 Q. Taquan went out of business? Is that -- okay. When was
25 that? You said in '87?

1 A. '99.

2 Q. '99. Okay. So you were only with Seaborne for, like, a
3 year; is that correct?

4 A. Almost a year, yeah.

5 Q. Did you start off your career at Taquan, or did you have
6 anything before that?

7 A. It was my first commercial flying job, in '87.

8 Q. What is your current position?

9 A. Line pilot.

10 Q. And what's your aircraft?

11 A. The Beaver and the Otter.

12 Q. And when did you start at Taquan?

13 A. May of '16.

14 Q. How was the transition between Promech and Taquan?

15 A. Same. Same aircraft. Same region.

16 Q. Did you have to go through another training program? Can you
17 describe that transition, please?

18 A. Training program is the same one. You've reviewed. Their
19 ground school is the same.

20 Q. The entire training program was the same?

21 A. I'd have to compare them note to note. I don't know.

22 Q. Did you -- you didn't perceive any major differences?

23 A. I didn't put them side by side. I can't answer that.

24 Q. Okay. So when you say they were the same, were there
25 specific aspects -- I guess in terms of your perception of that

1 training program, was there any major differences or --

2 A. They all seemed the same to me, but that's just an opinion,
3 so I really don't know. I didn't put them side by side, so I
4 can't really answer that.

5 Q. Okay. And did you have to go through initial training here?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. What did that training look like?

8 A. You're going to have to clarify that.

9 Q. When you're going through that training, how long is it?
10 What are you discussing? Is it lecture?

11 A. I'd have to look that up again. I think there's a required
12 number of hours. It would be in the training outline, I'm sure.
13 You guys might know that better than me, what initial and
14 recurrent and all that transition stuff is.

15 Q. How many total hours do you have?

16 A. Something over 20.

17 Q. Twenty thousand? How much time do you have in the Otter,
18 approximately?

19 A. Approximately 2000.

20 Q. What about flying in the Alaska area?

21 A. Approximately 13,000.

22 Q. Are you IFR current?

23 A. No.

24 Q. When was the last time you were current in IFR?

25 A. Would have been probably May of '13.

1 Q. Okay. Did you have to keep that currency for Promech?

2 A. No.

3 Q. You did that, you did that on your own?

4 A. It was my last job.

5 Q. And your last job? Can you clarify?

6 A. Vulcan.

7 Q. Okay.

8 DR. SILVA: Okay. You can't have that door open, though.

9 (Conversation about the position of the door.)

10 MR. RICHMOND: Okay. That's a little cooler.

11 BY DR. SILVA:

12 Q. All right. Were you familiar with the accident pilot?

13 A. In what way?

14 Q. In any way. Professionally or personally.

15 A. I knew him here at work.

16 Q. Okay. Can you describe your relationship with him?

17 A. Coworker.

18 Q. How were your interactions with him?

19 A. In what way?

20 Q. Your normal colloquial interactions. So what did -- what

21 kind of stuff did you talk about? Were they --

22 A. Then I'd just say normal.

23 Q. What is normal?

24 A. Whatever you described.

25 Q. I need these in your own words. So how do you characterize

1 normal?

2 A. Well, civil. Respectful.

3 Q. Have you ever had any issues working with him?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Were you flying the day of the accident?

6 A. No, I was off.

7 Q. Okay. How did you find out about the accident?

8 A. Probably came back to work the next day. Or it could have

9 been the day after. I can't remember what I was doing. I get 2

10 days off at a time.

11 Q. Were there -- have you noticed any changes in the company in

12 the last month after the accident?

13 A. In what way?

14 Q. Any kind of operations procedure changes, culture --

15 A. I didn't notice any.

16 Q. When was your last interaction with the accident pilot before

17 the accident?

18 A. You'd have to look at the days off and see if we were on.

19 But probably saw him at work prior to the -- prior to my time off.

20 Q. Have you ever flown with him?

21 A. In what capacity?

22 Q. In the same aircraft.

23 A. Yes, I've given him a check ride.

24 Q. Okay. Do you recall when that was?

25 A. No.

1 Q. What do these check rides normally look like?

2 A. You'd have to clarify that.

3 Q. So go through --

4 A. Beyond 8410-3 form.

5 Q. And what is that?

6 A. Standard FAA check ride form.

7 Q. Okay. So when you meet the pilot, walk through what you
8 would be doing, what you would be looking for, aircraft maneuvers,
9 things like that.

10 A. Well, he's given an oral as well, as -- already completed a
11 written test, but the FAA likes to have us do both. And then we
12 talk about the airplane, and then we -- I outline where we're
13 going to go based on environmental considerations. Weather,
14 whether it's east of town or west of town, and what to expect on
15 the check ride in regards to leaving the surface and proceeding
16 out. Probably climb to gain altitude and do all the air work at
17 altitude, as opposed to being at altitude and then forgetting what
18 -- something and wind up down low so you got to climb back up. So
19 it always starts out with altitude. And then complete all of the
20 items on the check ride form, and then proceed back to town.

21 Q. And what are you looking for in terms of performance when
22 you're giving these check rides?

23 A. Satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

24 Q. Do you provide other feedback in addition to satisfactory or
25 unsatisfactory?

1 A. There's no other parameters than satisfactory or
2 unsatisfactory.

3 Q. Do you give the pilot any feedback outside of those --

4 A. At that point I'm a check airman and I'm not an instructor.

5 Q. Okay. Do you give them feedback, was the question.

6 A. No. Because the check airmen can't be instructing while
7 they're checking.

8 Q. Do you give feedback after the flight?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Do you recall your last flight with the accident pilot?

11 A. No.

12 Q. How do you like working here?

13 A. I like it.

14 Q. What's your favorite thing about working here?

15 A. Days off.

16 MR. RICHMOND: That's damn consistent, isn't it?

17 BY DR. SILVA:

18 Q. How often do you work?

19 A. Five days a week.

20 Q. Okay. If you could change anything about your job, what
21 would it be?

22 A. More time off at the same pay.

23 Q. Okay. Have you felt any external pressures to fly, whether
24 it's from the company or the customer?

25 A. No.

1 Q. How would you characterize morale amongst the pilot group?

2 A. Good.

3 Q. Have you had any sort of CFIT training?

4 A. We do every year.

5 Q. Okay, what does that look like?

6 A. Comprises an hour of recurrent for recurrent people. A

7 simulator. And then it's usually part of the check ride as well.

8 Q. And what do you do during this training?

9 A. Are you familiar with the CFIT training at all?

10 Q. I want you to describe it, because everyone has a different

11 perception of it.

12 A. There's an hour of sim, and that comprises three different

13 scenarios: a whiteout, an inadvertent IFR and a flat light

14 situation. And then in the check ride, I'd say it's a level 180-

15 degree turn with a slower forward speed for a smaller radius.

16 Then a controlled descent on an assured open space below us. No

17 islands or obstructions over open water. From 300 feet down to

18 the surface, it's a glassy water landing technique. And that's

19 the end of the maneuver.

20 Q. Do you, do you conduct this training or do you --

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. Okay. Do you have to go through the training as well?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. Who else can instruct for the CFIT training?

25 A. I believe Mike O'Connor is a check airman here, and Mike

1 O'Brien is also a check airman here.

2 Q. Who does the majority of the CFIT training?

3 A. I don't know. You have to count them up.

4 Q. How often do you conduct CFIT training?

5 A. Usually in the spring as the new pilot summer cadre shows up.

6 Q. Okay. Is that every day, or how does that work?

7 A. It goes on for about a week or 10 days. Or 3 weeks, really.

8 As guys dribble in, we get them done. Some guys want to show up
9 first.

10 Q. Have you noticed any consistent difficulty that people may be
11 having as they go through training?

12 A. In what way?

13 Q. In terms of the CFIT training, are there any things that have
14 to get reinforced during the training prior to the test?

15 A. I don't notice any.

16 Q. Okay.

17 DR. SILVA: All right, I'll take a break for now. Shaun?

18 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

19 Q. So your check ride, so you utilize a plan of action?

20 A. Say that last word?

21 Q. Do you utilize a plan of action for your check rides?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Is that written down?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And you carry it on the flight with you or --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Is that for the oral and the flight, or is it just one or the
3 other?

4 A. It is primarily for the flight. I can give a better oral
5 than a piece of paper does.

6 Q. Okay. On the check ride form under instrument procedures,
7 looking at the last one from Mike Hudgins, hood work is .3 with a
8 sat, and then below that is recovery from unusual attitudes and
9 180-degree turns. What's the difference between the -- kind of
10 walk me through how you do the instrument procedures. The .3,
11 what is that -- that hood work, what does that consist of?

12 A. It consists of an en route portion, which is -- includes a
13 climb and a level off. Then there's a couple of 90-degree turns
14 for clearing turns, mainly for me. And there are unusual
15 attitudes, one nose-high, one nose-low. Then there is some kind
16 of partial panel where the Post-It pad notes are covering up
17 instruments. It's easier when I'm doing it. That may be about
18 it. I'd have to maybe think about it more. I can't remember what
19 I just said.

20 Q. Okay, the unusual attitudes, how do you normally set those
21 up? Do you let the -- does the pilot remain flying and you kind
22 of talk him through banks and stuff?

23 A. Head down, eyes closed.

24 Q. They keep the stick?

25 A. Head down and eyes closed. I've got the flight controls.

1 Q. Okay. Have you seen any trend difficulties or anything with
2 those?

3 A. I haven't.

4 Q. Okay. Have you noticed any trends with any of the instrument
5 work among the check rides that you've been doing?

6 A. Well, what do you mean by trends?

7 Q. Do you see -- okay, you know, this year, while there's --
8 pilots are having a tough time with the unusual attitudes, or
9 they're having a tough time with the level-offs. Do you see any
10 trends forming like that?

11 A. I don't.

12 Q. How do you set up and do -- evaluate the CFIT escape
13 maneuver?

14 A. In the simulator or in the airplane?

15 Q. In the airplane.

16 A. Fifteen hundred feet. Usually have them -- they begin with
17 the hood on. With the foggles, you can look out through the
18 bottom, and they're VMC at this point. And I tell them that
19 they're en route to, let's say, Waterfall resort, and that they
20 are the last one in line after an hour-long string of airplanes
21 have gone through. And the first plane was good weather, and now
22 you're an hour later not looking at particularly good weather.
23 And poof, you just went IFR. Perform the maneuver.

24 Q. Okay, so what are you looking for?

25 A. Looking for a level 180-degree turn that has been slowed, and

1 flaps added for turn performance. They utilize the terrain
2 database and return out the way they came in, and then confirm an
3 open area below them before they start a descent. Controlled rate
4 of descent, no more than 1,000 foot a minute. And between 300
5 feet and the surface, they transition to a glassy water landing
6 attitude.

7 Q. What do you look for in relation to the TAWS and inhibit
8 switch?

9 A. What do I look for in that?

10 Q. So is it normally inhibited when you go on the flight? Is it
11 uninhibited?

12 A. It's in --

13 Q. Describe the TAWS switch.

14 A. It's in the inhibited position.

15 Q. Okay. Is it always -- do all the airplanes stay -- does it,
16 kind of, live in the inhibit?

17 A. As far as I know, they only go to the uninhibited when we are
18 IFR.

19 Q. So you didn't mention that in the, in the CFIT escape
20 maneuver. Do you look for that --

21 A. No.

22 Q. -- that they turn that off?

23 A. It's already off.

24 Q. Well, that they un-inhibit it so it's active again?

25 A. No, it never gets moved.

1 Q. Okay. So even during training, it does not get moved.

2 A. No.

3 Q. So do the pilots have any experience listening to that and
4 hearing it actually activate in their ears while they're flying?

5 A. I don't know.

6 Q. Are you a flight instructor also or just a check airman?

7 A. Just a check airman.

8 Q. So we've learned from other interviews that operational
9 control can be delegated to some of the senior pilots, and your
10 name was brought up. Tell me about that. What happens when
11 you're given operational control? Walk me through a day when
12 you've got it.

13 A. I have not had it yet. I don't know.

14 Q. You've never had operational control at Taquan?

15 A. I see it on the schedule, but I think that day is still out
16 in the future from today.

17 Q. Okay. One of the things we were told from the previous
18 interviews was that, when you have operational control, you're
19 kind of hanging out in dispatch, so --

20 A. You're talking about the person who is?

21 Q. Yeah, that you've had operational control. It's been
22 delegated to you as a senior pilot, and you kind of hang out in
23 dispatch when that happens.

24 A. Okay. I take your word for it. I haven't had it yet. Like
25 I say, I see it on the schedule, but I haven't had it assigned to

1 me yet.

2 Q. When was your last observation as a check airman?

3 A. I believe it was this year.

4 Q. Do you remember who did it?

5 A. Jon Percy would have been doing it.

6 Q. When he observes or does your check airman ride, are you with
7 an actual student or is it a simulator ride?

8 A. No, it is usually giving a check ride to someone who needs
9 either initial or recurrent.

10 Q. So how do you accomplish the 299s?

11 A. Everywhere we go is a destination, so that's accomplished on
12 the 293 reg.

13 Q. Okay. So when you -- you mentioned earlier with the CFIT
14 escape maneuver, they'll, kind of, come down, go into a glassy
15 water, into a glassy water landing. Does that terminate the end
16 of the 293 with you, and then from there back is a 299, or are you
17 actually at one of your destinations?

18 A. No. From there, then that maneuver is terminated and we go
19 into water work and step turns and finish the rest of the check
20 ride.

21 Q. How do you evaluate judgment?

22 A. That's a good question.

23 Q. Thank you.

24 A. Actions, I suppose.

25 Q. Can you elaborate?

1 A. Let's see. How would you elaborate that? Depending on where
2 they want to land, if they have given themselves enough room or
3 have chosen a place to land that is rougher than it needs to be
4 for what we need to do; water conditions, crosswind, not giving
5 themselves enough room, through actions.

6 Q. So the 293(a). I'm looking at the oral. I'm looking at
7 Mr. Hudgins' last check ride here. The 293(a) at the same time
8 was accomplished for the Beaver as well, as the Otter. Can you
9 tell me how that's accomplished?

10 A. It's a written test.

11 Q. Okay, do you do an oral for both?

12 A. I do.

13 Q. Okay. What separates the two?

14 A. Model.

15 Q. What makes one an Otter and one a Beaver?

16 A. What separates the Otter from the Beaver?

17 Q. As far as the oral is concerned.

18 A. Equipment.

19 Q. Do you do weight and balance information for both?

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. How do you accomplish that? Do you give them a --

22 A. It's usually focused on the CG calculator.

23 Q. Do you kind of give -- do you give them a scenario, or do you
24 just say, plan it for this flight? How do you, how do you
25 evaluate that?

1 A. Through discussion. How many, how many pounds of baggage can
2 you actually put in the back of the airplane when you got 10 seats
3 used up? Say the question again?

4 Q. No, you've answered it. It's more -- seems to be more
5 scenario based. So do you evaluate CFIT training in the sim as
6 well, or just in the, in the airplane? Like, do you do any sim
7 work with --

8 A. The simulator is part of the program, and there's -- as I
9 mentioned to the young lady, is three scenarios: flat light,
10 inadvertent IFR and -- I can't think.

11 Q. Where is that accomplished?

12 A. It's in that building across the street there.

13 Q. Is that a Taquan simulator?

14 A. Oh. Deteriorating visibility. No, it belongs to Medallion.
15 One of the NTSB fellows a couple of years ago went through it. I
16 think it was Brice.

17 Q. Okay. Cue-based training, is that taught or evaluated here?

18 A. Q based? Yeah, it's part of the Medallion program.

19 Q. Do you have anything to do with that as far as from a check
20 airman standpoint?

21 A. Mostly in -- determine inflight visibility. We know that
22 it's 2 miles from Vallenar Point out to Guard Island, and local
23 knowledge type things.

24 Q. Has there been any change to the, to the software or to the,
25 to the simulator experience that you can relate since the Promech

1 accident?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Were you flying on the day of Mr. Hudgins' accident? You
4 said you were off, right?

5 A. That's correct.

6 Q. Okay. Have you been out to Steamboat?

7 A. I have.

8 Q. How reliable is the weather reporting and weather information
9 that you gather from out there?

10 A. I don't know. I don't collect that information.

11 Q. So you don't check weather before you go?

12 A. I look at all of the places that you can, which is Ketchikan
13 and the cameras.

14 Q. Okay. So there's no way to get weather at Steamboat?

15 A. I think the company probably -- you asked me if I do, but I
16 don't. The company collects weather from there.

17 Q. Okay. So as the pilot, you're not concerned with where
18 you're going from the weather that's there?

19 A. We have to make our own weather observations here in this
20 region out of this company. It's part of staying alive here.

21 Q. So talk to me about the flight risk assessment that's done
22 before a flight. Who fills that out?

23 A. The flight follower gals down there in the dispatch room.

24 Q. Do you ever look at it?

25 A. Oh, yeah. Each one is signed.

1 Q. Okay. So if you don't check weather before you depart going
2 out to Steamboat, how can you accurately evaluate that form?

3 A. We go to all kind of places around southeast Alaska that have
4 no weather reporting.

5 Q. Okay. But you have people at Steamboat that give weather
6 reports, do they not?

7 A. I believe they give it to the gals at dispatch, yes.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay, I'm done. Matt?

9 MR. RICHMOND: I need to take a phone call in 5 minutes, just
10 to the extent that --

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

12 MR. RICHMOND: -- if there's a break at some point, I just
13 want to let you know, because I know, Brad, you'll probably be
14 going --

15 MR. RIGSBY: I'll defer to Brad, then, and let --

16 MR. RICHMOND: Well, no, we'll come back. I just have to
17 make this call.

18 MR. RIGSBY: (Indiscernible).

19 MR. RICHMOND: That's all I'm saying. It may be 5 minutes;
20 it may not, you know.

21 MR. RIGSBY: You got most of my questions I had written down.

22 MR. RICHMOND: Okay. Brad may be able to do it in 5. I
23 don't know.

24 MR. SIPPERLEY: You know me better than that, don't you
25 already?

1 MR. RICHMOND: I think you can do it in 4.

2 MR. SIPPERLEY: Okay. Just a couple of things.

3 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

4 Q. So the 180-degree turn, with respect to that, is there any
5 specific radius -- you know, turn rate -- you're looking for when
6 you're evaluating, to keep it within a certain distance from the
7 beginning of the turn to the end of the turn?

8 A. The focus is to have them slow and not do it at cruise to
9 imply that that turn radius is smaller. For them to do nothing is
10 not what we want to see. We want to see them slow down.

11 Q. Is there any minimum altitude that you may be at that you'd
12 say, okay, at this point we are too low to even execute a 180-
13 degree turn? So let's say -- your minimum altitude you can fly is
14 at 500, correct? Is that -- and if you're in a tight area with
15 terrain on both sides, would a 180-degree turn be considered an
16 effective escape maneuver at that point, do you feel?

17 A. I don't understand the question.

18 Q. I guess my question is --

19 A. Is the question about in a valley or just how far
20 (indiscernible)?

21 Q. Yeah, if you're -- yeah, if you're flying at low altitude in
22 a valley, is there any minimum altitude that you emphasize that,
23 if you're this low in this type of an area, the 180-degree turn is
24 not an effective escape maneuver for inadvertent IMC?

25 A. Minimum en route altitude over terrain is 500 feet for us.

1 Q. Okay. But is there any point if you're at that altitude,
2 that low, when you would say, this is not a place that doing a
3 180-degree turn would be a better idea than maybe just punching
4 and going IFR and exercising your emergency authority there? Do
5 you -- I guess the question, is do you train to that, or do you,
6 do you emphasize that at all?

7 A. Are you asking me if I advocate punching out or electing to
8 find a place to land?

9 Q. I'm asking you if there is any altitude that you would say
10 executing a 180-degree turn would not be the safe escape maneuver
11 from?

12 A. I can't answer that, because it would just be an opinion. We
13 teach the level 180-degree turn with a controlled rate descent.
14 Punching out through rising terrain doesn't seem like it would be
15 smart in anybody's books, but that's just my opinion.

16 Q. Okay. During the training at all, do you emphasize left or
17 right turn? Is there any difference to you for a 180-degree turn?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. Outside of the training routes where you have the cue-
20 based flight training, is there any cue-based or -- for
21 determining inflight visibility, how else do you do that? So
22 you're not -- we're not on a Misty Fjords route, you know, that
23 has the cue-based training. You're outside of that. Say you're
24 going to Steamboat. Is there another way that you estimate the
25 inflight visibility?

1 A. Is there a way that I do or that the company advocates?

2 Q. That the company advocates.

3 A. You've got the Chelton with range-to-distance marks on it.
4 There's a cockpit cut-off angle. If you become familiar with
5 that, you know where to look on the airplane to see what your
6 slope angle is. And then local knowledge.

7 Q. Okay. So on the Chelton, it's my understanding -- and I'm
8 not real familiar with Chelton, so again, you're the expert on
9 this stuff; I'm just trying to learn from you. If you're making,
10 so let's say, the 180-degree turn, it gives you a little curlicue,
11 right? It shows you, kind of, your turn vector?

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Is that something you look at, you know, to -- or train to
14 evaluate, okay, if you make this turn, it does show that I am --
15 once you complete the 180-degree turn, you'd be going in a safe
16 direction, your planned direction or planned --

17 A. The noodle, as it's called sometimes, when it first appears,
18 only indicates a standard rate turn. That's not what you'd want
19 to be doing during a CFIT escape maneuver.

20 Q. Okay, so it wouldn't be an effective part of -- okay.

21 A. I wouldn't think so, no.

22 Q. Okay. Just in your experience executing the 180-degree turn,
23 of course, the first element before you can make that turn in
24 either direction, what would you say that would be, when you're,
25 when you're making -- going to make that turn, before you make the

1 turn, what would be one of the first thing you'd want to consider?

2 A. Situational awareness. That's part of their program,
3 Medallion's program, is giving yourself enough room to know that
4 you may be going to have to make that turn and that you've already
5 decided which way you're going to make it, implying that you might
6 be on one side of a valley or the other for favorable results.

7 Q. Okay, so let's say -- so in the scenario where you do lose
8 that -- lose the forward visibility, you can't really see outside
9 anymore and you're going to go into that maneuver, you're relying
10 on your position, the little aircraft position on the Chelton, to
11 make that decision, then, for your left or right turn to escape
12 the terrain for your situational awareness? Would that be a fair
13 assessment?

14 A. No. I would say that you'd already thought of that way ahead
15 of time.

16 Q. Okay. But you'd agree that --

17 DR. SILVA: You're going to pause?

18 MR. SIPPERLEY: -- knowing exactly where you're at before you
19 make the turn is the, is the first element of that? Okay. I'm
20 sorry, (indiscernible) --

21 DR. SILVA: Brad, let's pause for a sec.

22 MR. SIPPERLEY: Actually I think that was probably my last
23 one. If we just -- let's see. I think that was all I had anyway
24 for now, so --

25 DR. SILVA: Okay.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: So we'll go off --

2 MR. RICHMOND: If you guys have a couple more, come back?

3 DR. SILVA: We do.

4 MR. RICHMOND: You do? Let's just take a break. I'm going
5 to make a phone call. You don't have to sit here. I'll come get
6 you.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: We're going to go off the record at 3:00.

8 (Off the record at 3:00 p.m.)

9 (On the record at 3:15 p.m.)

10 MR. WILLIAMS: We're back on the record at 3:15.

11 DR. SILVA: All right, Brad. Anything else?

12 MR. SIPPERLEY: I'm good for now.

13 DR. SILVA: Okay.

14 BY MR. RIGSBY:

15 Q. On the risk assessment form that you guys fill out, that you
16 guys get from dispatch or from a flight coordinator, do you guys -
17 - you go in after they fill it out. Do you go in and evaluate it
18 and ever change it or add or subtract from it?

19 A. I don't.

20 Q. You don't. Okay. Other than this past check ride, have you
21 flown with Mike on a familiarization flight or something like
22 that? Since you're -- sounded like you're pretty familiar with
23 this area and identifying, you know -- like, when he first came
24 into the company, did you take him out to show him around or --

25 A. No, he was already working at Promech when I took a job at

1 Promech in '13.

2 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. Okay. That's it.

3 BY DR. SILVA:

4 Q. Does Taquan have a safety program?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Can you describe that and your understanding of what that
7 program looks like?

8 A. It is a Medallion-structured safety program.

9 Q. Are you able --

10 A. Formal, I guess, you'd say.

11 Q. Sorry --

12 A. A formal program.

13 Q. Okay. If you have a safety issue that comes up during
14 flight, do you have the capability to report that to the company?

15 A. Inflight?

16 Q. Any inflight or on the ground.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. On the water. How would you do that?

19 A. You call it -- it's called an S1 form. And then either
20 orally or via that form. Orally first, obviously, and then
21 followed with that form.

22 Q. Have you ever reported a safety issue to management?

23 A. I have.

24 Q. Can you give an example of that?

25 A. Had a rudder bearing go bad on an airplane, and had to do a

1 landing because of that, and I put that on an S1 form.

2 Q. So what happened after you reported it?

3 A. I got an email back right away showing that administrative
4 process with it.

5 Q. Okay. Did you get anything back that it was complete?

6 A. Not yet. I don't know if I will. That may just be something
7 that goes off into the system. I don't know.

8 Q. When was this event?

9 A. Two or 3 weeks ago, maybe.

10 Q. How many times have you used this safety reporting system
11 since you've been here?

12 A. Minimally.

13 Q. In terms of order of magnitude, are you saying once a season?

14 A. Maybe that.

15 Q. Less than that? Okay. How many check rides do you give per
16 month?

17 A. Per month? We do most all the training in the springtime, so
18 there would be, between three check airmen, probably seven check
19 rides in a month or a month and a half, whatever. It's all kind
20 of got to be done by the first week or so of May, and so it starts
21 in the first week or so of April.

22 Q. Okay. How long have you been a check airman?

23 A. 1990, maybe?

24 Q. Okay. So before you came --

25 A. I don't, I don't know.

1 Q. -- to Taquan. How long after you started here did you become
2 a check airman for Taquan?

3 A. I was initially a check airman, because I brought the Otter
4 -- you got the chicken and the egg somehow, and they never had a
5 turbine Otter here on their op specs. So they -- when I came from
6 Promech, I was the, I was the check airman right off the bat for
7 it, so --

8 Q. Yeah. Got it. Okay. How is this job different from when
9 you were flying at Promech?

10 A. It's not.

11 Q. Okay. Is there any difference in the operation itself?

12 A. I don't, I don't know what you mean. We operate the same
13 equipment in the same region with the same level of safety.

14 Q. Okay. During the CFIT training in the aircraft, you
15 mentioned the scenario where you get into inadvertent IMC. Is
16 there a view limiting device that's used, or is that --

17 A. Not in the simulator, but in the airplane there is.

18 Q. Okay. What kind of device is it?

19 A. Foggles.

20 Q. Okay. And you mentioned that you don't advocate for a
21 standard rate turn in this avoidance maneuver. What kind of bank
22 angles are advocated?

23 A. I don't know.

24 Q. Okay. Let's say you had someone you were checking conduct a
25 standard rate turn. Would that be a cause for failure?

1 A. We look for them to see an aggressive course reversal, and a
2 standard rate turn would not be aggressive.

3 Q. Okay. So what, I -- order of magnitude again, then. What
4 constitutes aggressive? That means something different to me.

5 A. I don't know. I can't tell you. Standard rate turn is only
6 about 5 or 6 degrees of bank in a Beaver. So if that's all you
7 were going to do, you'd eat up a lot of real estate.

8 Q. So if they did a 30-degree bank turn, would that have been
9 aggressive?

10 A. That would be more appropriate. That would be more
11 appropriate.

12 Q. Okay. Would there, would there be a bank angle that you
13 would have found excessive in conducting this maneuver?

14 A. Well, stall speed on a Beaver at a 60-degree bank is, like,
15 105, and they only cruise at 105. So you wouldn't want to see
16 that. As the loads change, that's all going to change. Well, go
17 ahead.

18 Q. You mentioned that the TAWS switch, you usually see in
19 inhibit. Why is that? Why do you fly the airplane in inhibit?

20 A. It's IFR equipment in a VFR environment.

21 Q. Okay, so what does that mean for you if a pilot --

22 A. Human factors nightmare.

23 Q. In what way?

24 A. Audible sounds in your headset. Earsplitting sounds. You
25 got all inappropriate operations of flight.

1 Q. Are you saying they're inappropriate alerts?

2 A. They're -- yes. They're constant. All we do is fly at low
3 level next to the terrain and that's all it's telling you, is
4 you're low level next to the terrain.

5 Q. When you're checking the weather for a flight, can you walk
6 us through what you're looking at and what you're looking for?
7 Let's say you were going to Steamboat and back.

8 A. I'd look at the only cameras available, which is ones off of
9 Ketchikan, Point Higgins, Kasaan, Harris River, Craig. And that
10 would get me only that far into the -- which would be the other
11 side of Prince of Wales Island. And then if dispatch had
12 collected any weather from any of the other stations, see what
13 they had. And that's all you're going to get there.

14 Q. And what are you looking specifically for when you look at
15 these cameras?

16 A. Ceiling and visibility. And high winds.

17 Q. Under what conditions would you decide to cancel a flight
18 based on weather?

19 A. Less than 500 and 2.

20 Q. Okay. Are there any other visibility minimums that you have
21 to abide by?

22 A. In what way?

23 Q. Is it always 2 miles visibility under any condition, any
24 flight?

25 A. Those are the prescribed minimums. It's 1,000/1, or if

1 you're less than 1,000 feet, it's 2 miles, but you guys already
2 know that.

3 Q. Does the, does the operation have any higher minimums, I
4 guess, is the question.

5 A. Which operation?

6 Q. Taquan. Does Taquan have other rules that would require
7 higher minimums?

8 A. You know, I think there -- in their tours they do have a
9 little bit higher. I'd have to look them up. That's a common
10 sense thing. People pay for a flightseeing tour; you don't want
11 to fly them around in 500 and 2 because they're just going to
12 complain.

13 Q. Do you fly the tours?

14 A. I have.

15 Q. Okay. When was the last time you flew a tour?

16 A. Yesterday.

17 Q. Okay. Okay, so -- the sectional out there. I'm curious
18 about the route. Let's say you didn't quite know what the weather
19 was going to be like on the other side, but you're leaving from
20 Ketchikan going to Steamboat or Waterfall. What route would you
21 take to get there, and how -- walk us through what decision-making
22 you would use to determine that.

23 A. On what kind of a day?

24 Q. Let's say -- well, let's start with unlimited. Perfect
25 weather.

1 A. Round Vallenar Point and a climb and go straight line.

2 Q. At what altitude?

3 A. About 4,000.

4 Q. Okay. Now let's say, again, you turn -- let's say you turn

5 back and the weather is -- has degraded over the main part of the

6 island. How would you, again, assess the situation to return

7 back? Walk us through what your decision-making would look like

8 if -- let's -- you've decided that this is a no -- you can't get

9 through over the land.

10 A. You've got to look at your lowest passes, the lowest terrain.

11 Harris River is one of them. Trocadero is one of them. Hetta

12 Inlet is one of them. I wouldn't probably divert too much. Well,

13 you can go clear around Sea Otter Sound and through Coffman Cove.

14 Those are really the only ones that you'd have fuel to consider.

15 Q. Okay, let me check and make sure I understand that. So you

16 mentioned Coffman Cove; is that correct? Where is that?

17 A. Yeah, Coffman Cove is on the east side of POW.

18 Q. Help me out here.

19 A. This is Sea Otter Sound here.

20 Q. Okay. So you would try and go north --

21 A. Maybe.

22 Q. -- to get out through there. Okay. Would you ever go south

23 to get back to Ketchikan?

24 A. To where?

25 Q. Leaving Waterfall.

1 A. No. So it's probably -- I don't think we'd ever consider
2 going through Moira. Again, that's too far to go, fuel
3 consideration-wise.

4 Q. Okay. Just because of fuel, is where you would --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- call that? Okay. Okay. So let's say the ceiling has
7 dropped to minimums, 500 feet.

8 A. We wouldn't be going anywhere.

9 Q. Would you just land on the water in that case? Would you go
10 back to where you started?

11 A. Well, you'll have to be more definitive in what your scenario
12 is.

13 Q. Okay. Why don't -- what details would you like me to
14 provide? I can give you a scenario. I just --

15 A. When you say a drop to 500 feet, are you talking en route or
16 are you talking we knew that --

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. -- it was 500 feet before you left Steamboat or Ketchikan
19 or --

20 Q. No. You left and there was unexpected 500-foot ceilings.

21 A. Between Steamboat and --

22 Q. And Ketchikan.

23 A. And Ketchikan. All right. Well, you'd try to make your way
24 to Craig, Alaska. That's -- you could try to make your way to
25 Waterfall. There's good resource there. Try to make your way to

1 Hydaburg. That's good -- these are all easily attainable
2 overwater destinations with tiedowns and safe moorage. There's
3 lots of bays. You're talking about being below 500 feet, though,
4 and terminating the flight, though, right? Because 500 feet is
5 operational as long as there's 2 miles of visibility.

6 Q. Okay, that's fine. If you would continue, that's also an
7 option. Let's say, regardless of fuel, you did want to come
8 through this pass past Hydaburg. What altitude would you chose to
9 fly through there? What's the minimum altitude that you would
10 like to have?

11 A. Are you referring to Sulzer --

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. -- Portage? It must be couple hundred feet through there, so
14 you'd need 700 or 800 feet.

15 Q. Okay. Any visibility that -- requirement outside of the 2
16 miles that you would be looking for to get through there?

17 A. You would have to have a minimum of 2 miles of visibility.

18 Q. Okay. You wouldn't want anything extra?

19 A. You would want it to be clear. And a million.

20 Q. Okay.

21 DR. SILVA: Okay. That's my last question. Shaun?

22 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

23 Q. So you mentioned, when Sathya asked about the visibility,
24 that you thought there may be something different for tours.
25 Company visibility. So you did a tour yesterday.

1 A. I think I did. Got to be factual here, right? Yes, I did a
2 tour on the 13th. That's yesterday.

3 Q. Okay. So if the weather looks marginal, do you go back to
4 the GOM to try to refresh what the company minimums are, or --

5 A. You can tell --

6 Q. -- when would you go back and look?

7 A. -- if people are not getting their money's worth. 500 and 2
8 is not tour weather.

9 Q. Okay. But you're not for sure what the company minimum is.

10 A. I could recite it to you if we went and looked it up.

11 Q. Have you -- do you remember turning down a flight since
12 you've been here at Taquan for weather?

13 A. Sure.

14 Q. Have you returned?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: That's all I have.

17 DR. SILVA: Okay.

18 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

19 Q. I just have one quick -- so you've flown in this area a lot,
20 obviously, and I'm --

21 A. (Indiscernible) scenario, flown --

22 Q. No, I said you've flown this area --

23 A. Oh, I'm sorry. That's --

24 Q. -- a lot. So I'm, you know, just starting to learn the
25 terrain and where everything is and all that. So you said that

1 Hetta Inlet is a, is a good low route if you had to come back
2 because you can go to the west arm; would that be a true
3 statement?

4 A. It can be. You automatically think that it's the lowest
5 route across the island, but because it's so narrow and backed up,
6 it may not be.

7 Q. Okay. So is -- in your experience, is there any typical
8 weather chokepoints? Like, would Sulzer be considered a
9 chokepoint for weather, if you're going to have some? I know
10 there's a lot of places that say, you know, every time I go down
11 this valley, that weather is -- you know, it can be clear on both
12 sides, but if I'm going to find weather, it's going to be here.

13 A. It's Murphy's Law.

14 Q. Murphy's Law? Okay. So it's --

15 A. If you, if you count on something to be open, I guarantee it
16 won't be.

17 Q. Okay. So when they're entering here in marginal weather or
18 low weather -- like you'd said earlier about having -- always
19 having to plan, knowing where you're going to, where you're going
20 to go, this -- before you even enter Sulzer Portage, would it be
21 safe to say that you would -- having a plan of escape would be
22 something you'd always have in the back of your mind? Okay.

23 A. Yeah. Absolutely.

24 Q. Either up Dog Salmon or the 180.

25 A. Yeah. If you can't see through, it's -- that's one of the

1 nice things about this region. If you can't see through the
2 passes, you can't see through them.

3 Q. So all right. So my last question is, where would you want
4 to make the no-kidding go/no go decision to try to get through
5 Sulzer, if it was you?

6 A. Orbiting at the end of --

7 Q. (Indiscernible) island?

8 A. Yeah. Right in here. Right over the land. Right over the
9 trees.

10 Q. That's about as far as you'd want to be able to go. Okay.
11 And there's -- at, say, 1,000 feet, there's plenty of room to do a
12 180-degree turn at this point?

13 A. Oh, yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Based on a 30-degree bank angle, slowing it down,
15 doing a 180-degree --

16 A. Consider how wide this channel is. Just like at the NTSB in
17 the lab there. We measured all that stuff, and they were saying
18 there's not enough room to orbit at the end of Ella Lake. So we
19 measured here, and it's -- we routinely make 180-degree turns
20 right here, and that's much wider.

21 Q. Okay. Yeah, I just wagged it on the way here. It's about 2
22 miles. Would that be about --

23 A. Yeah, this here is about 1600 feet or so.

24 Q. Okay. So plenty of room to turn, to turn around. How about
25 at 500 feet? Would you consider --

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. Do you still think you at that point -- is there any point in
3 Sulzer Portage or along the route that you would, if you were in
4 there, where you would say, I got -- I'm committed now to continue
5 going straight?

6 A. If weather was good enough to be in there, yeah, there's
7 plenty of room to maneuver in there. But if it was choked up with
8 clouds, you wouldn't be in there.

9 Q. Okay. So as far as defined chokepoints for weather, it's
10 Murphy's Law. It's what you see is what you get.

11 A. You have to make your own observation.

12 Q. And that's what you were referring to earlier. As you're
13 flying, not dispatching. As you're flying, you're always
14 evaluating and making a decision.

15 A. You have to. I mean, there's no other way to do it. You
16 can't base the whole flight on what's going on in one place in
17 southeast Alaska.

18 MR. SIPPERLEY: Okay.

19 DR. SILVA: Well, okay. You're good?

20 Do you have anything for us that you think that we should
21 look into further for the investigation?

22 MR. HASSELL: And I don't anyway. No.

23 DR. SILVA: All right. Well, thank you for your time.

24 MR. HASSELL: Yeah.

25 DR. SILVA: You know, we appreciate it.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: We're off the record at 3:34.

2 (Whereupon, at 3:34 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Clark Hassell

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA053

PLACE: TAQUAN AIR, KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

DATE: AUGUST 14, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T *

OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

*

Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: ADAM WEILAND

APPEARANCES:

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

MIKE O'BRIEN, Senior Pilot
Taquan Air

BOB RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. Weiland)

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:40 a.m.)

MR. WILLIAMS: And we're on the record at 10:40.

DR. SILVA: I'm Sathya Silva. I am Human Performance Investigator with the NTSB. Shaun and I have been working together on the operational, human factors side of this case. So let's start with introductions to see who you've got here. Specifically the FAA and their role here because it's not a typical role that you probably experienced with them. But, let's start with Shaun.

MR. WILLIAMS: So Shaun Williams. I'm the Operations Group Chairman for the investigation, NTSB out of Anchorage. You know, the role here for me it's, we're trying to find, do the background on the accident. Find out, operationally, what happened and how we can, if any changes need to be made or recommended, that sort of thing.

DR. SILVA: Matt?

MR. RIGSBY: Matt Rigsby out of the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation based in Washington, D.C. We're here, I'm here assisting Brad who is the FAA IIC for this accident. We're here for the safety end of it. Not here for any enforcement activity or anything. Anything that you say and hear can't be used for the enforcement side of the house. So, you know, just to put you at ease hopefully. It's not the typical black hat that may be associated with us a lot of times. It's the white hat.

1 DR. SILVA: Brad?

2 MR. SIPPERLEY: And I'm Brad Sipperley. You know I have a
3 Beaver hat too, so. And just so, IIC, just so you know, stands
4 for Investigator in Charge. That's what my role is on the FAA
5 side.

6 DR. SILVA: Okay. And Mike.

7 MR. O'BRIEN: He knows me already.

8 MR. WEILAND: Yeah.

9 DR. SILVA: Okay. Can you state for the record?

10 MR. O'BRIEN: Mike O'Brien, senior pilot, Taquan Air.

11 DR. SILVA: Great. So that's just who is in the room.

12 Again, we're working together purely in the name of safety which
13 is our role as the NTSB. We are not here to assign fault, blame,
14 liability, along, anything along those lines. That said, we are a
15 public organization. So we cannot offer any kind of
16 confidentiality or immunity. This interview is being recorded.
17 What will happen is we'll transcribe, or that the recording will
18 be transcribed. A copy of that transcription will become part of
19 the public docket, not the audio itself. You are entitled to have
20 a representative of your choice in this interview. Would you like
21 a representative?

22 MR. WEILAND: Yes.

23 DR. SILVA: And who would you like?

24 MR. WEILAND: Bob.

25 DR. SILVA: Okay. Let's see here. Okay. So how we will do

1 this is I will start out with a handful of questions and then we
2 will go around the room twice to make sure everyone has a chance
3 to ask you what they need. Any questions before we start?

4 MR. WEILAND: No.

5 DR. SILVA: Okay. Great.

6 INTERVIEW OF ADAM WEILAND

7 BY DR. SILVA:

8 Q. Can you state your full name for the record, please?

9 A. It's Adam William Weiland.

10 Q. And can you briefly run through your background in terms of
11 aviation history and what led you to where you are now?

12 A. Learned to fly in 2003 and got a ride in a float plane in
13 that same year and decided I wanted to do this for a living.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. So I was working towards that goal, got hired on up here June
16 of 2007.

17 Q. Okay. Where did you do your training?

18 A. Initially in Wisconsin.

19 Q. What ratings do you have?

20 A. I'm an ATP single and multi-engine land and sea.

21 Q. Um-hum. Anything else?

22 A. Well, flight instructor.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And when did you start flying in Alaska?

1 A. 2007.

2 Q. That's right, you said that.

3 A. June of 2007.

4 Q. And you, this is the only operator you've flown with?

5 A. Negative.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. In, just got to think of the dates here, October of 2008, I
8 flew for Andrew Airways up in Kodiak. And then, well, that lasted
9 until July of 2009 and I came back here. And then last summer, I
10 flew for Tikchik Narrows Lodge.

11 Q. Okay. So when in that timeframe have you been at Taquan?

12 A. All the other --

13 Q. Every --

14 A. Yeah, all the other periods in time.

15 Q. What's your total time?

16 A. I just crossed 10,000 hours.

17 Q. Okay. Congratulations.

18 A. Thanks.

19 Q. Do you have an estimate of how much time you've had flying in
20 the Alaska area?

21 A. 8800 hours.

22 Q. Okay. Are you IFR current?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Do you fly outside of work?

25 A. For my own pleasure in the wintertime, yeah.

1 Q. Um-hum. Do you currently fly in the summer or is that just a
2 winter activity for you?

3 A. You mean for fun?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. No, no it's just for work.

6 Q. What is your current position here?

7 A. Senior pilot.

8 Q. Um-hum. Do you hold any other roles within the company?

9 A. Negative.

10 Q. Okay. Do you have an estimate of how many hours you have in
11 your Otter?

12 A. Without looking at my logbook, 650.

13 Q. Okay. Have you flown with the accident pilot before?

14 A. I have not.

15 Q. Okay. Have you conducted any training with the accident
16 pilot?

17 A. CFIT avoidance training.

18 Q. Okay. Can you describe that training?

19 A. As in what we do?

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. So we put them on a simulator and we run them through
22 scenarios and we try to make it as realistic as possible. And
23 determine that they can make the correct decision at the correct
24 time to turn around and head back. It's -- yeah.

25 Q. Do you do any training in the aircraft?

1 A. Negative.

2 Q. Okay. So you're purely simulator?

3 A. Just on the simulator.

4 Q. Okay. Do you do any of the ground training?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Who does the ground training?

7 A. It's kind of, would it just be O'Connor? Yeah.

8 Q. Do you do the sim training for everyone that comes through?

9 A. Not everybody.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. But it's, got to look at the records to see --

12 Q. That's fine.

13 A. -- how many people I've done this year. But no, not

14 everybody.

15 Q. Not everyone, but do you do a majority of them?

16 A. I do a number of them. This year I've done five or so

17 people.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. But I'd have to look.

20 Q. Okay. How many people go through that training per season?

21 A. All.

22 Q. Okay. Have you noticed any trends in terms of difficulties?

23 Has anyone, not anyone really -- as people go through the training

24 are there any issues that people are having in particular? I

25 mean, any kind of --

1 A. Other than getting used to the simulator.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But that's not -- any simulator in existence. But we fly
4 them around, just let them control the simulator for a while so
5 they can get used to it and then we begin the actual training.

6 Q. Um-hum. Okay. Can you run through what the CFIT avoidance,
7 what you train for CFIT avoidance procedure?

8 A. It varies from pilot to pilot, but I've already said it once,
9 we give them scenarios. For instance, fly from this location to
10 this location, you know, give them some sort of a background. You
11 know, so and so on the other side says its good weather here, okay
12 you made the decision to make that flight in the sim and then at
13 some point I lower the weather on them.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. And my role is to determine, you know, that they have made
16 the correct decision at the correct time. To say the weather is
17 below minimums, it's below where I'm comfortable, return.

18 Q. So what procedure are you looking for from them once they get
19 into IMC?

20 A. The procedure is an estimation of ceiling and visibility and,
21 outside of that, pilot comfort. And if you determine it's not
22 comfortable, not safe, even if it's above legal minimums, turn
23 around. That's all I'm looking for. I'm looking for them to make
24 their decision-making process.

25 Q. Um-hum. Is there any kind of procedure you're expecting them

1 to follow in that process of turning around? I mean, any
2 guidance?

3 A. 180-degree turn away from terrain.

4 Q. Okay. Let me see here. Do you recall your session with the
5 accident pilot?

6 A. Not like it was yesterday.

7 Q. Okay. Do you recall fly, or doing the instruction with him?

8 A. Yes, I do.

9 Q. Do you recall any details of that instruction at that
10 session?

11 A. Nothing out of the ordinary.

12 Q. Okay. How do you like working for the company?

13 A. I love it. I've been up here for almost 12 years now.

14 Q. Okay. What's your favorite thing about it?

15 A. I get to fly a Turbine Otter on floats and even up to that
16 same vein a Beaver. That's what I came up here to do and I'm
17 doing it.

18 Q. If there was anything you could change about your job, what
19 would it be?

20 A. Not a thing.

21 Q. Um-hum. Have you felt any external pressures, whether it's
22 from the company passengers, anyone in any of your destinations?

23 A. No.

24 Q. How would you characterize morale amongst the pilot group?

25 A. I'd say it was high.

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. Everybody seems to be pretty happy to be here.

3 Q. So you started here 2007, correct?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. Was this before or after the previous accident happened?

6 A. Just before.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It was a month before.

9 Q. Were there any changes that you observed since then? From
10 before accident to after accident?

11 A. Oh, absolutely. The focus went directly to making it a safer
12 operation and that's when the Medallion Foundation, you know,
13 that's when we started really grinding hard on. But again, I was
14 brand new, I was a dock guy for half the season and I was working
15 the dock that day.

16 Q. Um-hum. Okay.

17 A. So I'd need, I don't know details on the accident other than
18 it happened.

19 Q. Um-hum. What kind of changes were made, like you said,
20 safety wise?

21 A. Just a stronger focus on CFIT avoidance.

22 Q. Okay. Were there new procedures, new training?

23 A. I'm not familiar with what was previously used, so no.

24 Q. Since this accident, has there been any changes in the
25 company? That you've seen.

1 A. That, that I've seen, no. It's, --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- can't answer that one.

4 Q. So have you, from your perspective, you haven't seen
5 anything? Any changes in procedures, policies, anything along
6 those lines?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. When, I just want to talk about the risk assessment
9 form. How do you use the risk assessment form as a pilot?

10 A. Well, dispatch determines all the factors involved, you know,
11 pilot, machinery, weather. I am allowed to take a look at it and
12 if I disagree with anything on that risk assessment form, I can
13 talk with the chief pilot or whoever's in operational control at
14 the time and elect to make a change.

15 Q. Okay. Have you done that before?

16 A. No, never had to.

17 Q. You've never changed anything?

18 A. Yeah, never had to change it.

19 Q. Did you get any training on how to use a risk assessment form
20 or evaluate it? What did that training look like?

21 A. It's basically just what I explained to you.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. They give you your risk assessment, you can look it over. If
24 there's anything you disagree with, anything that you care to add
25 to it, you are more than free to do so.

1 Q. Okay. So before you take a flight, what kind of procedures
2 do you go through? From when you come to the airport, or even
3 before you get to the airport, what, again kind of walk us through
4 what you would, what you do.

5 A. First thing I'm looking at is weather.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Where am I going? What's the weather look like between here
8 and there.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. Wind, ceiling visibility, all the standard. And next to that
11 is what does my load look like? How heavy am I?

12 Q. Um-hum. Are there any minimums that you're particularly
13 concerned with or what's your criteria for --

14 A. It varies from location to location.

15 Q. Okay. So let's say you are going out West over to Steamboat.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. What would be a, what kind of weather would give you a no-go?

18 A. Most of the passes that we fly through if it's less than 1200
19 feet I'm just --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- not going to, not going to even bother. Because you can't
22 make it across the island.

23 Q. Okay. So if the ceiling anywhere is 1200 feet, is that, did
24 I understand that correctly?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Okay. Is that a personal minimum? Is that a company
2 minimum?

3 A. It's personal.

4 Q. Okay. You know what the company minimum is?

5 A. Company minimum is legal minimums.

6 Q. Okay. Have you gotten any pushback for sticking to your
7 personal minimum on these flights?

8 A. No.

9 DR. SILVA: I will pause here, hand it over to Shaun.

10 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

11 Q. So according, looking at the Mike's ground training form, the
12 CFIT training that you did -- well, first of all, are you just a
13 sim instructor then, for the CFIT? Or you do any other --

14 A. I do provide instruction in the aircraft too, but it's not --
15 I don't focus on CFIT. I focus on the company training.

16 Q. Okay. All right. And how long have you been an instructor?

17 A. For the company, since 2011.

18 Q. Okay. Okay. So on the ground training form, when you, when
19 you do the ground training, about how long does it take to
20 accomplish all the items on the form?

21 A. Just filling out the form?

22 Q. No, to actually do the training. Like, how long is the
23 training typically? Is it an hour, is it 8 hours, is it 7 hours?

24 A. Well, ground school, that's not my focus. I'm in the
25 aircraft, but are you talking per flight?

1 Q. Yeah. So I'll show you the form I'm talking about here.

2 This form here.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. Sorry. So is it normally an hour to cover all those items?

5 A. If it's recurrent, yes. Initial ground training, it should
6 be 8.

7 Q. Okay. So this one from May of this year, recurrent, is
8 1 hour. And then --

9 A. Is that recurrent?

10 Q. Yeah, that's recurrent. So last year for recurrent, it was 8
11 hours. And the year before it was 8 hours for recurrent. So I
12 mean there's a lot of items on there, so what I'm curious about is
13 --

14 A. They sit in with the new pilots. That just --

15 Q. For the recurrent?

16 A. Well, those previous years. He sat in with the new pilots
17 every year on the full initial ground school which is why his
18 recurrent rates 8.

19 Q. Okay. So then the one, is that more of a one-on-one?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. So what determines whether the training will be
22 accomplished one-on-one versus sitting in with the ground school?

23 A. Time, time and availability.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Okay. Matt?

25 BY MR. RIGSBY:

1 Q. Have you ever been with the FAA, had an FAA inspector ride
2 along one of your flights? Either evaluating you as a check
3 airman or --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. When was that?

6 A. Oh man.

7 Q. Estimate is fine. This year or last year?

8 A. 2013 or '14, it was one of those, one of those two.

9 Q. Do you recall was it the POI?

10 A. It was our POI.

11 Q. Okay. Do you recall his name?

12 A. Was it Jon Percy at the time? They change all the time and
13 I --

14 Q. Sure. Had you seen Jon before or since 2014? Either just
15 here, maybe not evaluating you, but other pilots?

16 A. In passing. I'm usually headed out on a flight.

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. So I'm not sure what he's up to other than hey how are you?

19 Q. Sure. Okay. Have you been ramp checked by somebody other
20 than John?

21 A. Yes, and if you're going to look for names --

22 Q. No, no, that's fine. It was just, but has it been at least
23 once a season?

24 A. Oh yeah.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah. Sometimes --

2 Q. Multiple times?

3 A. -- several more times than once.

4 Q. All right. Has that always been here at Taquan or has it

5 been out when you're someplace else?

6 A. When I flew in Kodiak, one time there.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. That was so long ago, I, again, I don't remember who it was.

9 But otherwise, yeah, always at Taquan.

10 Q. Okay. How many total pilots does Taquan have? Do you know?

11 A. Twenty-two.

12 Q. Okay. And have you, I mean as a senior pilot, do you, at one

13 time, do you touch all of them or fly with all of them at one, you

14 know --

15 A. Not necessarily. You're talking with training?

16 Q. Correct.

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. That would be, that would be pretty tough --

20 Q. Sure.

21 A. -- for one.

22 Q. On the preflight risk assessment, so when you first see it,

23 it's already filled out for you?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And then you have the ability to change it?

1 A. I have the ability to add anything I, if I determine
2 something extra should be on there for myself I can add it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. If I see something that I don't agree with, I can talk to
5 whoever's in operational control and discuss.

6 Q. Sure. And then do you sign that form?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. It gets signed.

10 Q. When you're flying out there, do you have other personal
11 devices that you use for weather backup --

12 A. No.

13 Q. -- for flight or flight path? Okay. Do you use a fixed,
14 when you're doing the CFIT training simulator, is there a fixed
15 syllabus for that? Basically, a checklist that they're either
16 passing or failing?

17 A. It's a satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

18 Q. That's right, I'm sorry. Have you ever had any
19 unsatisfactory?

20 A. Negative.

21 Q. Okay. Is there a place on the form for you to add additional
22 comments? If you feel a guy needs additional training?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. There is.

1 Q. And have you had that experience to maybe come back and
2 recommend?

3 A. Negative.

4 Q. Okay. Ever made positive comments on the forms before?

5 A. Say again?

6 Q. Have you made positive comments? Like --

7 A. Negative.

8 Q. Okay. So generally you just, it's a --

9 A. It's usually just satisfactory, unsatisfactory. I put the
10 scenario I put them through.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yeah.

13 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. That's it.

14 DR. SILVA: Okay. Brad?

15 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

16 Q. So you say you had the ability to add to the flight risk
17 assessment as you see necessary. How often would you say you
18 actually do that?

19 A. Not very.

20 Q. Not very often?

21 A. It's, for me, it's very rare. I mean, normally everybody's
22 on the same page. So I can look at it, if they determine that
23 it's no fly, I don't need to add anything to that.

24 Q. When you have had to add things to the flight risk
25 assessment, do you recall what is, what area? Was it manpower,

1 weather?

2 A. It's typically manpower. Not feeling that great that day,
3 you add a point for that. Or two or whatever you determine it's
4 going to be.

5 Q. Okay. With respect to the simulator training, that's a
6 Medallion provided simulator?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. And they maintain it and --

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Okay. Is it, does it have the Chelton Avionics?

11 A. Negative.

12 Q. Negative. Okay. So let's --

13 A. It's all visual.

14 Q. So it's not really so much instrument, it's just the visual
15 screens you're looking at?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. So is the terrain you're looking at, you have specific areas
18 you said you take them into?

19 A. They don't stay the same. It'll vary from one pilot to the
20 next.

21 Q. Okay. So --

22 A. And it's --

23 Q. I'm sorry --

24 A. I'm sorry, keep going.

25 Q. No, you keep going. No, so you can select areas around here?

1 Like, for example, the Misty Fjords area.

2 A. I keep it in the area. I keep it in this general area, but I
3 don't want to give two people the same exact scenario.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. They'll go talk to each other and hey do this thing.

6 Q. So all that we're looking at in that simulator training,
7 there is visual cues --

8 A. Visual cues.

9 Q. -- based on terrain --

10 A. Decision-making ability.

11 Q. Nothing to do with instrumentation --

12 A. Negative.

13 Q. -- or terrain graphics? Okay. Okay. So you said that time
14 and availability determines, you know, how long you actually spend
15 on the recurrent training --

16 A. For the ground.

17 Q. -- the ground subjects. How do you, do you effectively take
18 what normally takes 8 hours and compress it to one hour?

19 A. The initial training is 8.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. The recurrent is one. So if they decide they want to sit in
22 on that recurrent training, that's their choice.

23 MR. O'BRIEN: Initial.

24 MR. WEILAND: Initial, yeah. Did I say recurrent, yeah, I
25 meant --

1 Q. Right. But still, in the recurrent, there's still 13
2 subjects you still, you know, marked off as being satisfactory.
3 So how do you cover effectively 13 subjects in an hour? Do you
4 feel that's an adequate enough time to do those 13 subjects for
5 recurrent training?

6 A. I do.

7 Q. You do? Okay. Who fills out, you know, you have the
8 training forms that are generated and then, of course, you have to
9 document and sign the training. Who, are you validating the
10 pilot's credentials before you conduct the training?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. So you validate all the information on the check
13 boards. Okay. I know you've said it once, can you just one more
14 time the 180 degree --

15 A. Turn away from terrain.

16 Q. -- turn away from terrain maneuver. That's all based on
17 visual cues. Nothing to do with graphics, nothing to do with --

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. -- any type of avionics.

20 A. The simulator doesn't have --

21 MR. SIPPERLEY: Doesn't have that in there. Okay. I don't
22 have any more questions.

23 DR. SILVA: Okay. Mike?

24 MR. O'BRIEN: I don't think so.

25 DR. SILVA: All right. I had a few follow-ups.

1 BY DR. SILVA:

2 Q. Have you flown through the Sulzer Pass before?

3 A. Several times.

4 Q. Okay. How many would you say? How often I guess.

5 A. A few dozen.

6 Q. Okay. Do you feel comfortable going through there?

7 A. Absolutely. As long as minimums are within my own personal -

8 -

9 Q. Okay. And is 1200 still a good altitude for that pass?

10 A. Oh, plenty.

11 Q. Okay. If you had to go lower, what would your minimum be?

12 A. I wouldn't.

13 Q. Okay. And why 1200 for this pass?

14 A. It gives you adequate clearance above terrain and even right

15 in the middle, you're able to glide either direction back to

16 water.

17 Q. Okay. Have you ever called in sick or called in fatigue for

18 a flight?

19 A. Negative.

20 Q. Okay. Do you know of anyone who has?

21 A. I can't recall at the moment.

22 Q. Okay. When you train the course reversal, or you test the

23 course reversal in the simulator, what altitude do you set them up

24 at?

25 A. It varies.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. It is all dependent on where I set them initially, where they
3 are going. As this is why I change it from one pilot to the next.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I offer a little variety.

6 Q. So is the altitude below max terrain in that area? Is it
7 something that is clear of terrain?

8 A. They are typically in a mountain pass.

9 Q. Okay. Do you have a general altitude below the terrain?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Like how far into the pass they are?

12 A. No, it just depends on the pass. Mountains are, they're not
13 consistently the same size.

14 Q. Okay. And is there any guidance given on which direction to
15 turn in order to do that course reversal?

16 A. Yes, they should be following one side of the valley or the
17 other.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And it is, the advice that I provide to them is, you know, if
20 you're on one side of that valley or the other, turn the other
21 way.

22 Q. Um-hum. Is there a specific bank angle that you look for?
23 Or aggressiveness to that maneuver?

24 A. Negative.

25 Q. Okay. How wide are these passes? Is it plenty to do with

1 the standard rate turn?

2 A. They vary.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Some will be a mile wide, some will be a mile and a half.

5 Q. Okay. Usually in that mile, mile and a half area?

6 A. Usually.

7 Q. Okay. As an instructor, what is the, what's the company
8 policies on checklist usage or how do you train checklists?

9 A. Every phase of flight.

10 Q. Okay. And is that a challenge response kind of thing? Is it
11 a memory, is it a -- is that by memory and verify with a
12 checklist? Is it line item by line item? How do you --

13 A. Line item.

14 Q. Okay. Is that written somewhere?

15 A. It's in every aircraft.

16 Q. Okay. Is the, is the policy on how to use the checklist
17 written anywhere, as far as you know, in company policy?

18 A. Can't answer that.

19 Q. All right.

20 A. As far as I know.

21 Q. Have you ever flown with anyone who does not do that line
22 item by line item policy?

23 A. Negative.

24 DR. SILVA: Okay. All right. I think I'm done for now.

25 Shaun?

1 MR. WILLIAMS: I just have a few questions here, not long.

2 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

3 Q. Do instruct in both the Beaver and the Otter?

4 A. Just the Beaver.

5 Q. Just the Beaver. Okay. So that takes care of my next
6 question then. When you do the cue-base training, about how long
7 does that training session take?

8 A. One hour.

9 Q. Okay. So the training, the cue-base training takes an hour?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. So I think this is kind of getting to what Brad was
12 talking about earlier, still looking at the training form, it says
13 the duration is 1.0. The cue-base training is part of that. So
14 if that one item takes an hour, how are the other 12 covered?

15 A. I can't answer that one at the moment.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. That's all I have.

17 DR. SILVA: Matt?

18 BY MR. RIGSBY:

19 Q. Do you have, do you do CFIT training in the aircraft as well?
20 Under the hood, as a check airman?

21 A. Negative.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Well, it's, the simulator is where we focus on it.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And in the aircraft, it comes as just part of that training

1 session.

2 Q. Okay. I mean, obviously, under the hood or the foggles,
3 I'd --

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. Okay. And do you, how do you, do you incorporate the Chelton
6 into that? The Chelton display into the set training?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. And how does that go? I mean, as far as does it, you
9 know, as far as the display that you're seeing on the Chelton. Is
10 it accurate? You know, I think, do you activate terrain feature
11 or the, uninhibit the Chelton in a CFIT training?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. Does the Chelton, is it seen fairly representative for
14 the area or are there gaps in it? As far as the way it's
15 displaying the terrain?

16 A. I believe it does.

17 Q. Okay. Okay. All the way, does it cut off at certain use or
18 altitude?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. When you say cut off --

22 Q. Well, I mean, does it, like if you're over water but it's
23 showing it as brown.

24 A. Oh yeah.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. If you're on a landing, it'll paint it orange and red if it
2 doesn't recognize water as a landing area.

3 Q. Okay. Are both the Otters and the Beavers configured the
4 same in the cockpit with the Chelton display?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Have you seen, as a check airman, have you seen guys, if they
7 go from a Beaver to an Otter --

8 A. I'm not a check airman.

9 Q. Oh, you're not.

10 A. Just an instructor.

11 MR. RIGSBY: Just the, okay. Okay. Nothing further.

12 DR. SILVA: Um-hum. Brad?

13 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

14 Q. So everything in the simulator is just visual you said. So
15 if you go, so you don't practice actually doing inadvertent IMC in
16 the simulator? I mean if you go inadvertent IMC in the simulator,
17 if you do, what are they using then?

18 A. Reciprocal heading.

19 Q. So we're just doing 180 using the heading indicator? Okay.
20 I noticed in the other room, there looked like there was a couple
21 of Chelton boxes there. Is that, is that something you also
22 incorporate in when you do the simulator training?

23 A. Yes, and that is a whole separate, that's a whole separate
24 section of the training is, there's a item list of functions they
25 should be familiar with on the Chelton system that they have to

1 run through.

2 Q. So that's more of a functionality check on the Chelton --

3 A. Functionality and how to use it.

4 Q. But they're not, the two aren't incorporated, as far as the
5 CFIT training? Like you don't do a CFIT based, anything on that
6 as far as the CFIT training --

7 A. No.

8 Q. -- based on the Chelton? Okay.

9 A. No, it's functionality only.

10 MR. SIPPERLEY: Functional. Okay. I've got no more
11 questions.

12 DR. SILVA: Okay. Mike?

13 MR. O'BRIEN: No, I'm good.

14 DR. SILVA: Shaun, you have --

15 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

16 Q. Yeah, I just had a follow-up to the TAWS question. So it
17 doesn't recognize the water as a landing area. Have you flown
18 over the same routes in a Beaver and an Otter?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Do you remember any differences with the TAWS alerting at
21 altitude?

22 A. No.

23 Q. So they tend to go off about the same?

24 A. Oh yeah, yeah, they're all set to the same parameters.

25 Q. They are? Okay. TAWS switch live in inhibit position.

1 A. If it's in inhibit it doesn't give you the audible warning.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. If it's in enable, it'll give you the audible warning, but it
4 always will paint yellow and red depending on your altitude above
5 said terrain.

6 Q. Okay. How many flights are you doing today?

7 A. On average, five, six.

8 Q. No, today.

9 A. Oh today?

10 Q. Yeah, do you have any more flights today?

11 A. I haven't done any today, yet. As of right now, I've got
12 two.

13 Q. Are you scheduled to fly both the Beaver and the Otter today?

14 A. Just the Otter.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Just the Otter. Okay. Okay, I'm done.

16 BY DR. SILVA:

17 Q. Just to follow-up on the TAWS, how do you use the TAWS when
18 you fly?

19 A. In passes, in lower weather, I mean, you keep it away from
20 the red and yellow.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But otherwise, I'm looking out the window. I'm not worried
23 about, and I shouldn't say not worried. I'm not, I'm less
24 concerned with relying on this box down here that paints yellow
25 and red when I can look out the window and say I don't like it,

1 turn around.

2 Q. Okay. So that's regarding the visual. Do you have the aural
3 alerts on at all under a normal operation? Or do you keep that
4 inhibited?

5 A. In normal operation, no I keep it inhibited.

6 Q. Okay. Have you had an instance where you've turned it on
7 actively? You made a decision to turn it on?

8 A. Negative. I like to turn around before that even needs to be
9 a thing.

10 Q. Okay. Is there any sort of policy that the company has on
11 enabling or enabling or disabling the TAWS?

12 A. I can't answer that one.

13 DR. SILVA: Okay. Okay.

14 MR. WEILAND: All right.

15 DR. SILVA: Everyone's good? Hold on one sec. We thank you
16 for your time. Is there anything that we didn't ask you that you
17 may think might help us that contribute to the investigation?

18 MR. WEILAND: I don't think so.

19 DR. SILVA: Okay. Well, you have our information and feel
20 free to reach out if you do think of anything. And appreciate
21 your time.

22 MR. WEILAND: All right. Thank you.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: We're off the record at 11:20.

24 (Whereupon, at 11:20 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Adam Weiland

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA053

PLACE: TAQUAN AIR, KETCHIKAN ALASKA

DATE: AUGUST 15, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Sonya M. Terry
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T

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OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

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Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: LEAH KLINGER

APPEARANCES:

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

MIKE O'CONNOR, Chief Pilot
Taquan Air

ROBERT RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Ms. Klinger)

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I N T E R V I E W

1 MR. WILLIAMS: All right, so the recorder is going now.

2 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: My name is Shaun Williams. I am with the NTSB
4 out of Anchorage, Alaska. I'm the operations group chairman.
5 Trying to look at the background of the investigation, the
6 accident, and try to figure out -- help piece together from an
7 operational standpoint as far as what could have contributed to
8 the accident.

9 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay? We're a federal agency charged with
11 determining probable cause of transportation accidents. We are
12 not a part of the DOT or FAA. We have no regulatory or
13 enforcement powers at all.

14 Have a couple -- few different people here with us. We're
15 going to go around, just let everyone, kind of, introduce
16 themselves and their role and what they're all here for. So I'll
17 start with Sathya.

18 DR. SILVA: I'm Sathya Silva. I am a human performance
19 investigator with the NTSB. So I'm based in Washington, DC, and
20 we work closely with operations, given the realm of the
21 information that we're looking at, to look at pilot decision-
22 making, (indiscernible), things like that. (Indiscernible).

23 MS. KLINGER: Perfect.

24 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. I'm Matt Rigsby out of the FAA's Office
25

1 of Accident Investigation, assisting Brad, who's the FAA
2 coordinator IIC on this accident, so --

3 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

4 MR. SIPPERLEY: Brad Sipperley from Fairbanks. I'm the
5 investigator-in-charge. I'm on this team. I'm not here to do
6 anything as far as enforcement, so you can just -- here to help
7 try to figure out what operationally and what factors, you know,
8 helped contribute to this accident and how we can prevent it in
9 the future.

10 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

11 MR. O'CONNOR: She knows me.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: For the record.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, for the -- oh. Mike O'Connor, chief
14 pilot, Taquan Air and NTSB party rep.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: So you okay talking with all of us here --

16 MS. KLINGER: Sure.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: -- today? Okay. So we'll be using a tape
18 recorder to record the interview. It'll be sent for
19 transcription. The transcript, not the audio recording, will
20 become part of the public docket when we're all said and done.

21 The purpose of the investigation, like we said, is just
22 safety. It's to determine the probable cause and try and prevent
23 it from happening again. Our role -- we don't assign fault,
24 blame, liability. This is all just part of the factfinding phase
25 of the investigation. We cannot, however, offer any guarantee of

1 confidentiality or immunity.

2 The way these kind of go, each group member will have a
3 chance to ask questions. I'll start, and then we'll, kind of, go
4 around the room. Probably do about two rounds of questions. So
5 bear with us. Sometimes we end up skipping around a little bit,
6 but --

7 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Please answer all the questions to the best of
9 your recollection. If you don't understand a question, ask for
10 clarification, ask for it to be repeated, anything like that. If
11 your realize you misstated and want to change an answer, please do
12 so.

13 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: When you do answer, because it's a tape
15 recorder, just try to be -- I know it's really hard not to just
16 nod. But just try to answer so it picks it up --

17 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: -- please. So you're entitled to have one
19 representative of your choosing. Is there someone you would like
20 to have as your representative?

21 MR. RICHMOND: She's already decided. Yeah.

22 MS. KLINGER: Bob is here.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

24 MR. RICHMOND: You should just assume that's going to be the
25 case. Everybody will just say the word Bob.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: We're still going to ask it.

2 MR. RICHMOND: Okay. Thank you, Leah.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: So Bob, you may direct Leah not to answer a
4 question or to request a short break with her. However, you may
5 not answer a question for her. (Indiscernible).

6 MR. RICHMOND: I think none of those will happen, I'm sure.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: Do you have any questions before we begin?

8 MS. KLINGER: No.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

10 INTERVIEW OF LEAH KLINGER

11 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

12 Q. So for the record, could you please state your name and job
13 title?

14 A. Leah Klinger, and I'm a dispatcher.

15 Q. Okay. And how do you spell your last name, Leah?

16 A. K-L-I-N-G-E-R.

17 Q. Okay. So how long have you been with Taquan?

18 A. 2004.

19 Q. So can you, kind of, give us a little bit of your background?

20 A. How far back do you want me to go? Like, college? All the
21 way back?

22 Q. We can kind of start -- so since 2004, have you only been
23 here? Have you worked at other companies?

24 A. No. I've been with Taquan since 2004. I graduated from
25 Embry-Riddle in -- let's see. Was that '92? And I've worked at

1 Taquan Air -- I started the first time in 1996. I went to
2 Seaborne Aviation in '98. And then got my dispatch license and
3 went to Frontier Flying Service for a winter, and went to Alaska
4 Airlines in 2000. And came back to Taquan Air in 2004.

5 Q. Okay. So are you a pilot?

6 A. No.

7 Q. No. Okay. And you said you have your dispatcher's license,
8 so you're --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- certificated?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. So when you came to Taquan, kind of, talk to me about
13 your training. What kind of training have you had here? What it
14 consists of.

15 A. Most of the training is on-the-job training of looking at
16 weather, putting flights together, how the flights pay. Looking
17 at how all the flights go together and -- right, so that it's
18 profitable. Looking at safety with weather. And like I, like I
19 said, most of it is just on-the-job training. It fully takes
20 probably at least 2 years, I think, to train a dispatcher. A
21 flight follower. We're not dispatchers.

22 Q. Okay. Was there any classroom portion? Do you still go
23 through any classroom portion, or is it still just kind of on the
24 job?

25 A. There's classroom portion we do with the pilots. We sit in

1 with them and -- for a day. Recurrent training every year. I
2 think we sit in for 8 hours? I'm guessing.

3 Q. When was the last time you did recurrent?

4 A. In April.

5 Q. Are there any forms you sign at the end of it or anything
6 like that? Or training records (indiscernible)?

7 A. Well, there are the recurrent tests that we take every year.

8 Q. Okay. Do you know who keeps those records?

9 A. They're kept in the DO's office.

10 Q. Okay. So if you could, walk me through just a normal day.
11 From when you show up, how does your day go? Time you get here,
12 breaks, workload, that sort of thing.

13 A. From the time I walk in the door, you sit down, turn the
14 computers on, answer the messages. You open up -- look at the
15 daily sheets. You open up the computer and look at all the
16 weather. And then the chief pilot or the person in operational
17 control for the day sits down, and we talk about the weather. And
18 then the day starts with the first flights of the day. In the
19 summertime, it can be tours. It can be scheduled flights. And in
20 the wintertime, it's scheduled flights.

21 Q. How long does your day go?

22 A. I work three 10-hour days. That's all I work. Monday
23 through Wednesday.

24 Q. So you mentioned that you look at all the weather. What kind
25 of weather are you looking at?

1 A. So I start in the computer, and the first tab that opens,
2 it's called Lincoln Rock Winds, and it tells me what the winds are
3 doing up outside of Coffman Cove. And then I look for the winds
4 over on the outside of Prince of Wales. And that kind of gauges
5 what we think it'll be doing out in the straits. You really don't
6 know until you get out there. Then I pull up the winds aloft for
7 Annette at 3000 feet and I look at what the trend is going to be
8 for the day for the three reporting periods.

9 The next tab that I open is the TAF and the METAR for
10 Ketchikan, and I read that. Then I go to the Clarence Straits for
11 the marine weather and I look at that weather. Then I look at the
12 marine weather for the Canadians and I look at that. And then I
13 open up the webcams, the FAA weather cams. And I start with Hyder
14 and I look at Hyder. I look at the Misty Fjords. The two
15 reporting cams at Alva and Minx, which is twin islands, and Minx.
16 And then I go to Metlakatla and look at the seaplane base there
17 and observe the weather, again, at Annette, and look at what the
18 METAR is in Annette. Then I go to Mountain Point, Ketchikan,
19 Point Higgins, Meyers Chuck, Kasaan, Hydaburg, Harris River,
20 Craig, Klawock, Coffman Cove, Edna Bay, Port Alexander, Level
21 Island, and then I'll sometimes look at Wrangell as well.

22 Q. Are you looking at the forecast, TAFs, radar, satellite?

23 A. The only -- there are the FAA weather cameras. There are the
24 actual cameras of what it's showing there. The only ones that
25 have METARs are -- and TAFs is Annette. Annette Island doesn't

1 have a TAF. There's a METAR at Annette. And Annette has a -- I
2 don't know if it has a TAF. Sometimes we'll look at what the
3 METARs are doing down in Canada around Prince Rupert for a trend
4 of what the winds are doing coming up. Klawock has a METAR and a
5 TAF. And then Wrangell will have a METAR. Hydaburg has a METAR.
6 It's just at their seaplane base. So those are the only ones with
7 METARs.

8 Q. So when you check the weather, you mentioned that you sit
9 down with whoever's got operational control at that point and kind
10 of talk to him about that. Do you talk with the pilots about the
11 weather?

12 A. So the pilots that have their flights that are being
13 dispatched will come in and -- so a typical morning, if -- say
14 Mike O'Brien is the one that is taking the flight. Then I'll --
15 we'll look at the weather and he'll look at the weather, and I'll
16 say, well, it looks good to me; what do you think? And he'll say
17 the same. And we always make sure that we concur before they take
18 a flight.

19 Q. Is there a formal risk assessment that you do or the pilots
20 do or --

21 A. We have a risk assessment.

22 Q. So who completes that?

23 A. I fill out -- it's a canned form that we have online, you
24 know, on our computer. And then I'll fill it out based on the
25 weather that I've, I have observed and any reports that we get

1 from outlying stations or any other aircraft.

2 Q. Does the pilot have any input in that form, or do you have it
3 pretty much completed?

4 A. He does. I complete it and hand it to him, and then it is up
5 to him to make any changes if he disagrees or wants to add
6 anything to it.

7 Q. You mentioned the person with operational control. What is
8 operational control?

9 A. Operational control. So we have Mike O'Connor, our director
10 of operations, or a person that they designate as operational
11 control to help make flight operation decisions, whether we are
12 going to fly or are we not going to fly, and based on that,
13 weather conditions for the day and at that moment.

14 Q. How do you know who it's going to be?

15 A. Mike O'Connor has designated them.

16 Q. I mean, is there a list, or does he call in in the morning
17 and say -- I mean, how do you know who is going to have
18 operational control at that --

19 A. He has a pilot schedule, and there are days that he has
20 operational control. It'll either be him or a senior pilot. When
21 he's not -- does not have operational control, then it's either
22 Mike O'Brien or Clark Hassell. He'll designate one of them.

23 Q. So how often do you see that person that's got it during the
24 day?

25 A. Mike O'Connor is usually right there with us and is there the

1 majority of the day. He'll take breaks. Mike O'Brien hangs out
2 in dispatch and right there at the computer behind dispatch.

3 Q. So are those guys taking flights also during the day, or are
4 they pretty much just with you guys?

5 A. No, they're, they're hanging out just there.

6 Q. Okay. Do you -- what is your authority with operational
7 control? Do you have any -- how does that --

8 A. No. I'm the flight follower. I take care of the aircraft
9 reporting to us every 30 minutes. I continually look at the
10 weather and advise, but no, I don't have operational control.

11 Q. Okay. Do you have the authority to cancel a flight?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. For what reasons?

14 A. If I do not agree that the weather -- or if it is, if it is
15 not a profitable flight. We can also cancel it if there -- so
16 revenue, basically. With a tour, if it's weather related. But we
17 usually -- if it cancels for -- like, say, the passengers have
18 canceled and it's no longer a profitable flight, then I will just
19 cancel it and notify the person in operational control. But if
20 it's weather related, we're always discussing together.

21 Q. Can you initiate a flight?

22 A. No, the pilot initiates the flight. So I guess --

23 Q. Well, I think, I think what I mean is, if you have, you know,
24 a bunch of people that come in off the street and say, hey, we
25 want to go take a tour, can you create that flight and get a pilot

1 and an airplane for it? Can you --

2 A. Yes. With concurrence with the person that's in operational
3 control. Say, hey, we've got, you know, four people that want to
4 go on a Misty that just walked in the door. The weather is still
5 operational, we believe. And so yeah, and then they say, yeah.

6 Q. You ever been observed by the FAA doing your flight
7 coordinator duties?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Do you recall who or when or the last time, or any
10 information about that?

11 A. I think Jon Percy was just here April? Was Jon Percy here in
12 April?

13 MR. RIGSBY: Yes, he was.

14 MS. KLINGER: And at that point, he was our POI, so --

15 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

16 Q. I want to go back to the training a little bit. The ground
17 training, the recurrent training that you do, what does that
18 training consist of?

19 A. So the ground training, we have a test that goes over the
20 FARs and those types of questions. We sit in on the pilot
21 training when they talk about weather, and talk about loads and
22 customer service. And then -- that's all I can think of at the
23 time when -- for the official training that we sit in on.

24 Q. How long does it normally last? Sorry if you said that
25 already. It's --

1 A. That's okay. It's usually one day. I think it's 4 hours
2 minimum? We usually spend an afternoon. I don't know, I don't
3 know the exact timeframe.

4 Q. Okay. When you discuss the weather with the pilots, is it a
5 joint decision whether a flight's going to go? Is it more one-
6 sided?

7 A. So I give them the weather. It's ultimately the pilot's
8 decision whether the plane goes or not.

9 Q. Okay. Do you make any suggestion one way or the other to
10 them?

11 A. No, you give them the information and they make the decision.

12 Q. Have you thought -- have you run into a situation where you
13 believed that the wrong decision was made?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Kind of talk to me a little bit about how you, how you track
16 the flights.

17 A. So from the time they call off, they report every 30 minutes.
18 So a typical flight to Craig would be they call off with their
19 load and their fuel load, their passenger load and fuel load.
20 They will call me within 30 minutes. It's usually they'll call
21 Hollis for Craig, which is 30 minutes away. Then they call again
22 when they are landing, usually 5 minutes out. Landing Craig in 5.
23 Once again, when they leave Craig, I also have the program that's
24 ADSBAmerica.com, which we call CRABS. You can see them on the
25 computer screen. It's live. And you'll see them pop up, and

1 they'll call us when they get in the air. They have to get enough
2 altitude to call us.

3 And they'll call Craig inbound. Then they usually call again
4 somewhere around in the Hollis area again when they're 30 minutes
5 out, and then they'll always call -- not always, but they'll call
6 more for the dock to let them know that they're inbound. They'll
7 call, like, Vallenar or Guard Island, usually 10 minutes out. And
8 then they call landing.

9 Q. Okay. So do you guys file FAA flight plans, flight service,
10 or is it all company?

11 A. It's all company.

12 Q. You were on --

13 A. They do file flight plans if they're going to Prince Rupert,
14 because they're going international.

15 Q. Okay. So you were the flight coordinator on duty the day of
16 the accident; is that correct?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Had you worked with Mike before?

19 A. Hudgins?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. What kind of conversations did you guys have that morning?

23 A. We went over the weather. I briefed him what the weather was
24 here and what the weather was called in for Steamboat. And he had
25 also looked at the cameras. And they loaded the aircraft and --

1 so that's -- that was our conversation.

2 Q. Who does the fuel loading? How does that get determined?

3 A. Who does the what?

4 Q. Fuel load.

5 A. The pilot.

6 Q. Pilot. They determine what they need?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Okay. What was Mike's demeanor when he came in that morning?

9 Did he seem normal? Did he seem distracted? Was there anything
10 stood out?

11 A. Normal.

12 Q. Okay. What is that like for him? Is it kind of quiet? Is
13 he bouncing off the walls because he had too much coffee? Help me
14 out here a little bit.

15 A. Smile on the face, gives you a hug, tells you good morning,
16 and is happy to be working. Happy to be there.

17 Q. So you had worked with him for a while; is that right?

18 A. I want to say it was his fourth season with us? Fifth
19 season? I don't know exactly how many years.

20 Q. Okay. Ever make any safety decisions or anything that gave
21 you cause for concern?

22 A. No.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm going to pause right there. I'm going to
24 let Sathya --

25 MS. KLINGER: Sure.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: -- ask you questions.

2 BY DR. SILVA:

3 Q. How do you like working here?

4 A. I like it.

5 Q. What's your favorite thing?

6 A. My favorite thing about working at Taquan Air? The family
7 atmosphere that we have.

8 Q. What's your least favorite thing about working here?

9 A. That I'm working.

10 Q. Okay. If there was anything you could change, what would it
11 be?

12 A. Anything that I could change?

13 Q. Say you were queen for the day.

14 A. That Leah didn't have to work as much.

15 Q. How would you describe the safety culture?

16 A. We have a great safety culture. We have -- safety is the
17 first and foremost thought process.

18 Q. Can you give me an example of that?

19 A. On any given day, if we have a flight that we don't think --
20 like, with a tour. If we don't think it's going to be a quality
21 tour for the customer, then it doesn't happen. So safety comes
22 into that first in the way of, if you don't have a good ceiling
23 and visibility to provide a quality tour where the guest is going
24 to see, say, the Misty Fjords, if they're going to be looking at
25 this, then that's not a quality tour in our mind. And so that

1 safety comes into play.

2 Q. So you've been here -- what is it now? Fourteen years?

3 A. Fourteen years. That's how old my oldest is, yes.

4 Q. How has the company changed? Evolved?

5 A. So from when I worked in the '90s here at Taquan Air, which
6 was a completely different owner and that was back in the day when
7 there were logging and fishing and you didn't fly tours, you were
8 -- very rare did you do tours back then. So it was a different
9 mindset. Aviation has evolved over all of those years, and it is
10 a more safer, conservative -- definitely very conservative
11 compared to how it used to be back in the day in the late '90s.
12 And I truly believe that we are the most conservative on the
13 waterfront when it comes to flying and aviation. Everyone,
14 though, is so much different than it used to be in the way of
15 being conservative and watching the weather and not taking chances
16 and not being out there when they shouldn't be. Just the whole
17 waterfront has changed in that mindset, I think.

18 Q. Does the company have a safety program?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What does that look like from your point of view?

21 A. That safety is the number one priority. We have a risk
22 assessment where we have bullet points that you look at. And we
23 have a reporting program that can be anonymous or is looked into
24 and reported on. Our safety program just puts that as the
25 priority as opposed to the dollar signs, and that's what is the

1 most important, I think.

2 Q. Okay. Have you ever reported something to the safety
3 program, I guess?

4 A. Not that I can think of. Other than maybe a trip hazard on
5 the dock.

6 Q. Do you recall how that was handled, if you did report that?

7 A. So we have a safety officer, and the process for that is,
8 when it's reported, then it is looked into and reported back to
9 the person. They try within 24 to 48 hours. Even if it's just to
10 say, hey, this is going to be fixed, or this is what the thought
11 process is to get it taken care of.

12 Q. Who is that safety officer?

13 A. I don't -- it was Mike O'Brien. I believe he still is.
14 Hopefully I'm not throwing anybody under the bus.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: You're not.

16 MS. KLINGER: Okay. Phew.

17 BY DR. SILVA:

18 Q. So you mentioned that you do some training with the pilots.
19 What part of training is that?

20 A. I don't do any training with the pilots. I sit in on their
21 training when they are -- when Mike O'Connor is having ground
22 school.

23 Q. Okay. And do all flight followers do that?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. How many flight followers are there?

1 A. We have myself and Danita and Tyler and Deandra and Faith. I
2 think that's it. Five of us.

3 Q. Five?

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. Do you feel like that's enough?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. And when you were going through listing out the
8 weather stations that you're looking at, what specifically are you
9 looking for when you're looking at weather?

10 A. I'm looking on the cameras. If it's not something in
11 writing, I'm looking at the ceiling and the visibility and they
12 have a clear view day and a current day. And so you are gauging
13 what the pictures are looking at.

14 Q. And what limits are you, are you assessing?

15 A. What do you mean, what limits?

16 Q. So what's good enough to go?

17 A. Well, it has to be a minimum of 500 and 2. Passes are
18 obviously higher, because they're mountain passes. And I can only
19 give what is here and what it is perceived to be at the time.
20 Sometimes it's, well, this is what it looks like; it looks to be,
21 you know, say, 500 and 2, or it looks to be 1,000 and 5, or it
22 looks to be 20 miles and 2000 feet. Some days it's, we have good
23 weather here, good weather there; we know what we think it is
24 doing. Go take a look if you are comfortable. And they do. Some
25 days the only way to do that is to actually get a visual and to

1 send a scout plane out. Not a scout plane, but a plane to do a
2 weather check.

3 Q. Okay. How often do you have to do that, or do you do that, I
4 guess?

5 A. We concur with operational control and say, I think we -- it
6 looks like today is a day that we need to have a plane go take a
7 look at the weather before we operate any tours. Let's go take a
8 look. If it's -- obviously if it's not 500 and 2, you don't even
9 have to bother then.

10 Q. So how often is that something that happens? Once a week? A
11 couple times a week? Once a day?

12 A. It depends on the weather day, if it's a weather day. In the
13 summer -- I think we had one last Thursday out of 7 days. It
14 depends on the, on the year, on the, on the changes in -- some
15 years are great; some years are not. This year we've had a
16 beautiful summer. And so if it's a day that we think it's
17 marginal, then they do have a weather plane go out. Sometimes
18 it's every 2 hours. Sometimes it's once and they say it's not
19 good, and that finishes that, so -- today we didn't have one.

20 Q. Why is that?

21 A. Because it wasn't good.

22 Q. How full are your planes normally? How full are the flights?

23 A. What do you mean, how full?

24 Q. How full -- I want to use the term load factor. Is that a
25 term you guys use at all?

1 A. Um-um.

2 Q. So how many seats are booked or flown with passengers on each
3 flight, say, on average? Are you seeing all of the seats booked?
4 Are you seeing half of the seats booked?

5 A. It depends on if you're referring to tours or if you're
6 referring to scheduled flights. Scheduled flights, there are --
7 on any given day, there could be one person going to Metlakatla or
8 there could be four. We could have eight. It depends on what we
9 think the schedule will allow, if we have time in the schedule.

10 Q. Do you still fly if there's one person (indiscernible)?

11 A. Depending on if we have the revenue to -- it's a scheduled
12 flight for us. A 135 scheduled flight. So if we have mail
13 service also, then yes. If we have one person and it's not
14 profitable and the weather isn't good, then no, but --

15 Q. So for the tour flights, how full are these flights?

16 A. Well, they're full. We try to utilize, I would say, 80%.

17 Q. How many canceled flights would you say, on an average week,
18 you have?

19 A. I don't know.

20 Q. Okay. I'll think of another way to ask.

21 A. Well, yeah. I guess -- I can't come up with a number,
22 because I don't look at those. I dispatch for the day. That
23 would be more of a management question, kind of. One of the
24 managers.

25 Q. Okay. (Indiscernible).

1 A. And if we went by yesterday, there were no canceled flights.
2 If you went by today, every flight has been canceled so far. So
3 it's different every day, so I can't tell you in a week how many
4 are canceled, especially since I only work 3 days a week.

5 Q. How often are you canceling for revenue? You have to handle
6 those too, right?

7 A. Not often. In the wintertime, more often.

8 Q. So in the summer, what would that constitute, order of
9 magnitude? Is that once a week, once a month?

10 A. I don't know. Rarely, because we have -- summer is when you
11 make the revenue. So rarely are we canceling for lack of revenue.

12 DR. SILVA: All right. That's all I have for now.

13 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

14 MR. RICHMOND: Hey, Shaun, can you try to open the window
15 again a little bit? People have moved out from the front there.
16 Maybe it --

17 MS. KLINGER: Is it just too loud with the traffic, with
18 the --

19 MR. RICHMOND: Well, the problem is that you speak softly.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: That one car started up.

21 MR. RICHMOND: Yeah. Yeah.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: And then --

23 MS. KLINGER: Got you.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: So Matt?

25 BY MR. RIGSBY:

1 Q. So there's -- what are, what are some of the flight
2 qualifications for a flight coordinator?

3 A. Qualification?

4 Q. Yeah. Is there, like, a description, you know, if you're, if
5 you're hiring a new --

6 A. So --

7 Q. Do you try to look for somebody with a -- like, you're saying
8 you're a licensed dispatcher. Somebody with that type of
9 background, or is it something that you could take somebody off
10 the street and bring them into your position and do some training?
11 Or are you wanting them to train first?

12 A. So no. So it is not a requirement to be a licensed
13 dispatcher, and all of our flight coordinators have come in off
14 the street and done training. Some have been pilots, so that
15 helps. It's nice to have an aviation background. It's not
16 required.

17 Q. Is there a -- I guess, who do the flight coordinators report
18 to?

19 A. So they report to the station manager, which is Danita.

20 Q. Okay, is there, like, a lead? You've been here 14 years.
21 Are you the most senior --

22 A. Yeah, I'm considered a lead dispatcher.

23 Q. Okay. So if another dispatcher -- how many, how many are on
24 duty on a particular day?

25 A. On the day of the accident?

1 Q. Well, on the day of the accident, and then on an average day.

2 A. On the day of the accident, there were two of us on duty and
3 Mike O'Connor. So there were three, because it was so early in
4 the morning. There's always three of us on duty in the
5 summertime. In the wintertime, it's usually one of us on duty
6 with someone in operational control.

7 Q. Okay. Do you ever consult the other dispatchers, like, on
8 the flight risk assessment if you, if you have a question, or
9 would you go directly to the pilot? Okay.

10 A. You can ask the other flight coordinators. You can ask the
11 pilots.

12 Q. Okay. Who interacts with the -- like, at the lodge, like,
13 say at Steamboat or some of the other lodges. If they got a
14 passenger that needed to get out, I mean, who are they calling
15 (indiscernible)?

16 A. The flight coordinator. Yes.

17 Q. The flight coordinator. Do you ever get pressure from those
18 people?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. Maintenance interaction. Do you guys interact with
21 maintenance as well?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. They just -- okay. Do you guys do that tracking for the
24 maintenance folks as well, or does maintenance have a set
25 maintenance control that -- I mean, they just -- you have a

1 certain number of aircraft that are airworthy for that day.

2 That's what you pick from?

3 A. There's an aircraft Hobbs reporting status sheet, and that
4 has the hours. And they also have a status board in their
5 maintenance department. But that is what they look at, and then
6 we coordinate verbally, and it's all written down, so -- yeah.
7 There's --

8 Q. Okay. You said you had some interaction with the POI back in
9 April timeframe. Is that pretty typical?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Does he come -- you see an FAA person here once a season,
12 couple times a season?

13 A. I don't -- would almost say once a month in the summertime.
14 In the wintertime, he's probably here every 2 to 3 months. Jon
15 Percy is present quite often. And then the -- you also have Lana.
16 I don't even remember Lana's last name, but she lives here, so she
17 pops in and out. You see her about once a month as well.

18 Q. Okay. Do you have a pretty good relationship with them?

19 A. Um-hum.

20 MR. RICHMOND: Jet.

21 BY MR. RIGSBY:

22 Q. Have you ever come up with a situation where you feel a
23 flight shouldn't go but you get overridden by either the pilot or
24 management to say --

25 A. No.

1 Q. Or maybe to change a risk assessment or anything like that?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. What's the average flight time for both a tour flight
4 and then, say, a scheduled flight?

5 A. For the specific flight?

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. So a tour flight is an average of an hour and 15 minutes.
8 And a scheduled flight -- we fly scheduled flights from here to
9 Metlakatla, which are 10 minutes en route, so a .4. We fly as far
10 away as -- our longest flights are 3 hours going over to Hyder,
11 and then we go to Point Baker/Port Protection, which is 2 hours
12 round trip. So an average of 2 to 3 hours for a scheduled flight.
13 Our close flights -- Craig, Thorne Bay and Hollis -- that's an
14 average of an hour and a half to 2 hours.

15 Q. Okay. On the day of the accident, did you guys have a pre-
16 accident plan that you initiated once --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. -- you realized the aircraft was down? Who initiates that
19 plan?

20 A. Mike O'Connor and I were there together, and we initiated it
21 by making those first responder calls to the DO and the owner.

22 Q. Okay. You know, you said there's a reporting point every 30
23 minutes. If they go beyond that 30 minutes, do you try to contact
24 the aircraft?

25 A. I start the process of trying to contact the aircraft. My

1 second call is -- if Mike isn't there with me, then it's to him.
2 And then either to Brien or the director of operations and let
3 them know, and we just start the -- keep calling, send a plane out
4 to scout.

5 Q. Okay.

6 MR. RIGSBY: I think that's all I had.

7 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

8 MR. SIPPERLEY: Hi. I'm last, I guess.

9 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

10 Q. Back to the risk assessment form. On the day of the
11 accident, did you fill out the entire risk assessment form? You
12 said they're canned, so there's some information on there
13 prefilled out?

14 A. So it is, but there's no numbers assigned to it. Have you
15 all looked at the risk assessment form? Perfect. So it is
16 completely blank, other than, right, the form. And so based on
17 the load and the weather conditions, you fill it out
18 appropriately.

19 Q. Okay. So on the risk form, there's basically -- five areas
20 area are looked at. So for the manpower section, you don't do
21 anything with that as far as --

22 A. No, we fill out every section.

23 Q. Where do you get the information from to fill out the risk --
24 for the manpower portion of that?

25 A. Can I see the manpower one?

1 Q. Sure. Sure.

2 A. So for the manpower, if we go by our duty sheet, if it's the
3 end of the duty day, if they have flown 10 hours, which -- you
4 would ask the pilot. More than 5 hours previous to that flight,
5 that's kind of obviously looking at the daily dispatch sheet. Two
6 destinations, that's based on the load of where their stops are.
7 So if they're going to Steamboat and they're stopping at the
8 airport, that's two destinations. An unfamiliar destination,
9 that's knowledge from the flight coordinator and the pilot.
10 Asking him. If his last flight was greater than 14 days ago, you
11 would obviously know that because he hadn't been on duty. Asking
12 the pilot. A lot of these are asking the pilot.

13 The person in operational control would come to me and say,
14 hey, this guy's going through a divorce; you know, this might be
15 something for his risk assessment that needs to be put on there,
16 or he'll put it on there. Since the accident, they have added one
17 that says, distraction, and added points to that, and that's on
18 there for every day.

19 New to the area, less than a year with the company, less than
20 500 hours in type: that is everything that's kept on record
21 and --

22 Q. So you have access to that. You can see that just to verify
23 beforehand that -- what I'm just trying to do is (indiscernible)
24 --

25 A. Yeah, less than a year with the company and new to the area,

1 that's on automatic for the first year. Less than 500 hours in
2 type, that has been given -- say I've got a new guy. Well, he's
3 been here, and then I ask him. I don't look at those records. I
4 ask the chief pilot.

5 Q. Okay. Okay. So for the -- when you're doing the weather
6 assessment during the day, you -- I mean, are you using this --
7 you have the form out and okay, well, I've got dew point's less
8 than 3, Fahrenheit (indiscernible) --

9 A. Every time I fill it out, if I think I need to go back and
10 look at the temperature dewpoint spread on the weather, I'll look
11 at the METAR. I'll go and I'll change it if I feel that it's a
12 need, but we look at it for every flight.

13 Q. Okay. So as far as it being a canned form, it's basically
14 just a -- it's just a blank form. You're starting with a --

15 A. Correct. Yes.

16 Q. -- new sheet every day. Okay. Okay. Let's see. You've
17 already answered that. So on the day of the accident, we had --
18 this is actually from the accident day. There was no weather at
19 all, based on what you analyzed. Where did you, where did -- do
20 you remember where you specifically looked that day? Was it just
21 at Klawock at the -- or did you look at all the cameras and didn't
22 see any risk at all associated with that flight?

23 A. So for everything that we could see, everything was above
24 2000 and 5 looking at the cameras. I mean, it was -- I believe.
25 You would have to give me my sheets back so that I could look at

1 what I actually wrote down. But I remember that it was a day that
2 it was good enough on our side of the world to go take a look.
3 And we gave them the weather for what was happening on the other
4 side of Prince of Wales that I got from Steamboat Bay, and
5 everybody concurred that it was worth taking a look at.

6 Q. So would you say, then, the go/no go weather is based on the
7 departure point and not so much the arrival?

8 A. No, it's both. We had airplanes in for -- perfect example
9 today. Airplanes sitting in Waterfall that they felt the weather
10 was good there and I said, no, it's not good here; you can't come
11 home. So they're still there, as far as I know. They were an
12 hour ago.

13 Q. Okay. On the day of the accident, there was a report from
14 Steamboat that the ceiling was 500 to 800 feet?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Would you consider that a reliable source of weather?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. What would you consider an unreliable source of weather?

19 A. An unreliable source of weather to us is somebody that gives
20 you the weather, and when you get out there it's completely the
21 opposite. The weather changes. And what it was when he gave it
22 to me, it could have changed from between then and now. It is
23 southeast Alaska. It changes every 10 minutes.

24 Q. So the person at Steamboat is not a certified weather
25 observer, right?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. But that's -- his weather report -- he doesn't have any
3 weather equipment or associated -- but his report is considered
4 reliable?

5 A. I guess, then, if you put it in that context, then he
6 isn't --

7 Q. Well, I'm just trying to figure out what the -- what an
8 unreliable source of weather would be. Just trying to get a
9 (indiscernible) --

10 A. Oh, okay. Okay.

11 Q. It's on the forms, but I don't know, you know, how you're
12 assessing that, is what I guess I'm asking (indiscernible).

13 A. Okay. Sorry. An unreliable weather source, then, is
14 typically if you have somebody out in the middle of nowhere that
15 is going to give you weather that you don't know who they are.
16 You know, a customer, John Smith, calls up from Edna Bay and says,
17 well, it's 2000 and 5 out here; you guys need to come. That's an
18 unreliable weather source in our mind.

19 Q. Okay. Let's see. So for weather to be considered reliable
20 at a location, how close is that -- you know, based on your risk
21 assessment, how -- what's the distance from that reporting
22 station, the official stations? Do you recall what that's
23 supposed to be for it not to be considered a risk?

24 Maybe I'm -- there's a, there's a risk assessment on here
25 that says no weather within 10 miles. So Steamboat, the

1 closest -- do you know where the closest weather to Steamboat is
2 that would be considered reliable weather?

3 A. Klawock.

4 Q. Okay. And how far from Klawock is Steamboat?

5 A. I don't know the exact distance.

6 MR. O'CONNER: It's -- if I can add, it's less than 10 miles.
7 And we can measure it, if you like.

8 MR. SIPPERLEY: Yeah. I can Google Earth it and we can
9 double check. I think it was, like, 18 miles. That's why I'm
10 asking the question. So I'm just trying to, just trying to see
11 how we're using this form.

12 So I can come right back, then, to this overall question:
13 when it comes to the training you received at -- in understanding
14 this form -- I've been told that there's guidance and training.
15 When I came here the first visit, I asked, can I see what -- you
16 know, where are the guidances that goes with filling out this
17 form? And no one seemed to be able to show me anything. And I
18 had one person just tell me it was self-explanatory. So there's a
19 lot of things, to me, on this form that don't seem to be self-
20 explanatory. That's why I'm asking the question. Just want to
21 make sure that, if we're using this document, you know, we're all
22 -- we're using it correctly and we're analyzing the information.

23 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

24 Q. So okay. So did you get any additional weather from
25 Steamboat prior to the flight being dispatched, other than the

1 initial of 500- to 800-foot ceiling?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. On that day -- so the flight was delayed because of
4 weather (indiscernible) on the day; is that correct? The original
5 departure time?

6 A. I don't know that it was originally delayed. I would have to
7 go back and look at the dispatch sheet. If you guys have it, we
8 can look at what time they actually left.

9 Q. I have (indiscernible). I have the departure time here.
10 It's --

11 A. The departure time is scheduled for 6:15 from Ketchikan, but
12 by the time they usually get loaded and leave, it's anywhere from
13 6:25 to 6:30.

14 Q. So the time on this is what the planned time is, not the
15 actual time of departure.

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. So then for flight following purposes, you know, checking
18 every 30 minutes, where do you start the, start the clock
19 (indiscernible) started the clock on that?

20 A. From the point that he called off.

21 Q. Okay. And that's logged someplace else, not on this manifest
22 or on this form?

23 A. No, that's just the manifest for the pilot. It's logged on
24 our daily duty sheet.

25 Q. Okay, so you do the flight tracking on that. Okay. I'm just

1 trying to understand. Okay. See. With respect to operational
2 control, the flight operations manual says that the director of
3 operations routinely delegates the duty of operational control to
4 the flight coordinator on duty. And when I heard you say it's not
5 really the case -- I mean, you do initiate flights, but it's
6 always with concurrence. So is it a true statement that you
7 actually do exercise operational control? Do you believe it's a
8 true statement or no?

9 A. That I myself exercise operational control?

10 Q. Any of the flight coordinators on duty.

11 A. No. Because we're always in concurrence with the chief pilot
12 and the person that is in operational control.

13 Q. Okay. Let's see what else. Do pilots very often change or
14 add to the risk assessment form that you give -- fill out and give
15 to them? I mean, in general, do they take an active participation
16 in adding --

17 A. They do. They look at it, and they will add if they feel --
18 because they're out there flying, and so they see more than I see.
19 I can only give them what I can see on the computer. I'm not in
20 the airplane. And so they will come back and say, hey, you know,
21 it's windy. It's rough out there in the fjords, so let's add
22 this. Okay. So yes, they take an active role in using that risk
23 assessment.

24 Q. Okay. Let's see. On the day of the accident, his load
25 changed when he got to Steamboat. He was originally supposed to

1 pick up four people and cargo, and then it changed so he had to
2 reconfigure and all that. Does that happen very often, when they
3 have to reconfigure and change?

4 A. It just depends on the day. No. Ninety percent of the time
5 when they get to their location, it's the load that we have given
6 them when they leave here.

7 Q. Okay, so on that day, the load changed, and you received
8 another form. It was a Promech form that had the new -- is that
9 common to use -- for them to change load at the other end? And
10 then how do they coordinate that with you, the change in the --

11 A. The change. They will call us or they will email us, and
12 that day they had emailed the changes.

13 Q. Okay. But it all runs through you, that there's -- that's --
14 there's nothing that the lodge initiates that is not run through
15 your office, obviously.

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Okay. And I'll ask the question everybody else has probably
18 already asked. Do you feel the lodges create any undue pressure
19 as far as getting people in and out?

20 A. No. We have a good relationship with them.

21 Q. Okay.

22 MR. SIPPERLEY: I don't have anything else?

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Do you have anything, Mike, to ask Leah?

24 MR. O'CONNOR: To ask Leah?

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

1 MR. O'CONNOR: No.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So just a couple follow-ups that I
3 have, and we'll go around -- excuse me -- one more time, and then
4 we should be --

5 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: -- about done.

7 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

8 Q. Was this flight a scheduled flight or on demand?

9 A. It's on demand.

10 Q. Okay. How often do you see the director of operations?

11 A. I saw him a month ago. And he was here probably 2 months
12 before that. So we converse on the phone. I haven't spoke with
13 him since he left here, though, that month ago.

14 Q. Okay. So have you -- do you remember a time when Brien
15 Salazar had operational control?

16 A. There would be a day, if both Mike O'Connor or the director
17 of operations would be gone. No, I do not.

18 Q. And just to repeat from earlier, where did you say Taquan
19 flies in Canada? You said you do a little bit of international,
20 just over to Canada. Where was that?

21 A. It would be just on demand to Prince Rupert.

22 Q. Prince Rupert. Okay. But there's nothing scheduled over
23 there.

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Okay.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Sathya?

2 BY DR. SILVA:

3 Q. What was your degree at Riddle?

4 A. I have a degree in aviation business administration with a
5 minor in safety.

6 Q. And who would, who would you say was your supervisor, current
7 supervisor?

8 A. Here at Taquan Air?

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. It's Danita Scott.

11 Q. How is your relationship with her?

12 A. Good.

13 Q. Do you have interactions with -- we talked a little bit about
14 the director of operations, but in terms of your role as a flight
15 coordinator, how does that relate to the director of operations?
16 Do you have any kind of relationship with the director?

17 A. We have a good relationship with the director of operations.

18 Q. So does he, does he have any kind of control or authority
19 over the flight coordinators? How does, how does that work?

20 A. I don't know what his specific role is in writing, but -- so
21 I know that he is operational control over the whole flight op.

22 Q. Okay. So your -- from your perspective, the DO is
23 operational control.

24 A. As well. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Do they get involved with training at all?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. How so?

3 A. I would say it more is delegated to the chief pilot, but they
4 have a working relationship where that's -- he sets -- you know,
5 they set the standards. That's the director of operations'
6 position, I believe, in my mind.

7 Q. So in terms --

8 A. I don't know what's in writing for Taquan.

9 Q. That's -- I mean, that's fine. I'm trying to get your
10 perspective, really. We're not -- we have the books, you know.
11 So in terms of training, is that something that -- what part of
12 training is done by the operations side, the flight ops side,
13 versus the station manager side, I guess, is the --

14 A. It's about half and half. You have -- the station manager
15 does their training for -- in dispatch, and the director of
16 operations of flight operations department. We sit in and observe
17 and listen to, you know, what they have for -- participate in the
18 ground training for the pilots and the dispatchers.

19 Q. Do you have specific training done by the flight side for
20 dispatch, or are you normally just sitting in on pilot training?

21 A. We have our recurrent tests that we do every year, which we
22 already talked about. And then we sit in on the ground school and
23 participate in the ground school.

24 Q. Back to this risk assessment form. I know this question has
25 been asked, but -- so do you have training on how to, how to fill

1 out the form? Or do flight coordinators get training on that?

2 A. So flight coordinators, when we initially start, we -- this
3 risk assessment has evolved through -- with our Medallion safety
4 program. And so yes, we have sat down. We go over the risk
5 assessment in training with -- the pilots talk about it. When we
6 sit in on their training, they go, and you sit down and you go
7 through it with your station manager as well. The station manager
8 does the training with us. That's a tough one, because I was here
9 when the Medallion program became the Medallion program and we
10 brought that on. So it's kind of -- we all did it together.

11 Q. Is there anything formal or written down, do you know, in
12 terms of how to fill this form out?

13 A. I don't believe so. I don't know, I guess, is my answer. I
14 don't know.

15 Q. When you -- you mentioned that since the accident, you've
16 added a section on distraction?

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. What did -- can you elaborate on that? What does that mean?

19 A. It's on the risk assessment, and it says, distraction, and it
20 has a number next to it. That's all I know.

21 Q. What would constitute a distraction?

22 A. Well, we just had an accident a month ago. That would make
23 some pilots distracted in their normal day to day. It's another
24 risk factor that they have added to the risk assessment to be
25 conservative.

1 Q. How often would you say that you have risk assessments that
2 go into the realm where you need management approval for canceling
3 a flight?

4 A. Every day there's a weather day. Yeah. Every day there's a
5 weather day. If it's beautiful out -- and if you have a new pilot
6 that's new to the operation.

7 Q. Have you ever had a case where your assessment is okay, but
8 the pilot wants to cancel the flight anyway? Has that ever
9 happened?

10 A. I'm sure there has been.

11 Q. In your experience, have you had anyone cancel on top of an
12 assessment that you think was -- that your assessment was okay?

13 A. No. It's always -- we always talk about it. And then if
14 they don't think that it's as good either, then -- yeah. No.

15 Q. So even in that conversation, I guess, is my question. So in
16 your experience, have you put something out there and pilot comes
17 back with, no, it's a lot worse? I don't want to take the flight;
18 I'm not comfortable with this. Anything along those lines?

19 A. Yes, because a pilot will come back and say, I just came back
20 from Thorne Bay and it's not as good as it was; let's not go.
21 Okay. We go on hold.

22 Q. Okay. How often would you say that happens?

23 A. I don't know. You're asking me to dictate weather in
24 southeast Alaska, where one day it's sunny, the next day it can be
25 pouring down rain. I mean, look at yesterday. Look at today.

1 Two opposite ends of the spectrum. We have winter operations. We
2 have summer operations.

3 Q. So is this something that's more common to when you have
4 weather?

5 A. It is.

6 Q. And for clarification, the line item on the risk assessment
7 that says no weather within 10 miles, is that no weather
8 observation within 10 miles? Is that what that means?

9 A. So for -- in my mind, and somebody else's may be different,
10 but no weather within 10 miles is you've got the flight going to
11 Hyder and you've got a weather camera in the Misty Fjords and one
12 end Hyder, but nothing else en route. Nothing else -- nobody else
13 that can give you a weather report. Nobody else that can say,
14 this is what it's doing at that location.

15 Q. Okay. So it's not saying that there's no weather as in,
16 like, no thunderstorms or anything. It's a weather observation or
17 report or --

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. -- information.

20 A. Yes. No weather information.

21 Q. Okay. And the last question I had was regarding the date of
22 the accident. Can you just talk through what you were doing, I
23 guess, during that flight? What you saw, how did you find out
24 about the accident. Kind of narrate us through your experience
25 from that day.

1 A. So at the time of the accident, Mike and I were together in
2 dispatch and were watching the screen, and he made a reporting
3 point. And we saw the plane turn the opposite direction of what
4 he had just reported. And then within -- I think it was within 5
5 minutes of that report, the troopers had called and said that we
6 have had a report of your aircraft down, and gave us the airplane
7 number and the time. And so we went into react mode from there
8 with the operations, the emergency manual.

9 DR. SILVA: Okay. Great. That's it for me.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Matt?

11 MR. RIGSBY: Nothing.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Brad? Any questions?

13 MR. SIPPERLEY: No. No questions.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

15 MR. RICHMOND: You're done.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Leah, thank you very much for taking the time
17 in here. One final -- I know Bob loves the question. Is there
18 anything you'd like to add --

19 MR. RICHMOND: I forgot to tell her what to say.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: -- or anything that could help us out?

21 MS. KLINGER: No.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right. Well, thank you and --

23 MS. KLINGER: Okay.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: -- we're off the record at 1:50.

25 (Whereupon, at 1:50 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

1

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Leah Klinger

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA053

PLACE: TAQUAN AIR, KETCHIKAN, AK

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T *

OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

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Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: MICHAEL O'CONNOR

Tuesday,
August 14, 2018

APPEARANCES:

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY,
Federal Aviation Administration

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

BOB RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. O'Connor)

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I N T E R V I E W

(time)

DR. SILVA: Do we want to start recording now or do you want to go through the preamble before --

MR. WILLIAMS: I'll go through --

DR. SILVA: That's fine. Okay. So you've met everyone?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yes.

DR. SILVA: Which is good. So we don't necessarily have to go through introductions, but we will go through what each of our roles are in the investigation. Have you done any kind of interviewing or work with us at all?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, with Brice.

DR. SILVA: Okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: Brice Banning initially, we did a telephone interview.

DR. SILVA: Okay, right. So you should be familiar with some of our protocols. So Shaun and I are working together from the operations team and human performance side, again, to look at it with the decision making, how -- the information the pilot views, overall from company culture, the whole span of things.

So that is -- that's my role specifically. I'll let everyone go around the room and talk about affiliation and also from the FAA side, their limitations in terms of the investigation and enforcement. Shaun?

MR. WILLIAMS: So Shaun Williams, operational group chairman.

1 Looking at it from the -- where she's looking at the human
2 performance aspect of things, I'm looking at it more operationally
3 and just how it runs, how the day-to-day things take place here.

4 MR. RICHMOND: Want Mike in? Do you want Mike in yet,
5 Mike O'Brien?

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Not yet.

7 MR. RICHMOND: Not yet. I'll come get you, Mike.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have him on speed dial.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: We don't speed dial anybody around here; we
10 drag it out.

11 MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, yeah, right.

12 MR. RIGSBY: Hey, Mike, Matt Rigsby. I'm with the FAA's
13 Office of Accident Investigation. I'm not taking the IIC role;
14 Brad's going to keep the IIC role, but we're here just to assist
15 Brad, (indiscernible) typically take a little more work on our
16 side of the house.

17 MR. O'CONNOR: IIC?

18 MR. RIGSBY: Investigator in charge. Sorry. He's the -- for
19 the FAA and/or party coordinator, whatever you want to call him.
20 But, so we're here just to assist him and we're -- like I said,
21 for this interview, anything you say can't be used in an
22 enforcement case. So this is -- I hate to say a "Get Out of Jail
23 Free" card, but it's -- don't be worried about something you say
24 here that can be used against you later down the road or something
25 like that. Because, you know, we just have the black hat and the

1 white hat of the FAA; this is the white hat side. So we're here
2 to help resolve it, prevent future accidents, and that's it. It's
3 a safety investigation.

4 MR. O'CONNOR: Right, right.

5 MR. RIGSBY: Okay.

6 MR. SIPPERLEY: And, well, he just said everything about me,
7 so -- Brad Sipperley, the investigator in charge now. I took over
8 for Alissa Rojas, who initially started as the IIC out of Juneau.
9 I replaced her and I took over doing it from Fairbanks.

10 And as he said, I'm just here to try to figure out as part of
11 the team, you know, the pieces and parts that may have contributed
12 to the accident happening. Again nothing for an enforcement, just
13 here, and it's actually nice don't have that role.

14 So do you have any questions for me about my role?

15 MR. O'CONNOR: No.

16 DR. SILVA: Okay. So that was a good preface. You know,
17 we're here for safety. That's our number one goal.

18 MR. O'CONNOR: Um-hum.

19 DR. SILVA: We're not here to assign blame, fault, or any
20 kind of liability. That said, we can't offer any confidentiality
21 since we are a government organization and a public organization.

22 This transcript, because we are going to have this recording
23 transcribed, will eventually become part of a public docket that
24 will get released anywhere from 6 months to a year from now, once
25 all of the factual information gets released.

1 You are entitled to one representative to sit with you. Is
2 Bob here your chosen representative?

3 MR. O'CONNOR: Yes.

4 MR. RICHMOND: They're all trained to say that. Don't check
5 me on this.

6 DR. SILVA: Great.

7 MR. RICHMOND: I have a question. This recording, I had the
8 impression that the recording and thus a transcript would never be
9 produced.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: The transcript will.

11 MR. RICHMOND: See, that's the problem with this. Then every
12 plaintiff's lawyer in town gets a copy of what you're doing. And
13 so you don't really necessarily have people -- certainly not in
14 Mike's case, it won't make any difference, but somebody might not
15 want to answer.

16 Hudgins could be a defendant some day in a lawsuit. So if
17 I'm talking to him, I'm saying, I don't want you recorded or I
18 don't want you answering any questions. You see the problem?

19 MR. WILLIAMS: I know --

20 MR. RICHMOND: And, of course, he doesn't have to answer
21 questions. There's not a federal judge in this state that will
22 order him to answer questions if he's going to be subject to
23 liability. So I want you to think about as to him, maybe not
24 recording.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: We'll record that one, too.

1 MR. RICHMOND: Well, he may not talk to you then.

2 MR. RIGSBY: From what I understand, it was already recorded
3 in his initial interview with Brice.

4 MR. RICHMOND: Yeah, well, he gave a statement so they have
5 that in any case. But that's part of the problem is that every
6 plaintiff's lawyer grabs ahold of these things and uses them,
7 so --

8 MR. WILLIAMS: And we're here for the safety side not to
9 blame or --

10 MR. RICHMOND: Well, but you're not actually, and I'll tell
11 you why. Because, for instance, in the Promech crash you wouldn't
12 release any of the photographs of a passenger in the aircraft.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Correct.

14 MR. RICHMOND: And so the problem is, is the work you do
15 doesn't necessarily assist if you're not going to produce
16 everything. Anyway, we'll see with Hudgins. Certainly the other
17 people, it wouldn't make any difference because they're observers,
18 they're trainers, the people of that type. We're not worried
19 about that. Mr. Hudgins, I just -- he may take a different view.
20 Although, I've never talked to him other than on the phone for
21 five minutes, so --

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Right. So it'll be his call whether --

23 MR. RICHMOND: Right, okay.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: -- he wants to talk to us or not.

25 MR. RICHMOND: Well, we'll see.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

2 DR. SILVA: All right. So during these interviews, remember
3 you're the expert here. We all come with our different forms of
4 expertise.

5 MR. O'CONNOR: Sure.

6 DR. SILVA: But we are -- you are the one who knows the
7 operations, you know --

8 MR. O'CONNOR: Dirty details.

9 DR. SILVA. Yeah, exactly. So just keep that in mind.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

11 DR. SILVA: Try not to assume we know anything and if you
12 have any questions, feel free to ask.

13 So usually how we run this is, I'll start out with a solid
14 amount of questions here and then we'll go around the room and
15 make sure everyone has a chance to ask their questions, any
16 follow-ups, and we'll do that twice just to make sure everyone has
17 a chance. Do you have any questions before we start?

18 MR. O'CONNOR: No. I don't have any questions.

19 DR. SILVA: Okay. Well, feel free to ask, and if there's any
20 kind of clarification you need from us on the questions or
21 anything, again, feel free to ask.

22 MR. O'CONNOR: I might need a restroom break in an hour or
23 how long do you think that this will take?

24 DR. SILVA: Probably closer to two. So we will --

25 MR. O'CONNOR: If we could break --

1 DR. SILVA: If I forget, remind me.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: All right.

3 DR. SILVA: Yeah, it's not a problem at all.

4 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL O'CONNOR

5 BY DR. SILVA:

6 Q. Can you state your full name please?

7 A. Sure. Michael David O'Connor, O-'-C-O-N-N-O-R.

8 Q. Great. And can you run through a brief overview of your
9 aviation background and what got you to where you are now?

10 A. Sure. Well, I gave you all resumes this morning highlighting
11 my background. I've been flying floatplanes for 24 years. I
12 started working down in Seattle with an outfit out of Lake Union.
13 At the time it was called Chrysler Air. That's where my
14 floatplane career began and I got my floatplane rating there with
15 Jim Chrysler, and ended up instructing for him. Now they're
16 called Seattle Seaplanes. The operation is still there.

17 I went to Kenmore in 1995. I worked at Kenmore until the
18 year 2009. Quite a bit of experience at Kenmore flying every
19 aircraft they had, check airman, check pilot. Things didn't work
20 out at Kenmore for personal reasons. I had to leave.

21 I came up to Ketchikan in the year 2010 and then began
22 working with Promech Air. I worked at Promech for 5 years before
23 coming to Taquan in 2014. I was hired at Taquan as the chief
24 pilot. Otter time, time in the airplane that crashed, about 3300
25 hours; over 7,000 in the Beavers, very similar. Been flying in

1 the Ketchikan area since 2010.

2 A lot of the work I did before that in Seattle, in the
3 Pacific Northwest is very similar, flying up the Inside Passage,
4 Canada, did a lot of work there, very, very similar. The weather
5 here is a little bit different. It changes much more rapidly than
6 it does down south. But the operations area is, it's very
7 similar.

8 We -- I've been flying that route; I helped Steamboat build
9 their lodge by flying their workers and materials. Also,
10 Waterfall, it's en route; their Waterfall group owns Steamboat Bay
11 Lodge. I've been working with them for 7 years as well. So I'm
12 very familiar with the route, the aircraft, and the pilot, Mike,
13 who I've known since he started at Promech. We worked together at
14 Promech. And he moved over to Taquan -- Promech went out of
15 business, but he moved over before that; before Promech's
16 accident, he moved.

17 And a funny story is -- maybe I'm speaking out of turn, but I
18 asked him, Mike, how come you left Promech for Taquan? And he
19 said something to the effect, well, I didn't think I would survive
20 another season at Promech. And I totally relate to that. I'm
21 like, yeah, we are much more conservative.

22 But what else can I tell you?

23 MR. RICHMOND: Make her ask you a question.

24 BY DR. SILVA:

25 Q. So how much total time did you -- do you have?

1 A. About 16,000 hours.

2 Q. Do you have an estimate how much of that was after you moved
3 up to Alaska?

4 A. Well, I figure roughly 700 per season for 7, 8 seasons --
5 that's an estimate -- 5,000. No wait, let me do the math, 35 -- I
6 never did break it down that way.

7 Q. That's okay. We can do the math later.

8 Okay. So you were hired on here as a chief pilot and you've
9 been in this position since, you said 2014?

10 A. 2014, yes.

11 Q. Okay. And can you run through your duties and
12 responsibilities, in your own words, as chief pilot here.

13 A. Sure. And I did attach that to the resume. My main duty,
14 and it changes throughout the year, pilot staffing. So I'm
15 responsible for finding pilots, hiring pilots; maintaining
16 schedule, pilot schedule and training schedule; maintaining the
17 pilot records, scheduling check rides, check airman, scheduling
18 training.

19 On a day-to-day basis, I take care of problems as they come
20 up, making the decision whether to hold or go on a flight, which
21 route to take. I'm all -- I'm part of that decision-making
22 process. Also, just monitoring pilot performance and behavior.
23 Things come up, we need to make corrections, we need to do some
24 additional training. If there's a problem with our procedures, if
25 something isn't going right, I'll issue a pilot memo to revise

1 procedures as needed.

2 What else do I do? Everything. We're -- I've been doing a
3 lot of the DO duties as well. He's not here on-site, so I've been
4 handling some of the operational, what would you call that,
5 updates.

6 Q. What does that entail?

7 A. Ops manual revisions, making sure we have charts and current
8 weight and balance data in the aircraft. The Medallion program is
9 a big part of our operation, and maintaining that program with
10 audits and safety reports. We get safety reports whenever there
11 is an issue. And just responding to those reports, forward those
12 reports to the correct party and follow through to make sure that
13 they're being taken care of.

14 Q. Who do you report to in the company?

15 A. I report to the director of operations.

16 Q. Okay. How is that relationship?

17 A. It's good. We, George and I -- George worked at Kenmore for
18 a while. We have similar backgrounds and a mutual level of
19 respect and -- yeah, our relationship is good.

20 Q. Do you feel comfortable bringing issues up to him if you have
21 to?

22 A. Oh, absolutely. For sure. That's what I do. When the
23 pilots have an issue, if I can't correct it, I'll bring it to
24 George and then he'll bring it up to senior management.

25 Q. Okay. So do you feel like he's receptive of your input?

1 A. Absolutely, yes.

2 Q. How often do you interact with him?

3 A. Well, when he was here, on a daily basis. He moved at the
4 end of last season and we talk on the phone or text or email
5 several times a month. It just depends on what issues are coming
6 up and if there's a need. I have been able to handle most of the
7 issues myself. If there's something larger, then I will bring it
8 to George.

9 Q. How long does it normally take to get issues resolved?

10 A. It depends on what the issue is.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Some of them are immediate. We'll just -- we'll issue a
13 pilot memo. If it's a safety concern, a pilot memo goes out,
14 everybody reads it, and we'll follow up and make sure it's the
15 correct action.

16 Q. Okay. And do you have the authority to do all of that on
17 your own or do you have to get --

18 A. Oh, yeah.

19 Q. Okay. I'll follow up with that later.

20 Do you fly outside of work?

21 A. Outside of this job?

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. No.

24 Q. Do you still fly for the job?

25 A. Not as much as I used to.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. My first year here as chief pilot, I flew the line every
3 single day, and I've actually had pilots comment that we don't
4 know the difference between the chief pilot and the line pilot
5 because you're just flying every day. But that was me learning
6 the job and trying to fit into the company. And as I became more
7 familiar with Taquan and the operation, then I started to take on
8 other responsibilities, pilot scheduling and whatnot. And now I
9 fly very infrequently, just a couple of times a month.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. We have a pretty good group of pilots this year so we're not
12 short-staffed or anything like that, so I can focus my time and
13 attention here for -- in the office.

14 Q. Do you feel like you have enough time to do everything you
15 need to?

16 A. Well, the work will still be there at the end of the day.
17 Nobody's coming in at night to do the work for me. So I'm not
18 completely caught up, but I do stay caught up. I've found when I
19 arrived here, getting caught up to where I needed to be, that took
20 a lot of time. But now that everything is all caught up, it runs
21 a lot smoother.

22 Q. So when you have to prioritize, what kind of -- how do you
23 prioritize your tasks? What kind of gets put off and what kind
24 of --

25 A. What gets put off? Well, certainly not the day-to-day

1 issues. That's priority. What's happening right now, and I'm
2 getting texts from dispatch, what are we doing, what are we -- so
3 those, got to take care of today's actions first.

4 Pilot scheduling, make sure we have the pilots, they're all
5 healthy and ready to go. If there's a concern, then I'll adjust
6 the schedule, if somebody calls in sick.

7 The kind of things that get put off are typically the DO's
8 job, the ops manual revisions and updates; that stuff can wait.
9 We do have a training manual revision coming due next month and I
10 haven't got to that yet either. So that type of, you know,
11 intensive manual revisions, those are getting put on hold.

12 And once the season ends, things will slow down. Really, in
13 the wintertime, one guy can do everything. But once we expand in
14 the season, then there's a lot more to do.

15 Q. When does it start to pick up around here?

16 A. Well, our training begins at the end of April.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. But really I start interviewing, looking for pilots in
19 September. The sooner I can get them, you know, squared away, the
20 more likely they are to show up, so --

21 Q. Who else is involved with hiring? Is it just you?

22 A. It is mostly me. George has some oversight. We review pilot
23 qualifications. We haven't really had any issues there.

24 Q. How is the, I guess, how is the workforce? Are you, do you
25 find that you -- you said you have kind of enough pilots now but

1 do you --

2 A. Oh, yeah.

3 Q. -- find it difficult to get enough people or --

4 A. When we first merged with Promech or we bought out Promech
5 several years ago, there was some difficulty. That merge, if you
6 want to call it that, wasn't really set and we didn't really know
7 what was going on. They were pretty tight lipped about it. They
8 wouldn't commit to the number of pilots needed.

9 Well, I hired enough pilots for what I thought we needed with
10 9 airplanes, and they ended up putting 16 airplanes on line. We
11 did take some of the pilots that Promech hired and brought them
12 in. That was difficult, bringing two different companies
13 together. That was a very tough year.

14 And it's -- after that, it has been a little bit tight on
15 pilots; it's been short. We typically have -- I overhire. I
16 expect to lose at least one pilot, typically three, during the
17 initial training. Either they come up here, they don't like it,
18 it's not what they expected, or they just don't work out in
19 training and we'll -- I'll send them home. So we overhire.

20 This year nobody left and that was a big surprise. All the
21 pilots were outstanding. This is the first year I've ever had too
22 many pilots. Normally we don't have enough. Towards July, end of
23 July and August, they're getting injured, they're getting sick,
24 they're tired, they want to go home, and we end up short.

25 Last year one guy broke his hand; he was out for 4 weeks.

1 Another guy got mono; he had to leave. And one guy had a family
2 emergency, and that left us three pilots short in the middle of
3 the season. So I planned for that this year and I'm glad I did.
4 Yeah.

5 Q. So how many would you say you lose each year to training,
6 training difficulties?

7 A. To training, none this year. Last year we lost -- was that
8 last year -- one. I think that was 2 years ago. But they're
9 pretty well vetted before they get up here.

10 It's hard because a lot of people don't have floatplane
11 experience. So we'll do an eval ride with them. Two of the
12 pilots I hired this year came up in February for eval rides. And
13 I can usually tell in the first hour whether they're going to get
14 it or not, and they both did.

15 Q. Can you describe some other aspects of the hiring process?
16 What are you looking for in the pilots you hire?

17 A. What am I looking for? Well, just the overall background.
18 What type of flying have they been doing. I like to see the bush
19 type, you know, tailwheel time is huge. If they have any seaplane
20 time, that's great.

21 What worries me and concerns me are the airline pilots. A
22 lot of those have been the most difficult for training. They've
23 forgotten stick and rudder basic skills. And what I'll do in
24 those cases, if they really show that they're committed, and this
25 helps, is I'll send them to Kenmore and say, hey, go get a couple

1 hours in a Beaver. Go get a Beaver check out.

2 And I have a relationship with Kenmore and they'll report
3 back to me and say, hey, this guy's good to go or, you know,
4 they'll buy some instruction from Kenmore. Or they have the
5 option of coming up here and doing the eval, right. But a lot of
6 them don't want to come up and do the eval right without some
7 instruction first.

8 Q. Right. Are you looking for a specific amount of time outside
9 of the regulations experience-wise?

10 A. I like -- we have two types of pilots. We have the retired
11 airline pilot, which I like because they come back every season.
12 They typically run 20,000 hours. But they're the airline people
13 that we need to make sure they know how to fly still. And those
14 are good. We get 7 or 8 years out of those guys.

15 The other type we get are the ones that are fresh out of
16 school. This may be their first commercial job. And I don't
17 expect them to stick around more than 3 years. And it's tough
18 because we invest a lot into them, into their training, but it is
19 a stepping stone for most of their careers. Those will typically
20 be, you know, 1,000-hour pilots.

21 I really like more than 3,000. We do have certain
22 requirements with the cruise lines, Disney specifically. They
23 require 3,000 hours total time.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And that's a big bonus for us. If they have previous work in

1 Alaska, that's another big bonus. Those are all the kind of
2 things that I'll highlight on a resume: Alaska time, tailwheel
3 time, what type of flying they've been doing.

4 Q. What -- you mentioned difficulties merging the two companies.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. Can you describe that in a little more detail? What kind of
7 -- can you give us some examples of --

8 A. The company was split. We had Taquan and Promech, and we
9 actually -- we operated out of two facilities as one company. And
10 there was just a real -- it was tough.

11 I worked for Promech. Anytime you bring two companies
12 together, there's going to be some friction like that. And we
13 handled it well, but it was tough working out of two different
14 offices and, you know, we had to have two flight followers, one at
15 each place. We ran it kind of as a separate, two separate
16 companies but working together as one.

17 Once we moved out of the downtown office, out of the Promech
18 office, and we moved everything here to this facility, it really
19 streamlined everything. It wasn't like a company divided anymore.

20 Q. Were there any issues assimilating the Promech pilots into
21 the Taquan operation?

22 A. A few.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. There were. The ones that had issues are no longer with us.

25 And again, that's just, you know --

1 Q. What's the major, I guess, would be the issues?

2 A. Personality conflicts, our difference in operating. Taquan
3 is very conservative where Promech is a -- was a more aggressive
4 type operation. And trying to reign in these pilots who have been
5 working for Promech and have that aggressive type of flying and
6 just dialing it back to Taquan standards, you know, we're going to
7 be more conservative.

8 We don't -- we're not mission oriented. We don't have to get
9 there; we're going to cancel more. And I saw some frustration
10 with the pilots on that. And it's for their own good. But their
11 frustration was, well, we're costing the company money, we can --
12 I know I can get there. I'd hear that a lot. I know I can get
13 there. I'm like, well, good for you, but we're not going.

14 And that's, we're really working on -- the ones, the pilots
15 that are still here are showing great improvement in that regard.

16 Q. All right. You mentioned that you knew the accident pilot.

17 A. Oh, yeah.

18 Q. Can you, I guess in general terms, can you just describe --
19 we talked a little bit about how you -- your background with him,
20 but overall flying skills, proficiency, his attitude?

21 A. I first met Mike when he came to work at Promech. A great
22 guy. He's a guy that I trust. I've never seen any issues with
23 Mike. I've flown with him. I've done a few check rides with
24 Mike, a lot of his training. He's -- I just -- I don't know. I'm
25 at a loss. Mike's a good pilot. He's experienced, he's a

1 veteran, he's been doing this for 7 years. I don't understand how
2 he got so disoriented.

3 Q. So you had flown with Mike before?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. What's the nature of these? Were you the -- were you
6 checking, were you inspecting him?

7 A. We flew together.

8 Q. Oh, you flew with him?

9 A. We -- at Promech, we were both line pilots working side by
10 side. I may have done some checks with him at Promech. I don't
11 recall. That was a while ago.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. But when he came here, of course I did. I did some of his
14 checks here.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Never any issues with Mike.

17 Q. Have you had any kind of -- you know, this is more from the
18 operational side, but have there been any emergency or abnormal
19 situations come up with Mike before that --

20 A. There was one about a year ago, he had some issue with a
21 Beaver, I believe. I don't know the full details. It was a while
22 ago. But he had lost oil pressure, or his oil pressure light had
23 come on and he had to make a landing. I don't know the full story
24 on this. He was able to troubleshoot the problem and bring the
25 plane back. That was a mechanical issue, I believe.

1 And there was another one at Promech. He had an engine
2 problem, I believe one of the cylinders blew and he was able to
3 land the airplane, take it to the beach, let the passengers out
4 and then we were able to fly out and pick up the passengers. And
5 I can't remember if the mechanics worked on the plane there at the
6 beach. This was at Promech.

7 Yeah, he's had a few precautionary landings, I guess you
8 could say.

9 Q. Let's see. What would you say are his greatest strengths as
10 a pilot?

11 A. His greatest strengths as a pilot. His experience would be
12 one of them. He was a Navy pilot, has an extensive background.
13 He worked for Hawaiian Air.

14 Q. What about areas that he could have improved on?

15 A. Areas for improvement. That's a tough one. I think with all
16 pilots, just realizing your own limitations and setting those
17 limits and standards and sticking with them.

18 Q. Can you elaborate on the limitations? Are you talking
19 (indiscernible) --

20 A. Weather, whether it's wind or visibility or cloud heights,
21 just setting a standing, hey, this is my no-go; if it's here, I'm
22 going to turn around and come back and not continue. And I think
23 pilots get mission oriented and they're like, oh, I have to -- and
24 I'm speaking in general terms.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. Not specifically about Mike.

2 Q. Do you have specific go/no-go rules for weather or any kind
3 of other operational --

4 A. Absolutely. Yeah.

5 Q. Can you describe those?

6 A. Sure. So our visibility requirement is 2 miles over water.
7 If it's over land, it's 4 miles.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And on our tours, in the tour area it's 4 miles visibility.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And we've upped that visibility requirement as a result of an
12 accident that happened several years ago. Ceilings 500 feet. If
13 they cannot maintain 500 feet, turn around.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And we have some wind limitations as well. Thirty knots in
16 the landing area is a no-go. We look at all those things.
17 Turbulence, we don't want to be dragging our guests through, you
18 know, marginal -- or moderate turbulence. We want them to enjoy
19 their flight as well. Even if it's a beautiful day, sunny, if
20 it's bumpy we'll still cancel.

21 Q. Are these written in your policies or procedures at all,
22 these limitations?

23 A. Yeah. We do have them written in our ops manual. The
24 turbulent one, we don't. That's more of a judgement-type call.
25 But the winds and those types of operations, yeah, that's there.

1 Q. And just to clarify, you said the limit's 500-foot ceilings
2 and also if the flight can't maintain 500 feet?

3 A. Right, 500 is our minimum.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So they have to be able to maintain 500 feet AGL.

6 Q. Okay. So regarding these go/no-go criteria, is there any
7 kind of risk assessment or --

8 A. Yep.

9 Q. -- standard procedures?

10 A. Sure. We do have --

11 Q. Can you explain that?

12 A. We do have risk assessment forms.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And those are filled out by our flight coordinator before the
15 flight is released. We have copies of those if you would like to
16 see that.

17 Q. I think we already have some of those.

18 A. You have that, okay. Yeah, it just gives a number to each
19 different situation, whether it's, you know, a heavy airplane or
20 the pilot's unfamiliar, remote operations, no communication. It
21 assigns a number, and I'm not sure how they came up with those
22 numbers. That was already in place when I got here.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. We add all the numbers up, and then the pilot can add up, you
25 know, if there's things that we don't know about. Say he didn't

1 get a good night's sleep or he's had, you know, a family
2 emergency, then they can add their own numbers. They come up with
3 a total, and then we look at that total and it classifies it as --
4 if it's above a certain number it's a caution and it needs
5 approval or management advice, advisement. And then, of course,
6 if it's too high, then we just say it's a no-go.

7 Q. So when you have these that are on the higher end that
8 require management approval, are those -- is that documented?
9 Do --

10 A. It is.

11 Q. -- you have to sign off on that?

12 A. Absolutely.

13 Q. Who signs off on it, I guess?

14 A. Well, it can be the chief pilot, the director of operators,
15 or a designated senior pilot, whoever is in operational control
16 that day.

17 Q. Who else is in operational control outside of you and the DO?

18 A. Okay. So senior pilots, if it's my day off I will designate
19 a senior pilot to be in operational control. And that will be on
20 the schedule. And typically they will not have flying duties that
21 day. They may on a "fly last" type basis, if somebody needs a
22 break or it just depends on what's going on with the weather. And
23 we delegate that; we have limited operational control we can
24 delegate to the flight coordinators on any --

25 Q. So when it comes to these flights that again may have more

1 risk than normal, how may have you seen? How many can come across
2 your desk in a week or in a month?

3 A. You know, it really depends on the weather. If we have a
4 good stretch of weather, there will be real low risk. So there
5 hasn't been a lot this year.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Last year when we had a lot of rain, there were quite a bit
8 more. And we keep those for 30 days.

9 Q. Okay. So can you give me a number, let's say, for how many
10 you've gotten this season, that you've seen this season? Order of
11 magnitude is --

12 A. A couple dozen, maybe.

13 Q. Okay. And also how many flights are you flying per day
14 typically, I guess? That's another thing for us to see.

15 A. Well, we have 14 airplanes and each one will do 4 or 5
16 flights a day. And with the risk assessments, we do one in the
17 morning, and if the conditions don't change, we don't do one after
18 that. It just, it stays -- you know, we did one and we're good.
19 If the conditions change, then we'll do a new risk assessment or
20 if anything changes significantly we'll do a new one.

21 Q. And you said the flight coordinators are the ones who fill
22 these out?

23 A. Right.

24 Q. Are they given any kind of training in --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- these things. Okay.

2 A. Right, right. And that's all outlined in our Medallion
3 program, what training is involved. And that's the DO that does
4 the training.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And that's recurrent every year.

7 Q. Have you had instances where, let's say, you had weather that
8 you can see that would probably be below minimums or would -- have
9 you had instances where you know that it should have been a no-go
10 but you haven't seen any kind of paperwork to reflect that?

11 A. With our -- not with our company.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. No. I do recognize other planes flying around in weather
14 that we won't.

15 Q. Okay. So you've been there since 2014. Did you work with
16 the previous DO?

17 A. Yes. Yeah, Kevin.

18 Q. Can you describe how -- one, how that relationship was and
19 kind of the differences between the two?

20 A. Sure. So that was Kevin Roof and he, for one, he didn't like
21 paperwork. He liked to sit in dispatch and visit. We got along
22 well. I was a little sad to see him go, but I understand he
23 wasn't happy here and he needed to do what was right for him.

24 Q. Can you elaborate on the paperwork comment?

25 A. The paperwork?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. He's a pilot. He doesn't like to sit in the office, you
3 know, and do that. He would do it, you know --

4 Q. What paperwork are we --

5 A. Well, like updating the ops manual.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. We had an IFR program we were trying to start so there was
8 quite a bit there. The dynamics of the company has changed. Back
9 when Kevin started, the chief pilot and the DO would fly every
10 single day. And as the company grew, that was no longer practical
11 or safe. There needs to be somebody in the office overseeing
12 operations and that wasn't what Kevin wanted to do. He wanted to
13 be out flying every day.

14 So there was a little bit of -- and I don't think they were
15 giving him enough time in the office to get his work done. He had
16 said 3 days flying, 2 days office, and he could keep caught up
17 with everything, but he was more 5 days flying and he would do
18 office work on a day like this. You know, when we're not flying,
19 that's when the office work would get done, on weather days. The
20 problem is if we don't have weather days you get pretty far behind
21 working that way.

22 And when our last POI started, he sat down with George and
23 myself and said, I need one of you in the office all the time to
24 at least be able to take my phone call. He said, you know, he
25 didn't want us both out flying and unavailable. He wanted to be

1 able to reach one of us at any given time.

2 Q. So when it comes to the tasks that you are doing on behalf of
3 the DO now, in terms of his responsibilities, what percentage
4 would you say that you're doing of the DO's job versus --

5 A. It's shifted. In the wintertime I was able to cover, you
6 know, most all of it. As our training ramped up and with more
7 pilots coming on, I had to shift my focus to the chief pilot
8 duties. DO responsibilities, I may be covering 25 percent;
9 75 percent of my time is devoted to chief pilot duties.

10 Part of the issue with DO duties is managing the staff and
11 being here to do that. And, of course, they don't see me as -- in
12 that position to manage them.

13 Q. Okay. Have you had difficulties because of that?

14 A. Have we? Yeah.

15 MR. RICHMOND: I can't help you.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. We're dealing with those difficulties
17 and we all know what they are and we're working through it. It's
18 hard bringing a new DO in and having that new DO try to manage
19 somebody who's been with the company since its inception and take
20 direction from somebody who's new. They're pretty entrenched with
21 the ways, their ways, the old ways of doing things. And whenever
22 someone tries to introduce a new way or a new procedure, it's not
23 always met with warm fuzzies.

24 BY DR. SILVA:

25 Q. Um-hum. So do you have pilots who may just ignore your

1 guidance?

2 A. Not pilots.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Uh-uh.

5 Q. Oh, it's not -- okay

6 A. No, no, no. Pilots are -- we see eye to eye on, and if we
7 don't -- I don't have any issues with pilots.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. No. They're, they are well aware of my role and their role,
10 and we have a mutual respect. It's in other departments where the
11 DO, you know, manages other departments, other people, and not
12 being here to do that is -- it gets frustrating. There's a lack
13 of oversight, I would say.

14 Q. These other departments, are you seeing conflicts in terms of
15 the mission? Are you seeing -- is it that they're mission
16 oriented? How is --

17 A. A power struggle, who's in charge, who's your boss, who's my
18 boss, what's he supposed to do? That kind of thing.

19 Q. How are, how is that affecting -- or not even affecting, how
20 is it relating, I guess, to the safety of the operation?

21 A. It's not really safety. It's more just internal strife.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We've had people quit over that.

24 Q. So has this been going on since your DO moved out of the
25 area?

1 A. Since I've been here.

2 Q. Since you've been here, okay.

3 A. Yeah. There's always been this animosity. And you'll get
4 that, I know, with any company where not everyone's going to get
5 along. Somebody needs to be in charge overseeing what is going
6 on.

7 Q. We're almost there. Okay.

8 Can you describe the safety programs that you have in place
9 at Taquan?

10 A. Sure. As far as the flying?

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. We have a standalone CFIT Avoidance program. It's part of
13 our Medallion Star. It's fairly robust. It covers cue-based
14 training. We have PowerPoint presentation. We have charts. We
15 have a simulator that we use, and it's required recurrent
16 training. A minimum of 1 hour for recurrent training; the initial
17 training is 2 hours, and that's in the simulator. The PowerPoint
18 and the ground stuff, that's as long as it takes. You know,
19 they'll be questions and whatnot. Some sessions are longer than
20 others.

21 Q. How long is it, say on the --

22 A. The PowerPoint is probably 45 minutes and then we'll spend
23 another -- we have videos that we watch, another 40-minute video
24 on CFIT Avoidance. So, well, half a day on CFIT Avoidance and
25 then there's another module with the equipment, the Chelton

1 equipment. We have simulators with exercises and written tests.
2 And the FAA has actually put together a series of videos with
3 Capstone on the equipment series. So we go through that and then
4 we do the exercises.

5 Q. If a pilot has a safety concern, how would they relay that to
6 management? Can you kind of go through --

7 A. Sure. They would --

8 Q. -- the options they have?

9 A. What we really encourage is, we have a form that's called an
10 S-1 form. And it can be anonymous. And we do have a target; we
11 like to see at least 100 forms per year. We're about halfway.
12 We're at 50. That is the most effective communication tool
13 because it's written and we can send it to the correct department
14 and we can provide follow-through. If they want to provide their
15 information, we can follow through via email or in person. And
16 then we track this as well.

17 Q. Is this an actual written form? Is this kind of an online
18 form?

19 A. It's not online yet.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. It's a piece of paper.

22 Q. And where do they submit this? Where -- is there a box?

23 A. There's a box downstairs or they can give it to me or in my
24 box upstairs. And that typically, that's one of the DO duties
25 that I am covering that has traditionally been all DO. But it is

1 getting done. I do make it a priority.

2 Q. Can you give us an example of a safety issues that has come
3 up through these forms and how that was resolved through the
4 company?

5 A. Sure. Well, I have a whole stack of them if you want to look
6 at them.

7 Q. Actually, yes.

8 A. Do you, do you really?

9 Q. I do, yes.

10 A. I'll go get them. All right.

11 Q. Well, we can do that later.

12 MR. RICHMOND: Well, no, we won't go get them.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Don't go get them?

14 MR. RICHMOND: We won't go get them.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay.

16 BY DR. SILVA:

17 Q. We can handle that --

18 A. So -- all right, here's what happened one day. A pilot was
19 getting in or getting out of a plane, I can't remember, but
20 anyway, he stepped on the step to get in to the door and he
21 slipped. He was okay, but he wrote an S-1 that said, hey, the
22 non-skid paint is starting to peel off, could you please do
23 something about this? I got the form and said, oh, yeah. I gave
24 it to maintenance and they took care of it right away. That night
25 as soon as they got the form, they're like, oh, non-skid; that's

1 easy, we'll put that on there. Followed through with the pilot,
2 hey, how do you like your new non-skid? Oh, yeah, it's working
3 great.

4 Q. Was that just on that aircraft?

5 A. Just on that aircraft, yeah.

6 Q. Okay. Any safety issues that you've seen, whether it's this
7 season or previous seasons, regarding weather concerns or route
8 concerns operationally?

9 A. No. I do have concerns over these early morning Steamboat
10 flights. I never did like that. And I was doing Steamboat well
11 before Taquan was, at Promech. Steamboat, to me, seemed like an
12 afterthought. They built a lodge and they needed to find a time
13 to fly the guests, so they chose first thing in the morning, which
14 is the absolute worst time to fly out there because the weather is
15 still bad and we don't have good reports out there. That has
16 always been a problem for me.

17 I would like to see those flights moved towards the end of
18 the day when we have a better idea what the weather trends are
19 like. We're not under all that pressure in the morning. If we
20 don't get the flight done in the morning, those guys, those guests
21 aren't going anywhere because we have other things to do all day
22 long.

23 They have been working with us a little more. They've been
24 taking a boat out to the island and then a van and then another
25 boat. It's a big inconvenience for them but it's either that or

1 wait until 5:00 that evening.

2 Q. So is it -- who is it that you're interacting with that kind
3 of sets the schedule or the request for these early morning
4 flights?

5 A. It's -- well, we do have Tiger Johnson is coordinating with
6 Steamboat and Waterfall, these flights on the schedule.

7 Q. So has that changed at all, I guess, in your experience with
8 that route? Has it always stayed these early mornings?

9 A. Yeah. Well, I have talked to Brien Salazar about changing
10 that and I think he's looking at that as well. It makes more
11 sense for our operation to have it at the end of the day rather
12 than first light.

13 Q. Do you have an idea of how many of those have issues with
14 weather or more --

15 A. Oh, yeah. I would say over half. And it's only the time of
16 day. If you wait 4 or 5 hours, typically the fog will lift and
17 things will improve.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. The problem with the lodge work is they're different than
20 tours. It's a way different operation. With tours, if we cancel,
21 the guests don't even show up here. We leave them down on the
22 ships and they can go do their things. They can do another
23 excursion, go shopping, whatever. With lodges, they have no where
24 to go so they're hanging out and waiting.

25 Q. Do you get pressure from the lodge itself?

1 MR. RICHMOND: So we're going to take a break. I'm going to
2 talk to him off the record.

3 DR. SILVA: Okay. That's fine.

4 MR. RICHMOND: The record is going to be pending.

5 DR. SILVA: We'll pause.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: We'll pause here at 9:50.

7 DR. SILVA: Yeah. If you need to take a break too --

8 (Off the record at 9:50 a.m.)

9 (On the record at 9:55 a.m.)

10 MR. WILLIAMS: So we're back on the record at --

11 MR. RICHMOND: So let her ask you a question as opposed to
12 saying anything, Mike.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: -- 9:55. We just started a second recording
14 because I hit stop instead of pause, so --

15 BY DR. SILVA:

16 Q. Okay. So regarding the operation going over to Steamboat and
17 the lodge, is Waterfall, correct?

18 A. Waterfall and Steamboat are two different lodges owned by the
19 same parent company.

20 Q. Okay. Got it. So you have, from what I understand, you have
21 passengers who are there, who this is their only way to come back
22 to Ketchikan; is that correct?

23 A. There is another way.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. They have purchased a bus and they will load everyone up on

1 that bus, fly them to the ferry terminal, or they'll charter a
2 boat to go pick them up. So there is another way.

3 Q. They have other options.

4 A. They do have other options.

5 Q. Who does the -- I guess in terms of interaction between
6 Taquan and that company or the lodge itself, who does that
7 interaction? Who is that coordinator?

8 A. That's -- that is Tiger, Tiger Johnson. He's coordinating
9 with -- and I don't know who he's coordinating with; there are
10 several people at Waterfall and Steamboat. There's Mike Dooley,
11 there's Steve, there's Chuck, and I don't know who he's talking to
12 and if that changes on a daily basis or what.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And then they're the ones who make the decision, well, are we
15 going to wait until the end of the day to try to transfer the
16 guests or are we going to get a boat or are we going to put them
17 on the ferry. That is out of our realm.

18 Q. As Taquan?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Um-hum. That's up -- that's the lodge responsibility.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We'll give them the option, hey, we can fit you guys in at
24 5:00 if you want to wait; you make the call. What do you want to
25 do?

1 Q. Okay. And what's Johnson's role here?

2 A. He is assistant station manager.

3 Q. Okay. Okay. And just quickly going back to the safety
4 reports that you get. Overall, what kind of reports are they?

5 A. Everything. Anything from a dock -- a board is loose on the
6 dock. Just everything you can think of. There's a pothole in the
7 parking lot. There's handrails loose or there's a burr on the
8 handrail. Just anything that anyone feels is related to safety
9 they can report.

10 Q. Have you had any issues with maintenance or aircraft or
11 anything in terms of, you know --

12 A. Well, there's always maintenance. I mean airplanes break and
13 they fix them.

14 Q. What would you say is the average turnaround time from when
15 you get a report to solving or addressing the issue, I guess?

16 A. Oh, it depends what issue are we talking about. A
17 maintenance issue or a dock issue or --

18 Q. So with both examples, I guess. So --

19 A. Well, if it's something on the dock, let's say there's a
20 slippery ramp or there's a -- usually that's handled right away.
21 It depends on -- they have other things to do as well. It depends
22 on the, you know, the severity of the issue. If it's a real
23 serious safety concern, then it will be dealt with immediately.
24 And we do have the option of immediate corrective action. We're
25 required to respond to those within 3 days.

1 Q. Okay. And that requirement is set by?

2 A. It's set by our program, our safety program. Any maintenance
3 concerns are dealt with immediately.

4 DR. SILVA: All right. Okay. I'm going to pause for now
5 since you've heard a lot from me. So I'll pass the buck over to
6 Shaun for some follow-up.

7 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

8 Q. Are you doing all right?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I am.

12 Q. So Sathya covered a lot, so I'm going to go back and try to
13 fill it in.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. So I apologize if we're kind of jumping all over the place.
16 I'll try and keep it somewhat organized as best I can. I want to
17 go back to, you talked about performing some of the DO duties and
18 the DO not being here on site. How often is he here?

19 A. Well, he was here every day -- last year he was here every
20 day, 5 days a week.

21 Q. Okay. And this year?

22 A. This year he moved to Anchorage to be with his family at the
23 end of the season, October -- September, October, and he visits
24 periodically.

25 Q. When was the last time you saw him here?

1 A. It was last month we had an audit, a Medallion audit. When
2 was that? I want to say it was in June. I can get the specific
3 dates on that but I believe it was June.

4 Q. Okay. And to your knowledge was that the first he had been
5 here this season?

6 A. No. I think he was here prior to that, too, in May.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. He has flight privileges so he'll pop down every -- I don't
9 want to say every month, but, you know, every couple months he'll
10 pop in and go through our Medallion program and just get caught up
11 on some of that paperwork.

12 Q. Okay. So you said you talk, text, email -- I just want to
13 clarify, you said several times per month?

14 A. Right.

15 Q. Okay. So it's not on a daily or weekly basis that you're
16 constantly in communication with him?

17 A. Certainly not daily unless there's issues, then we'll talk
18 more if there is an issue. We may talk several times during a
19 day. If things are running smoothly, then there's no reason to
20 call him.

21 Q. So with regards to operational control --

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. -- so the director of operations retains responsibility but
24 can delegate it. So you're in the chain of command with
25 operational control?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So you said when you're out, you can designate a senior
3 pilot --

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. -- to do that?

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. Does it ever go back to the DO? Like if you're out, does the
8 DO, do you try to get him to cover it or do you just go straight
9 to a senior pilot?

10 A. I haven't. I like somebody on site to do that. We don't
11 necessarily have to be on site for that with technology today. We
12 can look at the cameras and check the weather. It's just easier
13 with someone here hands on.

14 Q. Are these senior pilots listed in the GOM or the ops spec?

15 A. Yeah. It's listed senior pilot.

16 Q. But they're not listed by name anywhere?

17 A. Not by name.

18 Q. Okay.

19 (Whispered conversation.)

20 MR. WILLIAMS: You talking to yourself?

21 MR. RICHMOND: Yeah, I don't want it on the record now if
22 you're whispering to yourself. It's -- if word gets back to D.C.
23 about you whispering to yourself.

24 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

25 Q. So what is the relationship -- you mentioned the POI came in

1 when he -- the new POI, and wanted the chief pilot or the DO,
2 somebody here to take his call.

3 A. Right. Somebody available. He didn't want us both out
4 flying. That's the way the operation had run in the past, where
5 the DO and the chief pilot were out, unavailable to take phone
6 calls because they were out in the field flying.

7 And when our new POI, it was Brian Frederick came in and he
8 sat down with us and said, hey, look, you guys have just grown.
9 You've acquired all of Promech's assets. I need one of you to be
10 able to answer my phone call at any time. So don't -- at least
11 one of you be in the office or be available. He didn't say, in
12 the office, just, he said, be available to answer the phone.

13 Q. What's the relationship with the POI?

14 A. We just -- there has been a change; there's been two changes
15 actually. Since I've been here, there's actually been three.
16 Brian Frederick was the first and then he left the FAA. And then
17 Jon Percy took over. And I'm familiar with Jon, he was the POI at
18 Promech, and he's -- he knows the operation, he knows the area
19 well. And I'm not exactly sure why that changed. Maybe it was
20 the workload.

21 But we have a new POI effective as of, I want to say last
22 week, and I haven't met him yet. I got a brief email introduction
23 and his name is Clamp (ph.). I can't remember his first name.
24 And he just said, hey, I'm your new POI; I want to give you the
25 heads up, I'd like to come out and visit your operation, and left

1 it at that.

2 Q. Okay. When was the last time you had seen Jon prior to the
3 accident, Jon Percy?

4 A. Jon Percy, he was here, he did check airman evals in May.

5 Q. How often would he come around?

6 A. Well, we requested those evals, and so every spring he's here
7 doing that, doing check rides.

8 Q. Do they come through for any inspection or --

9 A. Sure.

10 Q. -- anything like that, every year?

11 A. Yeah, every once in a while he'll pop in. If he's with a,
12 talking with a different operator, he'll come in and do a random
13 ramp check or whatever.

14 We do have an inspector in town, Lana Boler. She's a little
15 more hands on. She's the maintenance inspector. And she's
16 welcome anytime to come in and whatever she wants, we're happy to
17 help. She likes to schedule those meetings and I understand,
18 so --

19 Q. So your flight coordinators, you mentioned, are given limited
20 operational control?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. And the training was done by the DO in accordance with
23 Medallion?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. Does anyone sample their work? How does that -- how are they

1 supervised?

2 A. There is a test, a written test that they take every year.
3 And we do periodic -- oh, what would you call those -- drills,
4 emergency drills at least once a year. We'll give them a
5 scenario, overdue aircraft or whatever, and then have them go
6 through everything.

7 Q. Are there any records kept as far as the flight coordinator
8 training?

9 A. We do. We keep records.

10 Q. Okay. Does the Medallion -- you mentioned there was a
11 standalone CFIT avoidance as part of the Medallion.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. So is this, I know that there's some in the actual training
14 program --

15 A. Right.

16 Q. -- CFIT module in training program. Is this in addition to
17 that?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. There is another manual?

20 A. There is. It's another book, a big thick one with just CFIT
21 avoidance.

22 Q. And you mentioned that there was a Medallion audit the last
23 time the DO was here, what was that, June, I think you said?

24 A. We've had --

25 Q. Roughly.

1 A. We've had a couple. They, normally they'll come in and
2 they'll do a pre-audit and that, I believe that was in June. I
3 don't have the exact date, when someone come in and do the
4 pre-audit with the DO in preparation for the formal audit, which
5 just took place 2 weeks ago, and there was no findings.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And for the formal audit, unfortunately I was out with an
8 injury and George was out sick.

9 Q. Okay. And no findings, correct?

10 A. No findings.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. So did they look at the -- at all the stars at a time or do
14 they look at just a couple?

15 A. They --

16 Q. Which ones did they review?

17 A. I believe, from what I was told, they wanted to review the
18 Maintenance Star. Every year it's different. The last year it
19 was the CFIT Star and they wanted to observe our CFIT training in
20 the simulator. And I'm not sure how they schedule that, what they
21 -- I think they usually go around and talk to employees and ask
22 them about our safety culture and --

23 Q. At the -- I just want to make sure I've got this right. At
24 the time of the accident, you guys star holders or shield holder?

25 A. Shield.

1 Q. Shield.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. And is that still active now or is it in suspension
4 following the accident?

5 A. From what I understand, it is in suspension. I haven't
6 talked, spoken with Medallion directly. This is what I hear from
7 the DO is that we're going to lose the shield for a few months
8 while we go through, we're going through a TapRoot investigation.
9 And once we determine what happened then we can put a fix in
10 place.

11 Q. Okay. And I'll let the DO know this is as well, part of the
12 party process if there is an internal investigation going on, we
13 need to be notified of it.

14 A. Oh, okay.

15 Q. So that is part of the party status.

16 A. We are getting a new DO. He'll be here on the 22nd and
17 that's what we're waiting for, so he can be here part of that
18 TapRoot investigation. Because he'll be required to have that
19 TapRoot training, safety systems training, SMS training and that
20 stuff, so --

21 We were going to do it sooner but we said, well, let's just
22 wait until he gets here to be part of that. So we'll notify you
23 when we get a date for that.

24 Q. I just need to know that you're doing it. I don't need to
25 know the exact date but --

1 A. All right. We are doing it and Medallion --

2 Q. But you're doing it.

3 A. -- will be coming down to assist us with that.

4 Q. Okay. The risk assessment, do the pilots have anything to do
5 with it or is it solely by the flight coordinators?

6 A. No. The pilots can add their own situations, you know, stuff
7 that the flight coordinator would not know, you know, the personal
8 illnesses or emotional stresses. They are certainly welcome to
9 add whatever numbers they want to that.

10 Q. Do you feel it adequately captures the risk and addresses it?

11 A. Yeah. It gives us a good baseline.

12 Q. Are the pilots trained on it?

13 A. Pilots are.

14 Q. So have there been any significant training -- changes to the
15 training program or anything since the accident?

16 A. Since the accident, we've had a couple of safety meetings
17 just to emphasize our CFIT avoidance procedures. As far as
18 operational changes, we are raising our visibility requirements to
19 4 miles over land.

20 Q. Is that an en route thing or is that a launch?

21 A. En route, that's the flight visibility.

22 Q. Okay. When I was reviewing the training program, the copy
23 that was provided, I believe by you to Brice, there's an initial
24 approval stamp from the FAA with the initial approval expiring in
25 February of 2018. Has that training program received final

1 approval?

2 A. No. We got a letter saying that it needed to be revised by
3 September of this year. And that was the only letter that I've
4 seen.

5 Q. Who did that letter come from?

6 A. I'd have to look at the letter to see who sent it.

7 Q. Okay. If you can just give me the date and who it came from.

8 A. Sure.

9 Q. Because if it's from the FAA, I'll request it through them.

10 A. Should I go get that now?

11 MR. RICHMOND: Here's what I think on all things, is when
12 we're done if Shaun or Sathya or others give us what they want.
13 As an example, the thing I was concerned about is a slip and fall
14 on the dock, we give you something like that, some plaintiff's
15 lawyer gets a hold of it, he sues us for slip and fall on the
16 dock. So certainly some of them might be relevant and we
17 should probably --

18 MR. WILLIAMS: We may have a way around that as part of
19 summarizing that type of thing.

20 DR. SILVA: Yeah. We can, we can review it.

21 MR. RICHMOND: My sense is they tell us what they want at the
22 end of this, we generally would want to give them what they want.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: And it may be something, too, where we could
24 work out where we can just review it and see if it's pertinent and
25 if it's not then --

1 MR. RICHMOND: I think that's quite possible. I mean, I
2 really do, it's just that my general nature as the oldest of seven
3 children, is not to go run and volunteer things. But we want to
4 appear cooperative. And we will be cooperative, seriously. So
5 when we're done, you want to go get that --

6 MR. O'CONNOR: Sure.

7 MR. RICHMOND: -- Shaun can look at it, whatever.

8 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay

9 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

10 Q. So can you describe to me the use of the Medallion programs
11 within the training department?

12 A. Sure. The Medallion program in the training department,
13 specifically the CFIT Avoidance Star, and that's a big part of our
14 training, cue-based training. The S1 forms, that's part of the
15 Medallion program. We train pilots in what their looking for with
16 the S1 forms. The risk assessment forms, same thing, pilots are
17 trained. We have, you know, an initial, pretty robust initial
18 training program. It covers several days, and all of these, and
19 it may be a little overwhelming because there's a lot to take in.

20 Q. Just a couple more and I think I'm done. Who had operational
21 control the morning of the accident?

22 A. I did.

23 Q. You did. So have there been -- and like I said, I'm just
24 trying to fill in here for the last little bit. Have there been
25 times when you've needed to get in touch with the director of

1 operations but were unable or had difficulty doing so?

2 A. Not any difficulty, no. He's very responsive. Now, as
3 you've found out, I have some difficulty with my phone, cell phone
4 reception where I live, but texts, no problem at all with texts.

5 Q. You mentioned a concern over the early morning the Steamboat
6 flights. You said the weather's still bad, not good reports.
7 What kind of reports are you talking about?

8 A. We just haven't had a chance to get trends. You know, the
9 longer, the more you can observe during the day, the better you
10 get a feel for what the weather's trending, whether it's up or
11 down. And first thing in the morning, you don't have that trend
12 report.

13 Q. How do pilots get weather at Steamboat prior to -- because
14 they leave from here to go to Steamboat?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. So how do they get weather or know what's going on at
17 Steamboat before they depart Ketchikan?

18 A. Well, there are several things. We start with the METAR, the
19 Ketchikan METAR and TAF. And we look at the weather cameras en
20 route. And then Steamboat will call in with their current
21 conditions.

22 Q. Who's calling in?

23 A. From Steamboat?

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. His name is Adam. I can get his last name. I don't have it

1 with me now.

2 Q. Has he been trained on weather? What kind of weather are you
3 getting from Adam?

4 A. Right. It's a general, general conditions, wave heights,
5 swells, can he -- how far can he see, cloud conditions, is it
6 clear, are there clouds, fog.

7 Q. Cloud condition or visibility, cloud conditions type stuff,
8 is that -- there's no equipment out there to measure. It's --

9 A. There is no --

10 Q. -- kind of, I can see --

11 A. Exactly. I can see to the --

12 Q. -- the next mountain or something?

13 A. Yeah. I can see to the end of the bay. It looks clear out
14 that way or I can see this island or I can see halfway up the
15 mountain and the clouds start.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I think I'm -- that does it for me.

17 DR. SILVA: Matt?

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Matt.

19 MR. RIGSBY: Sure.

20 MR. RICHMOND: Let me see your notes, and I'll send him
21 (indiscernible).

22 (Laughter)

23 BY MR. RIGSBY:

24 Q. Mike, when you guys, when you hire a new pilot, are you the
25 only one that gives them a check ride?

1 A. No.

2 Q. No. Who else would give them a check ride?

3 A. For the actual check ride itself?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. It could be myself, Clark Hassell can give check rides, Mike

6 O'Brien is giving check rides. I believe that's it.

7 Q. Would those be considered the senior pilots?

8 A. Senior pilots.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Now we do have some pilots that are authorized to do the

11 244 rides, the line checks, the IOE stuff, that don't have check

12 ride authorization yet.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. We also have company instructors. And we try to get the new

15 pilots flying with everyone at least once so we can all take a

16 look at them.

17 Q. When you hire, on the new hire process, if they've never

18 flown out here before, are they put with a senior pilot for

19 mentoring or --

20 A. Absolutely.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I get criticized for over training quite a bit. I will train

23 as long as the schedule lets me. I will keep training those guys

24 until we run out of seats. I've done training well into June,

25 several months.

1 Q. So they, like they'll go on, I guess -- yeah, are there
2 particular routes that you guys fly?

3 A. There are. Yeah, we have scheduled routes.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And also with our tours, as part of the Medallion program we
6 have tour checks that we do. We'll load all of the new pilots up
7 in an airplane and take them out to the Mistys and show them this
8 is, these are the routes that we take, these are the reporting
9 points, and what the tour is about with no passengers.

10 Then, in addition to that, after they get checked out on the
11 airplane, we'll put them in the left seat with a check pilot in
12 the right seat with passengers in the back, and check them out for
13 as many times as it takes until everyone's comfortable. It's not
14 just a one and done thing.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And we have a follow-up check 30 days, 30 to 45 days after
17 that to check them again.

18 Q. It's 30 to 40 days after they first start flying?

19 A. After their initial check ride.

20 Q. After their initial check.

21 A. Um-hum. And then, of course, if we notice anything in the
22 meantime, we'll do additional training.

23 Q. Right. Do you -- under hiring requirements, I know you said
24 3,000 hours. Are they ATP, commercial?

25 A. Commercial.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Commercial. Any instrument requirements?

4 A. Instrument rating is required.

5 Q. Do they get checked out for instruments as well?

6 A. No. We're VFR only.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. We do CFIT avoidance maneuvers where we do put them under the
9 hood and teach them how to use the Capstone equipment, 180-degree
10 turn away from the terrain. It's a real standard procedure as
11 set.

12 Q. Sure. So that would be your inadvertent IMC --

13 A. Um-hum. Yep.

14 Q. -- training. Okay.

15 A. And we, we'll normally have them take that all the way down
16 to landing. And elaborating a little bit, but once they're under
17 the hood and they turn away from terrain, they got a wide open
18 water in front of them, we'll have them go ahead and set up for a
19 descent, controlled slow, glassy water descent.

20 Below 300 feet, the Chelton equipment just starts to paint
21 everything green or brown or whatever color it is, it's this
22 color, which really shows them that this equipment is only good to
23 a certain point. Once they're below 300 feet, you're using that
24 equipment beyond its capabilities, and that's a real eye opener
25 for some.

1 And conditions permitting, we'll have them take that all the
2 way down to landing or we'll have them go around, you know, if we
3 don't like the water or the way things are setting up.

4 Q. I know you mentioned Chelton. Have there been S1 reports on
5 the Chelton system?

6 A. You know, not recently.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. No. That, in the past, at Promech, certainly they have some
9 issues with satellite -- I don't know if it was a satellite thing
10 or what, with the screens going blue and freezing. But recently,
11 no, we have not had any issues with our Cheltons.

12 Q. Okay. Are the pilots paid on a salary basis?

13 A. Daily rate.

14 Q. I'm sorry?

15 A. Daily rate.

16 Q. A daily rate?

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Okay. Are they paid whether they fly or not?

19 A. Yes. So a day like today when they're not flying, we'll make
20 a call at 1:00 and if we send everyone home, say we're done, they
21 get a half day pay. If we keep them past 1:00 thinking it might
22 improve, they get a full day pay even if they don't fly.

23 Q. Okay. Are they allowed to accept tips from the passengers?

24 A. Sure.

25 Q. You say the flight coordinator, and just for my own

1 clarification, is that effectively, are we looking at a
2 dispatcher?
3 A. Right.
4 Q. Is that the same thing?
5 A. Yeah it is. It's --
6 Q. Okay.
7 A. We can't officially call them a dispatcher --
8 Q. Right.
9 A. -- because they're not licensed.
10 Q. Okay. But they are coordinating that, so --
11 A. Yeah.
12 Q. But they do the dispatch type function?
13 A. Those functions, flight following.
14 Q. Okay. How do they flight follow?
15 A. We have a, we call it CRABS. It works off the ADSB.
16 Q. Okay.
17 A. And it provides the real-time positions for the aircraft. We
18 also have radio communications.
19 Q. Okay. Are they required to call in certain waypoints or --
20 A. Yep. Every 30 minutes we need a radio call. Also 5 minutes
21 prior to landing, and then once they land back at the base.
22 Q. Okay. When they're flying a route, are they -- obviously you
23 have multiple aircraft in the area at the time. Do they
24 communicate to each other --
25 A. Sure.

1 Q. -- as well?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Is that just air to air?

4 A. Air to air.

5 Q. One to one?

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. Okay. Does dispatch monitor those as well?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. We have a separate radio, a different radio, it's actually a

11 marine radio that the pilots communicate to dispatch with.

12 Q. Okay. I guess, if they -- if you got a pilot that goes out

13 and does do an inadvertent IMC and they call in, do they have

14 satellite communications? Do they let you guys know back here

15 that, hey, we did an unplanned landing here, we're going to wait

16 it out for the weather? Is that how -- how do they relate that

17 information back to the base?

18 A. If they have -- some of them carry their own --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- those little trackers, spot trackers or whatever they're

21 called. We do have a sat phone for remote operations, we'll send

22 that out with the pilot if we know they're going to be out of

23 normal radio range. There are several relay towers along the

24 routes where they can relay that information to flight service.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And then they'll call us.

2 Q. You mentioned about the 500-foot minimum for over land or is
3 that over water and land?

4 A. 500 AGL.

5 Q. 500 foot AGL, okay. So when they pick out, go from Point A
6 to Point B, are they looking at the highest obstacle between that
7 point?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And then going 500 feet above that?

10 A. Yes. And our Capstone equipment has a little AGL readout so
11 if they're not sure what the terrain elevation is, they can look
12 at Capstone and it will tell them exactly what their AGL is.

13 Q. Okay. Do your aircraft have radar altimeters in them?

14 A. No. No, just that Capstone.

15 Q. Just the Capstone, okay.

16 A. However that works. It's off the GPS terrain database.

17 Q. What about TAWS units?

18 A. We do. We have TAWS, TAWS-B and TAWS-A.

19 Q. Is that integrated into the Chelton or --

20 A. The TAWS-A is, yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. That's -- the TAWS-B is a separate aural alert.

23 Q. So it is an aural alert. How is that -- just to the pilot's
24 headset?

25 A. To the pilot's headset, yeah.

1 Q. Okay. Can everybody else, like say, tourists or whatever, do
2 they wear headsets?

3 A. They do wear headsets. And I believe they can't hear that.
4 It depends on how the intercom is set up, because we do tour
5 narrations and we can isolate the passengers or they can listen to
6 the radio communications. So it depends on how the pilot has it
7 set.

8 Q. Okay. Do you guys have, do you guys video the flights at all
9 for the tourists or the passengers so they can buy their --

10 A. No.

11 MR. RIGSBY: I think that's it for me. I appreciate it.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Um-hum.

14 DR. SILVA: Do you need a minute or are you ready --

15 MR. SIPPERLEY: See, the tough part of going last is, you
16 know, the coffee has --

17 MR. RICHMOND: Just save time and say they've covered it all,
18 they've done their job, you know.

19 MR. SIPPERLEY: No I've -- yeah, that's the tough part of
20 going last, not just the coffee, it's --

21 DR. SILVA: All right. Let's take a 5-minute break.

22 MR. SIPPERLEY: Yeah. Let's take 5 minutes.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: All right. We're off the record again at
24 10:37.

25 (Off the record at 10:37 a.m.)

1 (On the record at 10:41 a.m.)

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. We're back on the record at 10:41.

3 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

4 Q. All right, Mike, you know, again going last I'm having to
5 take notes and trying to see if there's other questions I want to
6 ask, so -- as I'm going along. But I do have -- a lot of the
7 questions I have has been asked and answered, but I'm going to go
8 through a few things.

9 A lot of the questions on the flight risk assessment
10 form -- so I noticed on the form, looking at the form done that
11 day that had, you know, three signatures on it, three initials, it
12 had your initials, the flight coordinator's, and the pilot signed
13 it. Is that the normal, everybody takes a look at the risk
14 assessment for that day that's involved with it?

15 A. That's normal.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Yeah. Once we delegate the responsibility to the flight
18 coordinator, unless it falls above a certain number, management
19 won't need to initial that.

20 Q. But typically the flight coordinator fills it out, the person
21 in ops control looks at it, the pilot agrees and signs it, and
22 move on.

23 A. Right. And then it gets turned in at the end of the day.

24 Q. Okay. So you said that the -- typically, you know, with the
25 risk assessment forms you'll do one during the first thing in the

1 morning, if nothing changes. So for the day of the accident, you
2 know, then it would have been done the first thing; it was the
3 first flight of the morning so one would have been filled out
4 then. It would have been recommended for the day?

5 A. There was one for each flight that morning filled out.

6 Q. Okay. So on the day of the accident, there was no weather at
7 all that was identified as being an issue on that risk assessment
8 form. Do you know why that would be?

9 A. The weather reports that we had were good. The weather on
10 this side was -- I can pull exactly what it was, but it was like
11 better than 2,000. The weather that we were able to pull up en
12 route was certainly VFR.

13 Q. Okay. So when you're looking, you're probably looking at
14 cloud -- you only have three official METARs obviously.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. That's what you're allowed to use from the weather service.
17 So it's Klawock, Hydaburg, and Ketchikan.

18 A. That's right, yeah.

19 Q. Okay. Is that -- with the changing weather, you know, you
20 described it as rapidly changing weather --

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. -- and it's usually worse in the morning. Are those three
23 points enough, do you feel, to evaluate the weather?

24 A. Well, we like to get a report from the lodge itself because
25 it is further away from the reporting stations.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And Hydaburg has a weather cam, Craig has a weather cam,
3 Klawock has a weather cam. There's weather cams en route at the
4 Harris River, Kasaan. So we take all those pictures into account.

5 And we try to get a trend of is it getting better, is it
6 getting worse, what was it doing an hour ago. And we did not see
7 anything to indicate that we shouldn't launch the flight.

8 Q. Okay. So the reported at Steamboat was 500 to 800 feet for
9 that morning. So that's pretty much right at the minimum, so -- I
10 guess, isn't it?

11 A. It's legal, yeah.

12 Q. It's legal, but it is towards the minimums?

13 A. It is.

14 Q. Do you consider that a reliable source of weather?

15 A. I'll tell you what I'd like to see is a weather camera out
16 there. That would be the most reliable. If we can have weather
17 cameras at these lodges then we can make that assessment ourselves
18 and we're not relying on somebody else's interpretation of the
19 weather.

20 Q. So I think you said his name was Scott or -- at the
21 Steamboat?

22 A. At Steamboat, Adam.

23 Q. Adam, okay Adam. So his is just more of a, not a guess but
24 an educated looking at the terrain, looking at the hillsides,
25 okay.

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. So that's not, it's not considered a reliable source of
3 weather, it's just a --

4 A. It's not an approved --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Right. It's not an FAA observer, a FAA-trained observer.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Well, we do that. We train our people, this is what we'd
9 like to look for; if you see this, please let us know. Those type
10 of keys, you know.

11 Q. You also said that there was some training guidance for
12 filling out the risk assessment form. It's not just considered
13 self-explanatory. It is, there is training and guidance that's
14 provided to the pilots and dispatchers in how to fill that out?

15 A. Yes. For the dispatchers and for the initial pilots, yes.

16 Q. And that's through Medallion, is --

17 A. It's part of our basic indoc.

18 Q. Okay. As far as the audits, we were trying, I was trying to
19 look at the audits for the risk assessments form the last time we
20 were here and we were unable to find them. You said they just
21 came and did an audit on those and there were no findings on the
22 risk assessment for those?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. On the CFIT audit, okay.

25 A. There -- well, there were no findings in the audit that

1 Medallion did. I don't know specifically what they looked for; I
2 wasn't here.

3 Q. So you don't have somebody internally in the company that
4 does the Medallion audits?

5 A. We do. Yes. We do have an audit schedule that we do, and
6 typically it's the DO. I am responsible for the CFIT avoidance
7 audit.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And those are twice a year.

10 Q. Okay. So typically the DO does the audits for each one of
11 those Medallion functions, there's a -- okay.

12 A. Everything other than CFIT avoidance, yes, is a DO function.

13 Q. Let's see, so the standard objective of the training program
14 is to provide pilots with the necessary knowledge and preparation
15 to safely avoid controlled flight into terrain and to successfully
16 interpret, respond to terrain warning systems information based on
17 the knowledge of the TAWS system, operation, display, and aural
18 announcements.

19 Step 1 in your training is listed as, for the pilot to react
20 immediately upon getting a TAWS warning. However, on the day of
21 the accident the TAWS was in the inhibited mode and that seems to
22 be a common practice. Based on this information, how effective do
23 you really think the training is, you know, in coordination with
24 the use of the TAWS?

25 A. Well, it depends on which TAWS you're talking about, the

1 TAWS-A or the TAWS-B. The TAWS-B, the aural alerts are nuisance
2 alerts.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. We do have a procedure in place after the Hageland accident
5 investigation. We changed our training program to include TAWS
6 will be enabled upon inadvertently entering IMC.

7 Now, the TAWS-A is a visual cues. We trained, we train that
8 because you can't turn that off. That's always on. And that's
9 what we train our CFIT avoidance maneuver.

10 Q. You had said that the colors start to change on the, for the
11 TAWS for the water from blue to brown or whatever it is.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Below 300 feet?

14 A. It was 500 and they've lowered it 300 for Alaska.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Okay. For some reason I was under the impression it was
18 1,000 feet but okay.

19 A. 300 feet.

20 Q. Let's see. I've seen some examples of the terrain display on
21 the Chelton, the moving map doesn't really represent sometimes
22 always what you're seeing. For example, you'd be over water but
23 it actually looks like land. Is that an issue? It's --

24 A. It's good equipment. It's not perfect. It's better than a
25 lot of the products that are out there.

1 Q. So in your opinion, is relying on the Chelton moving map as a
2 source to train in positional awareness reliable --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- in reduced visibility --

5 A. It is.

6 Q. -- or when operating at low altitudes?

7 A. Situational awareness, definitely.

8 Q. In the mountains, okay. Okay. So we're talking about the
9 180-degree turn again.

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Your training program emphasizes the use of 180-degree turn to
12 escape from an inadvertent IMC. On the day of the accident, he
13 began -- Mr. Hudgins began to execute the maneuver, however, still
14 had a CFIT accident. What element do you feel is -- may have been
15 missing, you know, while executing that maneuver?

16 A. Well, one of the first things we train is slow down, transfer
17 your scan from visual to instruments, where's the terrain, where
18 is the high terrain, turn away from the high terrain. And I think
19 that's the key that was missed. Turning, turned the wrong way.

20 Turn away -- and we do have a little noodle that comes out of
21 the airplane, a little miniature airplane on the screen, and you
22 can follow the noodle and keep it out of the red, the areas of
23 red. It's good equipment. If it's used correctly, it is good.

24 Q. So with a, with respect to a turn then, a 180-degree turn,
25 there's been a lot said about, you know, getting in heavy rain and

1 the visibility in the turbine otter being reduced quite a bit --

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. -- because of lack of airflow over the -- with the window.

4 On the day of the accident, he made a right turn. Is it typical
5 that if you're in heavy rain, heavy precip, and your visibility is
6 reduced to turn left and look left first or -- I mean, as a pilot,
7 I kind of was like, I'm always like want to look out the window I
8 can see best. In the training, do you specify which is the --

9 A. Turn away from terrain.

10 Q. Turn away from terrain.

11 A. And I'm the same way. My preference is always to turn left
12 because I can see this direction a lot easier.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I can see out this side window, I'm -- and just better
15 visibility in a left turn. It's a natural tendency.

16 Q. But that's not a -- is that part that you emphasize in your
17 training to --

18 A. We don't have -- no, we'll put them in different scenarios.
19 We'll put them in a box canyon and then they need to figure out
20 which way to go. They'll need to think where is the terrain and
21 which way do I need to turn. It's not always going to be the
22 same.

23 Q. So with respect to the visibility in the turbine otters, and
24 there's been a lot said about the, flying in moderate to heavy
25 rain and --

1 A. Sure.

2 Q. -- the VG, there was VGs on that particular airplane. In
3 your experience, did that help, does that help much at all as far
4 as --

5 A. I have not heard any reports of that being an improvement.
6 We've tried everything and we haven't really found a solution yet.

7 Q. So from your experience in, you know, moderate to heavy rain,
8 how much can the visibility be reduced? I mean, you can have,
9 legally, probably 3 miles visibility to whatever, but when you get
10 into heavy rain does that reduce the visibility out the front
11 window enough to --

12 A. It's not so much the heavy rain, it's more of the light rain,
13 the little misty drizzle. It sticks to the window, and your
14 focus, your depth perception changes. So maybe the outside
15 visibility is the same but your eyes are now focused on these
16 little water droplets right --

17 Q. Too close.

18 A. -- in front of you.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. So in May of -- you were here in May of 2016 as the --

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. -- chief pilot. Do you recall getting a letter from the FAA
24 region regarding VFR routes and CFIT? There was a CFIT letter
25 that was sent out in May of 2016 to every 135 operator in the

1 state, you know, trying to find ways to help reduce CFIT
2 accidents.

3 Since that time, a lot of the operators have come up with,
4 you know, VFR routes. They have established VFR routes where they
5 have known, you know, designated points and routes where they have
6 minimum visibilities, minimum altitudes would be at. So no matter
7 what, when they're on that route if an issue occurs, you run into
8 weather, whatever, you always have a safe out left or right or,
9 you know, a good escape option.

10 Do you recall the letter? Do you guys, have you guys
11 considered doing something like that?

12 A. It rings a bell and we do have something in place on our tour
13 routes. For this route, for the accident, we don't have that cue-
14 based guideline.

15 Q. Okay. So --

16 A. And we are considering it, yes. We will be putting something
17 like that in place.

18 Q. Yeah. So for the cue-based training that you do have then,
19 that's mainly for the Misty Fjord's Tour?

20 A. Right.

21 Q. That doesn't apply to the Steamboat or to -- okay.

22 A. That's something we'll be expanding on.

23 Q. Okay. Let me just move on to these --

24 A. The cue-based training, that should be transferable. Once
25 it's learned, it should be easily transferred to any route. Now,

1 if we have to spell it out and make a map of this is the point
2 where you need to see this, we'll do that. That's not a problem.
3 We can do that.

4 Q. Um-hum, okay. All right. I apologize, I'm running through
5 my notes here and see what other questions that were left. If you
6 have the disadvantage of going last --

7 MR. RIGSBY: Can I ask one follow-up while he's looking?

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Say again?

9 MR. RIGSBY: Can I ask one follow-up while he's looking?

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Sure, go ahead.

11 MR. RICHMOND: You keep saying that. That's not a
12 disadvantage, Brad. I don't understand what you mean by that, you
13 know, really.

14 BY MR. RIGSBY:

15 Q. Mike, just real quick, on the audits that Medallion has done,
16 have you ever had an FAA -- has the POI or anybody participated in
17 that or come to oversight or, you know --

18 A. Not that I'm aware of.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. That's typically the DO working with Medallion during the
21 audit process.

22 Q. Okay. But never had that FAA inspector come out and follow
23 it along, that you've seen?

24 A. Not that I, not that I can recall, no.

25 MR. SIPPERLEY: Are you done, Matt?

1 MR. RIGSBY: Yeah.

2 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

3 Q. Okay. Back to the question of the DO, you're kind of wearing
4 two hats right now. You've had -- you're wearing two hats and
5 you're talking about some difficulties possibly in some other
6 departments. Is one of the departments dispatch?

7 A. Dispatch is a little bit divided. We have a station manager
8 who is responsible for the flight followers, as far as hiring.
9 And there seems to be some confusion over who reports to who.

10 The flight followers are great. But the DO would typically
11 have oversight and direction, give direction to the flight
12 followers.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And that, that's where the confusion is, is who is telling
15 dispatch, you know, what needs to be done.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And roles have changed in the company, too. And as those
18 roles change from, maybe we have somebody starting off in one
19 department and it's hard to adjust to that.

20 Q. You mentioned they have limited operational control --

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. -- delegated to the flight coordinators.

23 A. Yeah. And that's clearly spelled out what those limitations
24 are.

25 Q. Okay. In the FOM or your GOM, whatever you guys call it --

1 A. Sure.

2 Q. -- it says, it's routinely -- operational control is
3 routinely delegated to them but doesn't define it as limited. So
4 is that limited -- I didn't really see a division in the guidance
5 on what the limitations were. I mean, there's a number of things
6 that if these conditions, other conditions, risk conditions pop
7 up, then a senior pilot or somebody else actually has to step in
8 and --

9 A. Right.

10 Q. -- and evaluate it, so --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. None of those risks, though, are included in any of the risk-
13 based evaluation for points or things like that. Do you think
14 that at some point it would be a good idea to include those in the
15 overall risk assessment?

16 A. I would have to look at that. Yeah, it's a good idea. I
17 believe some of it is included, the beach operations, the high
18 winds, in the risk assessments.

19 Q. Let's see if I have anything else here. My last question is,
20 do you have any recommendations for us, the FAA, that you feel
21 need to be addressed that would help prevent these type of
22 accidents?

23 I mean there's -- we have seasonal meetings. I know there's
24 been a lot done here, work, you know. There wasn't -- I don't
25 think there was a meeting this year, but usually there's a meeting

1 with the carriers here every spring and every fall to discuss
2 issues and things that have come up. In your experience, what is
3 it or what recommendations would you have?

4 MR. RICHMOND: So I'm going to recommend that you don't
5 answer that question right now until we have a little more
6 information as to the cause of the accident and the NTSB finishes
7 their investigation. I hate to be recommending things to people
8 that may have nothing to do with this accident. So with that
9 caution, Mike.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay, let's ask that again down the road.

11 MR. SIPPERLEY: That's fine. I'm done.

12 BY DR. SILVA:

13 Q. Follow-ups and a few things that I skipped through my initial
14 stuff. Regarding, you mentioned a new procedure where you turn on
15 TAWS-B if you're in IMC.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Is that written somewhere?

18 A. It is.

19 Q. Where is that written?

20 A. It's written in our training manual.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. In the CFIT Avoidance Training Manual.

23 Q. And is that something they practice during the training?

24 A. It is. It's part of the CFIT avoidance training. It's
25 almost a required maneuver. It's not technically required but we

1 do that maneuver every year as part of the recurrent training.

2 Q. Okay. And where is the, where is that kind of line item in
3 terms of the entire CFIT avoidance procedure? Is that something
4 that, you get an IMC, the first thing you do is turn on the --
5 turn off the inhibit on the TAWS? How does that fit?

6 A. I'm not sure I understand. It's outlined in our training
7 manual, the procedures, what to do. On the check ride, we do have
8 a line that we write CFIT avoidance, or CFIT escape maneuver --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- satisfactory.

11 Q. So specifically the change that you made to turn on the TAWS-
12 B, once you get an IMC -- I guess I'm asking where does that fit
13 within the avoidance maneuver?

14 A. Okay. That's good. After the plane is stabilized.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So we have the pilot slow down, transfer reference to
17 instruments, become aware of his terrain. Once he's stabilized,
18 then the TAWS-B goes enabled. And then he starts to think which
19 way am I going to turn, looking at high terrain, I'm going to --
20 you know, I know my heading, what heading do I want to turn to,
21 get the plane slowed down, put in some flap, make the turn.

22 It's -- what I've seen is when guys, when pilots get into
23 these situations, their immediate reaction is usually wrong.
24 They'll overshoot their headings, they'll initiate a climb,
25 they'll do something. And the point is to transfer reference to

1 instruments, stabilize, and then decide which action to take.

2 Q. When was that change incorporated into your CFIT training?

3 A. It was a year ago. I have the exact date. We have the
4 revision number. I believe it was October 2017.

5 Q. Okay. So it would have been in this year's training?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. Going back to the risk assessment form, when you, as
8 management, give -- I guess they have the notification to you/the
9 approval from you?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. What are you looking for when you, when you sign that paper?

12 A. Well, I'm looking at the overall number. I'm looking at the
13 pilot, who's the pilot, what's the mission, and what's their risk
14 factor. If it's a high number, I want to know why. Why is it --
15 is it based on weight, is it based on conditions, and then weigh
16 that.

17 Q. What would be a high number to you in these?

18 A. Twenties.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. That's starting to get up there. We're typically seeing
21 teens on a routine basis.

22 Q. So are you looking specifically at the components? Let's say
23 the number is below that. Are you looking specifically at
24 components of the assessment?

25 A. Sure, yeah.

1 Q. And quality wise?

2 A. The pilot, the mission, and what are the risk factors that
3 stand out.

4 Q. So let's say, you mentioned that in this case you have like a
5 -- if it's a 500 to 800-foot ceiling reported at Steamboat.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. Where would that have fit, I guess, in a risk profile,
8 outside of the assessment form? But in your experience, what
9 would you --

10 A. Well, the weather en route was good. It was the weather at
11 the destination that was marginal.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. In that, the pilot can make the decision if it -- if he can't
14 maintain legal minimums, to divert.

15 Q. So is there any component of the risk assessment that -- the
16 risk assessment form that assesses conditions at the destination
17 and takeoff point?

18 A. There are, yeah. On the form?

19 Q. Weather-wise, yeah.

20 A. Yeah. Yeah, several different conditions, winds, terrain,
21 remote operations.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Familiarity with the destination and if it's a lake, several
24 different factors. The Steamboat Bay is a routine stop for us so
25 it's nothing out of the ordinary.

1 Q. So in the -- again, back to let's say a 500-foot ceiling, do
2 you think that that would have increased the risk of this flight?

3 A. It's over water, so -- if it were over land I might, but
4 since it's over water and the weather was good en route, we had
5 reports better than 2,000 feet en route, I don't feel that that
6 was a significant risk, the report that we got. Now things
7 change.

8 Q. You mentioned that you audit the CFIT avoidance. How do you
9 audit? What does that entail?

10 A. It entails going through the pilot records and making sure
11 we've done all the training, everything's been documented.

12 Q. And this is for Medallion? You do that audit --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- for Medallion, okay.

15 A. Part of the Medallion program. That's scheduled twice a
16 year.

17 Q. And do they review what you've done? Is there any kind of
18 quality check at all?

19 A. Yeah. Last year they came in as part of their audit and
20 checked the CFIT avoidance program. That was their main focus.

21 Q. And is it in the meantime that you do these internal, or I
22 guess you do these audits?

23 A. Every 6 months, yeah.

24 Q. Six months, okay.

25 A. Medallion comes in once a year -- well, twice. They do a

1 pre-audit then they do their actual audit.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But they're generally back to back, they're pretty close. We
4 do a mid-year audit and then we audit when they come here as well.

5 Q. Okay. Are there different limits for new pilots versus more
6 senior pilots?

7 A. No. No, we base everything on our least experienced pilot.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. We have talked about going to different teams, Team A,
10 Team B, and that was -- no, we're not doing that.

11 Q. Okay. And where would you put Mike on the spectrum?

12 A. Veteran.

13 Q. Veteran, okay.

14 A. Seasoned, experienced.

15 Q. Okay. Again, my questions are a little all over the place.
16 In terms of pilot compensation, how would you characterize the pay
17 here versus the competition around here?

18 A. My pay?

19 Q. For pilot pay. If you (indiscernible) --

20 A. You don't want to know what I think about my pay. Let's
21 see, I do --

22 MR. RICHMOND: Am I supposed to object? I felt like I should
23 have, yeah.

24 MR. O'CONNOR: Pilot pay is fair. I do take a sampling of
25 the industry. Of course, we're not going to be able to compete

1 with everybody. If it were an issue, we wouldn't have pilots
2 working here.

3 And it's not just the pay. The pay, the pay is fair. Pilots
4 appreciate working here because of our safety culture and they'll
5 tell you that again and again. They never feel pressured to fly.
6 Anyone can cancel a flight at any time for any reason. And that's
7 one thing they really appreciate about Taquan as opposed to other
8 companies where they don't have that type of freedom.

9 And we will never question a guy for -- a pilot for turning
10 around or canceling a flight, anyone. I will pat them on the back
11 and say, good job, you are paid to turnaround. You are paid to
12 make those decisions.

13 BY DR. SILVA:

14 Q. Have you gotten any pushback from that?

15 A. No. Absolutely not.

16 Q. So for this specific route, I think I got a little confused.
17 You said you developed the routes for different destinations that
18 you have; is that correct?

19 A. Well, the cue-based training, we do have specific -- a map
20 with point to point reference points, and that's for our tours.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. We don't have that for the lodge route. There are several
23 different routes you can take to and from the lodge.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And that's up to the pilot as conditions change to determine

1 which route they're going to take.

2 Q. Can we pull that up on -- just on the map. Can you --

3 A. Sure.

4 Q. -- kind of go through what the options are?

5 A. Sure. Actually, I might even something better. Let's see.

6 MR. RICHMOND: Is that your box?

7 MR. O'CONNOR: It's my box.

8 MR. RICHMOND: Put everything back in the box that you don't
9 want them to go through --

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay.

11 MR. RICHMOND: -- the rest of the day.

12 MR. O'CONNOR: I just need to look for this one, this map.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: I think you were about to give Bob heart
14 failure.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: I know, right.

16 I thought I had a copy of that map. Let me see -- oh, here
17 we go, all right. Made our box. This is what I'm looking for.
18 I'm sorry, someone else went through my box and it got a little
19 disorganized.

20 So maybe you've seen this. These are the different routes
21 for the different aircraft that flew that day.

22 BY DR. SILVA:

23 Q. Oh, okay.

24 A. This one has a bunch of the extra stuff on it assisted in the
25 search. Oh, you have that -- that's, yeah, that's one from the

1 day. So there should be three because we had three Otters flying.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. And they all took -- well, one one of them took a different
4 route than the other two. And if you want to look at that on the
5 chart, we can do that as well.

6 Q. This is what you were saying, the connecting lines, where is
7 this information coming from?

8 A. That's from the third-party program called RadarBox24. It
9 came off line.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Off the internet. So Steamboat is here and we are here. And
12 there are several different ways to get across this island.

13 MR. RICHMOND: Turn this over, you won't be distracted.

14 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. And as you can see on that -- which one
15 do you want to go over first?

16 BY DR. SILVA:

17 Q. Let's go over --

18 A. 409?

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. Okay. So 409 was the last plane to launch. And he came up
21 here to this point, Grindall Island, and said -- he gave a weather
22 report and said, hey, I think it looks better up towards Thorne
23 Bay; I'm going to go take a look up that direction.

24 So he came up this way, you can see on the -- came across
25 here, Control Lake. This is, yeah, fairly low terrain, maybe

1 1200 feet or so. He came across here at a couple thousand feet.
2 He said it was good. He went all the way into Steamboat. And he
3 did that on the way back out, too. He took a completely different
4 route.

5 MR. RICHMOND: So which pilot is that now?

6 MR. O'CONNOR: That would be Mike O'Brien.

7 MR. RICHMOND: O'Brien.

8 MR. O'CONNOR: In 409.

9 MR. RICHMOND: Just to make sure Shaun knew that.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. Any questions on that routing?

11 DR. SILVA: Uh-uh.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: No.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay.

14 MR. RICHMOND: So that's this one?

15 MR. O'CONNOR: That's that one.

16 BY DR. SILVA:

17 Q. You can keep that one too. Looking about 3000 --

18 A. And he did give a pilot report to Ketchikan flight service,
19 told them what the weather was doing. And he gave a report to our
20 dispatchers as well and told them his weather report.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. Now that one is 959. That was the first plane out, Chuck
23 Perkins. And he flew a slightly different route. He came through
24 what we call Sulzer Pass, which is -- where is Sulzer, down
25 here -- to Chomley to Hetta. This a low pass, fairly short over

1 the terrain, maybe 2 minutes, if that, over terrain.

2 And you can get through here at a fairly low altitude. It's
3 one of the lowest points to cross the island. And that's what he
4 did, and he came out and went past Hydaburg, went past Waterfall,
5 and then came up this way to Steamboat, did his thing, came back
6 out almost identical route on the way back. Came through here,
7 8:00 gave a report to flight service, weather's good, got at least
8 2,000 feet, thank you very much and back.

9 5-2 Bravo, that had the accident, he came out this way, as
10 you can see. It's right there. Pretty much identical to 959's
11 path. He came up and did his thing in Steamboat. Steamboat, his
12 -- things changed a little bit in Steamboat and he switched up his
13 load. He had to reconfigure his load. It was unexpected but not
14 unusual. Then he loaded back up and he took off.

15 And he decided to go up this way since the plane that came
16 through said it was good. He's coming up this way, where are we
17 at, Klawock, going by Klawock. He came to Klawock Lake and you
18 can see here he did a 180. He didn't like what he saw. He got to
19 this point, he didn't like it. He turned around and decided,
20 well, this way's no good. I'm going to try the route I came out,
21 so he went back down this way, back towards Waterfall.

22 In the meantime he's doing that, 409 is up here saying, hey,
23 it's good up here; 959 saying, hey it's good down here. He's
24 like, well, I'm already halfway, I'll just continue this
25 direction. And when he got here, apparently things had changed.

1 Q. So what altitudes would you normally fly for that more
2 southern route?

3 A. This route here?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. You can get through there 1500 feet, is a safe legal altitude
6 to get through there. The higher you are, the more direct you can
7 go and cross this terrain. If you're coming through here at
8 1500 feet and you can't cross, you might have to go around these
9 peninsulas, around the islands, and just follow the waterway up.

10 DR. SILVA: Great. Anyone else have questions on this before
11 I move on to the route?

12 MR. RIGSBY: No.

13 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

14 Q. Just one quick question. So like what, to get through
15 Sulzer --

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. -- what would be a minimum altitude you'd want to be going
18 through there at, you know, in case you had to do a tour?

19 A. Well, for Sulzer, you want to be able to see the other side
20 before you enter the narrow pass. You want to be able to see
21 water on the other side because it is quite narrow and if you had
22 to do a turn in Sulzer Pass it would be tight.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It wouldn't be impossible but it would be tight. So that's
25 one of the visual cues we're looking for in a lot of these places.

1 Because when you get to the end I want to be able to see water on
2 the other side or I'm going to find a different direction.

3 Q. So at the end of Hetta, I want to see West Arm?

4 A. Yeah, exactly. And what is confusing to me is when he got to
5 the end of Hetta, he reported I can see through Dog Salmon. And I
6 thought, yes, you're going through Dog Salmon. Dog Salmon is up
7 this direction, a left turn, and he could see through it. He
8 reported, I can see through Dog Salmon. And that's great, go that
9 way.

10 Watching this track, he made a right turn. I knew
11 immediately something was wrong because that's -- Dog Salmon's
12 left, why did he turn right? Came downstairs, what's going on?
13 Got the phone call there's been an accident.

14 Q. So he was -- he reported Sulzer for Dog Salmon, so that means
15 I'm over Sulzer at the beginning of it. So was that just -- would
16 you consider the beginning of Sulzer right passed (indiscernible)
17 Island there?

18 A. Right.

19 Q. Okay. So, and if I'm looking up Dog Salmon then you're
20 thinking he's going to go up through Skowl Arm and back into
21 Ketchikan?

22 A. Exactly.

23 Q. Okay. That's, so that's -- okay. So, positionally if he
24 reported that you would think he was past Skowl Island in the
25 wider part of that valley then.

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. Where maybe making a right turn would make sense if you had
3 to. Does that make sense to you?

4 A. It -- well, if he was going up that direction it sounds like
5 he opted not to go that way even though he can see through Dog
6 Salmon, he was still going to look at Sulzer.

7 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. Okay, that's when he -- okay, that's when
8 he changed and made the turn. Okay.

9 BY DR. SILVA:

10 Q. What were you looking at when you -- were you following the
11 flight?

12 A. I was. I was following all of them.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Yeah. Because they were going different directions and I
15 just wanted to see how things were progressing. It's part of my
16 job in operational control is to keep track of these guys as well.

17 Q. Okay. And you have a station, is that -- or is there just
18 like a --

19 A. I just watch them --

20 Q. -- (indiscernible) for you?

21 A. -- on the computer.

22 Q. Okay. So how did you first hear about the accident?

23 A. We got a phone call from the state troopers.

24 Q. Okay. How long after do you think --

25 A. It was minutes. I saw the right turn on the screen and it

1 didn't seem right. I went downstairs, have you heard what's going
2 on? And then the very next thing, within a minute, state
3 trooper's on the phone.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. We got a problem. The right turn did not make any sense to
6 me. There's just no reason to go that way. And apparently one of
7 the passengers had called 9-1-1 and then reported what had
8 happened.

9 Q. Again jumping all over the place here, but who's the director
10 of safety?

11 A. Well, it typically -- it was the DO and that got transferred
12 to Mike O'Brien.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I don't know if I completely understand the definition of
15 that position.

16 Q. Well, that's actually my next question, is what is your
17 understanding of the role of the director of safety?

18 A. Yeah, that's a good one. I -- to hold safety committee
19 meetings.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. We're all involved in safety and the S1 forms and the
22 day-to-day stuff, but as far as being the director of safety, my
23 understanding is that is the person calling the safety committee
24 meetings that are required.

25 Q. Okay. So right now it's Mike O'Brien, from your

1 understanding?

2 A. Right. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. Do you have a CRM or single pilot resource
4 management --

5 A. We do.

6 Q. -- training program?

7 A. We do in our training program. It's more about situational
8 awareness since we're a single pilot crew. And we have videos
9 that go over that and how to manage the cockpit and stay ahead of
10 the aircraft.

11 Q. Overall, what does your training program look like for both
12 initial and recurrent?

13 A. It's huge. For initial, it's huge. It spans several days,
14 at least 4 days. We're talking about 40 hours. There's a big
15 stack of written tests. I have a syllabus. Every year I come up
16 with a training, ground training schedule; it's a ground school.
17 We cover different topics every day.

18 For recurrent training, it's not as intensive. There, we
19 still do require all the written tests, the simulator training,
20 the recurrent flight training, and any additional training that we
21 feel is necessary, which is interesting because we did additional
22 training with Hudgins in the Otter.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And that, I don't believe that was logged on the records I
25 sent over.

1 Q. What kind of training was it?

2 A. It was just a -- well, it wasn't even an hour, it was .7
3 flight training in the Otter with one of our check airmen. Just,
4 he'd been gone for the season, want to come back and, you know, a
5 refresh, a refresher training.

6 Q. Was that your idea or was that -- did that come from him?

7 A. It was his idea.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah. And I was all for it. I was like, yeah, if you want
10 to go out for an hour or so and get familiar, refamiliar with the
11 airplane, certainly we have time for that.

12 Q. Do you have a fatigue policy?

13 A. Policy, well, I mean, a written policy no.

14 Q. Okay. So can someone call in fatigued?

15 A. Oh, for sure. Yeah, no problem. We -- on the busy days we
16 over schedule so we have extra pilots to give pilots breaks.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. We call those floaters. We have them on Mondays and Fridays,
19 which are our busy days. But at any time guys can call in sick.
20 Pilots call in sick and, yeah, no problem, we'll get it covered.

21 Q. Okay. Do you have enough people to do that --

22 A. Oh, yeah.

23 Q. -- and that's not an issue?

24 A. Not an issue.

25 Q. If you cancel a flight, whether this is from the tour side or

1 the lodges, do you have any pushback or do you hear of any
2 pushback --

3 A. No.

4 Q. -- if you cancel a flight?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. No. They understand why we're canceling. It's a safety
8 concern and there's never any question as to why.

9 Q. Anything come back from your management, any questions or --

10 A. Not to me personally.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. No. I've been doing this long enough that if someone's going
13 to question my decision making, then I'm going to just question
14 theirs.

15 Q. How would you describe the safety culture?

16 A. It's excellent.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah. It really is.

19 Q. What is your favorite thing about working here?

20 A. My favorite thing. That's a good one. The people.

21 Q. How about your least favorite?

22 A. The people. No, I'm joking.

23 Q. If there was anything you could change, you were king for a
24 day, what would that be?

25 A. Yeah. Someone asked me that, one of the Medallion auditors

1 asked me that. If there was anything I could change, there would
2 be something I would change, and it's one of the things we do in
3 the Misty Fjords where we land. And it has nothing to do with
4 this accident, it's just a procedure I don't like. We land, we
5 let the people out on the floats, on the pontoons to take
6 pictures. I feel that's a safety issue. I don't think we should
7 be letting people out of the aircraft while it's floating around
8 in the water.

9 That's something when I moved to Ketchikan I was like, you do
10 what? Because we never did that at Kenmore. I mean, that is a
11 lawsuit waiting to happen. If someone goes in the water, who's
12 responsible? I would change that.

13 Q. How do you -- have you voiced that to anyone?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. How was it received?

16 A. It's a procedure we've been doing for a long time,
17 longstanding procedure, they're not going to change.

18 Q. Who is making that call above you?

19 A. The people above me.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And that's something we need to look at because the Coast
22 Guard regulations have changed. I don't know why I'm talking
23 about this here, but requiring anyone under the age of 12 to wear
24 a life jacket on a boat. We didn't change. We're not a boat.
25 Are we; aren't we? I don't know. Maybe that's a question for

1 Bob.

2 MR. RICHMOND: I don't answer questions.

3 MR. O'CONNOR: Right.

4 MR. RICHMOND: But I can say if you let Shaun get out on a
5 float, I want him to have a life preserver. Like I want him to be
6 in a Gumby suit.

7 BY DR. SILVA:

8 Q. You mentioned that the visibility over land is now 4, the
9 minimum visibility is 4 miles?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. What was it before?

12 A. Two.

13 Q. Two miles, okay.

14 A. Unless it's a tour.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. The tours are 4.

17 Q. And when did that change?

18 A. The visibility over -- yeah, that as a result of this
19 accident. And that's something I really need to make clear is
20 it's 4 miles over land everywhere. I don't think everybody was on
21 the same page there. I think there was some, why are we
22 separating tours from our normal ops? I don't get that. It
23 should be the same for everything.

24 Q. Okay, let's see. When you address safety concerns, does that
25 come back to the reporter who reported the issue?

1 A. It will, yeah. That has been a criticism. There has been a
2 lack of follow-through. Some of the actions will be obvious like,
3 oh, you now have new non-skid on your airplane. But we have
4 revised our form to include an email for follow-ups.

5 Q. Okay. How do you encourage pilots to report safety issues?

6 A. Well, I tell them it's part of my bonus. I need to get at
7 least 100 safety reports in order for me to get a bonus.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Other than just the basic we want to be safer, more safe. We
10 want to be a safe company and it's your responsibility being out
11 there, if you notice something say something, and this is how you
12 do it. Don't just come to me as I'm running out the door, hey,
13 guess what I saw. No, write it down, get the report so then we
14 can follow up on it.

15 Q. And you mentioned a few things based on one of Shaun's
16 questions, but since the accident have you done any internal
17 reviews or changes to procedures or policies or anything?

18 A. Well, we've had the pilot safety meetings just to emphasize
19 our CFIT procedures to make sure everyone's on the same page. I
20 realize people forget or they don't remember things so we want to
21 make sure everybody's understanding what our CFIT avoidance
22 procedures are.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. And the, raising the visibility minimums to 4 miles. And we
25 are working on the cue-based training maps for the various routes,

1 not just for the tours but for all the routes.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And that hasn't been completed yet. It's work, a work in
4 progress.

5 Q. Okay. Have you had anyone leave the company recently?

6 A. Recently?

7 Q. Like within the last month or so since the accident, any
8 pilots or --

9 A. We've had a flight coordinator, was let go recently.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I'm not sure exactly what the circumstances were there.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Pilots, no. They keep coming back.

14 DR. SILVA: Good.

15 Shaun.

16 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

17 Q. Okay. So I'm going to keep it short, I only have a couple
18 questions here. You've referenced TAWS-A in Chelton. TAWS-B is
19 an aural alert.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. The TAWS classifications A, B, C, do you -- what's -- do you
22 know the difference between all of those and what the different
23 ones are?

24 A. I've looked into it for the Otters because we are getting
25 some new equipment and there were some discussions over what is

1 required with a turbine aircraft of that size. And my
2 understanding is a TAWS-B is what's required.

3 Q. Okay. So what is the TAWS-A?

4 A. The TAWS-A is the visual display on the map that shows, you
5 know, the red, the yellow for various levels of terrain.

6 Q. So are there any differences with altitudes or anything like
7 that with TAWS-A and B, and TAWS-C --

8 A. As far as the alerts?

9 Q. Yeah. Do you know --

10 A. There probably is. I don't know off the top of my head what
11 they are. That's a technical question.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. But as far as when the alert sounds, I don't know if there's
14 a difference when the alert sounds, you know.

15 Q. You say when, for inadvertent IMC you turn the switch, you
16 uninhibit --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. -- the switch. So is this standard practice that that switch
19 lives in the inhibit position unless it's inadvertent then it gets
20 taken out, or is it -- how is that switch normally positioned?

21 A. Normally it is at the pilot's discretion, it is inhibited,
22 yeah, because of the nuisance alerts. And I can elaborate on that
23 if you want.

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. I can make a strong argument that if that TAWS switch was

1 enabled this accident would have been -- would not have been
2 survivable. It could have distracted the pilot even further
3 causing him to make a radical change in bank angle or pitch and it
4 could have ended up as a completely different story in the end.

5 Q. Okay. So you mentioned if you have a pilot turn back for
6 weather, give the guy a pat on the back and commend him for it.
7 What about the guy that didn't turn back? Does anything happen --

8 A. Oh yeah.

9 Q. -- there?

10 A. Yeah, he gets spanked. Yeah, we -- I have had those
11 discussions, and it hasn't happened recently, but when we took
12 over Promech and we had the difficulties with the pilots
13 transitioning into the Taquan system, I had those conversations
14 with the pilots and say, no this is not the way we do it at
15 Taquan; I don't care if you can make it. I'm worried about the
16 guy that's following you who doesn't have the experience.

17 And I think it finally got through. It's, you know, the
18 experienced guys, sure, they get through a lot of weather but
19 they're going to have the inexperienced guys right on their tail.

20 Q. When was the last time you remember training being observed
21 by the FAA?

22 A. That was in May.

23 Q. They came and sat through ground school?

24 A. Oh, not ground school, no. This was flight training.

25 Q. Have they sat through ground school ever or not that you can

1 remember or --

2 A. Not since I've been here.

3 Q. When you became chief pilot, did you go through any
4 interview? Did the FAA sit down with you, vet you? How did that
5 process --

6 A. Sure. Yeah, our POI came down and he interviewed me and
7 asked me about my experience, and I gave him my resume and it was
8 approved, yeah.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: That is all I have.

10 DR. SILVA: Matt.

11 BY MR. RIGSBY:

12 Q. I have one last follow-up. On the visibility being raised to
13 4 miles.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. So there was -- it's my understanding that there was a
16 statement that on the day of the accident he was going back and
17 forth between 1 and 4 miles. So in the training, not in the
18 Chelton to see, you know, to pick out points, is that part of the
19 training of how you determine in-flight visibility is --

20 A. Right.

21 Q. -- using the Chelton, going back and forth, and then looking
22 outside and then trying to --

23 A. That is, that's one method. For our tours, we actually have
24 it on a map so you can say, if I'm at this point I should be able
25 to see this point or this island. And we know how -- that's a

1 known distance. To supplement that, we do the scaling on the
2 Cheltons, and that's a really good tool for that.

3 Q. So for the -- so on the tours you already have them
4 designated the points?

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. And what we're working on now is designating those type of
7 points for the other routes, for the (indiscernible) --

8 A. For other routes, right.

9 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. All right. That's all.

10 DR. SILVA: Anything that we didn't ask you that we should
11 have?

12 MR. RICHMOND: Shaun, come on, haven't you told her that
13 that's not going to happen?

14 MR. WILLIAMS: That's the number one question.

15 MR. RICHMOND: I mean, really.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: I don't know. We'll just proceed and if, you
17 know, if there's anything I can help with. I don't want to give
18 Bob a bad impression here either, so --

19 No, I can't think of anything off the top of my head. I did
20 get a text from Mike Hudgins. He should be here today, and you're
21 interviewing him tomorrow?

22 MR. RICHMOND: So can we go off the record? I mean, is that,
23 or do you have --

24 MR. WILLIAMS: In just a minute, as soon as she's --

25 MR. RICHMOND: Yeah.

1 DR. SILVA: Yeah. I think we're good. If you have anything
2 else, you have our contact information. We already have been in
3 contact. So I think we can -- if no one has anything else?

4 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. We're off the record at 11:40.

5 (Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m. the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

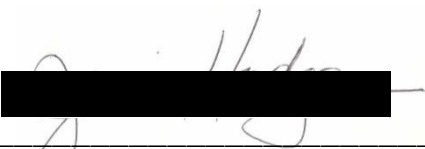
IN THE MATTER OF: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Michael O'Connor

ACCIDENT NUMBER: ANC18FA053

PLACE: Taquan Air, Ketchikan, AK

DATE: August 14, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Joni Hodge
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T

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OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

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Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: GEORGE CURTIS

APPEARANCES:

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

MIKE O'CONNOR, Chief Pilot
Taquan Air

BOB RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. Curtis)

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:06 p.m.)

MR. WILLIAMS: We're on the record at 2:06. So, thank you for joining us today. As I introduced myself, I'm Shaun Williams. The Operations Group Chairman, NTSB out of Alaska assigned to this accident, independent federal agency. We're here to determine what happened, why it happened, what we can do to prevent happen again. We're not a part of the DOT or the FAA, we have no regulatory or enforcement powers. As the operations investigator, it's just that, I'm focusing on the operational side. Anything that could have led to this and ways for improvement. Okay?

So, what I'm going to do is let everyone go around the room kind of tell you who they are and purpose for being here and keep going from there.

MR. CURTIS: Okay.

DR. SILVA: I'm Sathya Silva. I'm a human performance investigator with the board. So, I'll be working with Shaun, same thing, figure out what happened.

MR. CURTIS: Okay.

DR. SILVA: That's about it.

MR. CURTIS: Okay.

MR. RIGSBY: I'm Matt Rigsby. I'm out of the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation. I'm out here supporting Brad who's the FAA IIC, or investigator in charge, or coordinator for the FAA. We're here just to, from the, for the safety end of it.

1 MR. CURTIS: Um-hum.

2 MR. RIGSBY: So, not for any type of enforcement action or
3 anything like that.

4 MR. CURTIS: Yes.

5 MR. SIPPERLEY: And I'm Brad Sipperley out of Fairbanks, the
6 FAA.

7 MR. O'CONNOR: Mike O'Connor, here as the NTSB party rep.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: So, are you okay talking with all of us here
9 today?

10 MR. CURTIS: Absolutely.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Okay. So, we're going to be using a
12 tape recorder to record the interview. It'll then be sent out for
13 transcription. The transcript, not the audio, will then become a
14 part of the public docket.

15 MR. CURTIS: Yes.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: So, like I said, the purpose of the
17 investigation is for safety. To determine what happened, why it
18 happened.

19 MR. CURTIS: Uh-huh.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: It's not to assign fault, blame, or liability.
21 And the interview that we're doing here is part of the fact-
22 finding phase.

23 MR. CURTIS: Um-hum.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: So, we'll go pretty in-depth and work from
25 there.

1 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: We cannot, however, offer any guarantee of
3 confidentiality or immunity.

4 MR. CURTIS: Um-hum.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: Each of the group members will have a chance
6 to ask a question, ask questions one at a time. And so, I'll wait
7 for the other one to get finished. There will be an opportunity
8 for follow-ups. We usually do about two rounds, it seems to work
9 out pretty well.

10 So, please answer all questions to the best of your
11 recollection. If you don't understand a question, you can ask to
12 have it explained or repeated. If you realize you misspoke or
13 want to change an answer, please do so. We want the record and
14 everything as correct as possible. Also, since it is a recording,
15 please be sure to be verbal.

16 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Nodding doesn't get picked up on the, on the
18 tape. You are entitled to have one representative of your
19 choosing. Is there someone you would like to have?

20 MR. CURTIS: Bob.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Bob, you may direct George here not to
22 answer a question or request a short break or confer with him.
23 You may not answer a question for him.

24 MR. RICHMOND: Thank you.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Do you have any questions?

1 MR. CURTIS: No.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Let's get started.

3 INTERVIEW OF GEORGE CURTIS

4 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

5 Q. For the record, could you please state your name and job
6 title?

7 A. Yes, George W. Curtis, Jr. and I'm Director of Operations,
8 Taquan Air.

9 Q. Okay. Give me kind of a general overview of your aviation
10 background and how you got to here at Taquan.

11 A. Okay. Started flying Part 135, oh geez about, I'm
12 embarrassed to say how long ago, so 30 plus years' experience.
13 I've had several positions as check airman, training officer,
14 chief pilot, director of operations in numerous companies before I
15 arrived here at Taquan. My other seaplane experience is with
16 Kenmore Air in Seattle.

17 Let's see here, if I'm going back the last 20 years, Scenic
18 Airlines, chief pilot, 135, Part 121, also check airman, training
19 officer with them. And then up to a company called West Isle Air
20 up in the San Juan islands, Puget Sound area. I was hired in as
21 chief pilot and then very quickly moved to director of operations
22 with that organization. Took them into IFR operations and then I
23 was hired by Harbor Airlines doing the exact same thing. Went in
24 as a check airman training officer and then right to DO position
25 within just a few months. Then I was hired by the Boeing Company

1 and was a 737 systems and simulator instructor with them for about
2 4 years. And then I was hired by Alaska Airlines and as a first
3 officer instructor pilot. And so, I went in as a FO and then
4 immediately, after my first officer training, then I went through
5 captain upgrade training immediately so I could be an instructor.
6 And then I retired from there in January of 2016 when I accepted
7 the director of operations position here.

8 I still work for them part-time, two to three events per
9 month as an instructor pilot, as a retiree. Usually a Saturday,
10 Sunday, Monday kind of a thing. While doing all those jobs, I had
11 other little part-time things going on such as Kenmore Air when I
12 was working at Alaska Airlines. I was hired there initially to
13 put the land plane operation together, a Cessna Caravan. And then
14 was able to, not only set that program up, but also to fly for
15 them both on the land side and then later on on the float side.

16 And also worked with Hageland Aviation and helped set up
17 their operations control center after two accidents they had back
18 in 2015. And so, I just did that for about 6 months and then
19 worked very closely with their management team in setting up their
20 process and procedures, VFR routes, the (indiscernible)
21 operations. At the end of that 6 months, Alaska Airlines really
22 wanted me to be more active, so I drifted back over there again
23 until I retired.

24 Do you want me to go into more detail?

25 Q. So, you retired in 2016 from Alaska?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. But I just want to make sure, so I understand, you still work
3 part-time for them as an instructor?

4 A. Yeah, so when I retired I became a contractor.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Yeah. I've only, this year I've been pretty absent there. I
7 think I've only probably taught maybe five events this year. I've
8 been focusing more on the operation here and then I have another
9 position that I'm doing right now in Anchorage.

10 Q. And what is that position?

11 A. I'm the director of operations with Grant Aviation.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I gave 30 days' notice here of my intent to leave here and
14 they weren't able to replace me, so I agreed to stay on until they
15 found a suitable replacement. So, I've been traveling. I've day-
16 to-day operations by phone, or in person, or email.

17 Q. So, how long have you held the Grant position where you're in
18 Anchorage?

19 A. Let's see, I was first went in as chief pilot and that would
20 have been October 1, 2017. And then I moved to the director of
21 operations position, I want to say it was April, right around the
22 beginning of April.

23 Q. Okay. So, how long have you been director of operations, or
24 let's back up. How long have you been at Taquan?

25 A. Since the very end of January of 2016.

1 Q. Okay. How long have you been the director of operations?

2 A. The entire time. Well, actually, no when I came in I went
3 through pilot training first and then, I would say within about a
4 month and a half that I assumed that position. But I was hired in
5 as the director of operations.

6 Q. Okay. Had you worked here previously?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. So, when you were hired as the director of operations,
9 can you kind of walk me through how you got through the approval
10 process from the FAA to get --

11 A. Um-hum. So, I started off with a phone interview with the
12 principal operations inspector, who's name I don't even recall now
13 because he was replaced between the time I interviewed and my
14 first day here. But that was a rather lengthy phone call and it
15 focused a lot on operational control, Federal Aviation
16 Regulations, my previous experience as a chief pilot and director
17 of operations. And really the focus on the safety aspects, really
18 what the job entails, not only the paperwork side, but really the
19 safety portion of the position. And then, right before I was
20 named on the Ops Specs as the director of operations then I met
21 the new POI in person and had quite a lengthy conversation here in
22 Ketchikan before the change was made.

23 Q. Okay. So, you came on, you got picked up at Grant October of
24 2017 as chief pilot.

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. Was there, how did that approval process go with the FAA?

2 A. Well, the only thing that was different, it was in person
3 with the principal operations inspector.

4 Q. And was it, did they know you were also at Taquan currently?

5 A. Absolutely, yes.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. And has a Taquan POI, does he know you're currently at
9 Grant as well?

10 A. Absolutely.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Everybody was full aware and they talked to each other
13 apparently.

14 Q. And same thing with Alaska, as far as they know you still
15 contract with Alaska Airlines?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. So, how many pilots do you have here at Taquan?

20 A. I think we're hovering around 25, 27 range. It tends to
21 fluctuate. We have some that come in and work a portion of a
22 season and then they leave. So, that number will change a little
23 bit.

24 Q. Okay. What about airplanes?

25 A. Let's see here, count them up again here. So, we're two

1 down, can I count on my fingers? I want to say we have 15 on the
2 certificate right now, if I'm remembering it correctly. Two
3 Otters, the Caravan's gone, it was sold, and the then the
4 (indiscernible) Beavers. And then --

5 Q. Has there been any significant staffing changes or anything
6 like that since the accident?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Have there been any significant changes in the operation
9 itself in the last couple of years?

10 A. No.

11 Q. So, how did you find out about the accident?

12 A. I was notified through our operational control, downstairs
13 through our notification process. So, I was, I believe the second
14 phone call at which time I immediately notified our POI. And then
15 I was on an airplane about an hour and a half later and I was on-
16 site here same day.

17 Q. So, where were you when you found out?

18 A. I was in, it was Anchorage.

19 Q. How would you describe the relationship with the POI and the
20 FSDO?

21 A. Very good. Very cooperative, very proactive.

22 Q. How much interaction do you have with them?

23 A. With the entire department, as far as the entire FSDO? We
24 have quite a bit here on scene here in Ketchikan with a principal
25 maintenance inspector. We typically would see her several times

1 per month or more and then occasionally we would see other
2 inspectors from the general office. And then with our own POI, at
3 least quarterly, but we would talk on the phone several times per
4 month. If nothing else, just to check in with each other.

5 Q. So, how is operational control performed here at Taquan?

6 A. All right, it starts with the director of operations position
7 through to the chief pilot. We maintain the actual ability to
8 dispatch flights and then we offer, have limited operational
9 control which we give to our flight coordinators under certain
10 conditions. And we will, as an indicator -- let me be real
11 simplistic for a second. We'll go out, we'll look at the weather,
12 see what it's doing and then we'll say okay, we've checked, it
13 looks good you have limited operational control. So, nothing
14 changes, go forth.

15 And what we do is, as an example, if I'm in the office here
16 or if I'm in Anchorage, it doesn't make any difference, I have
17 access to weather cameras, I can see what's going on. I have
18 access to the flight tracking so I can see where the airplanes
19 are, what's going on. I do get phone calls quite often from
20 downstairs with a question about something, somethings a little
21 bit different that they want some clarification on and it works
22 really well. And we also have senior pilots that we've designated
23 and it's also in our operations manual. And in the absence of
24 myself or the chief pilot, then that ability would then flow down
25 to that senior pilot. You know, from a safety standpoint, we

1 allow anybody to stop the operation, but it takes a Part 119
2 manager, senior pilot to start it back up again.

3 Q. So, how often do you have the operational control versus the
4 chief pilot?

5 A. It really varies. I think the chief pilot has it much more
6 than I do, but even there we still talk when things are going on.
7 And so, I certainly have never felt like I was not in the loop
8 when something was going on.

9 Q. How often do you talk with the chief pilot?

10 A. I would say in the last, I would say this year as an example,
11 I would say at least weekly for sure. And then we text also.
12 Occasionally email, but typically we'll text each other, got time
13 for a phone conversation and then one of us will call the other
14 then we'll talk. I also communicate quite heavily with our
15 president and so, I manage that side of it also. Then
16 occasionally I'll speak with our safety officer when things are
17 going on, such as we're doing auditing. So, there'll be things
18 that I would require that them to perform as part of the audit, so
19 we have a conversation then. I've also had opportunity to talk
20 with senior pilots several times this year over questions.

21 Q. How often are you here?

22 A. Let me think here, I think this is my fourth or fifth trip
23 this year. And then last year, from the time that I left and
24 through the end of the year, maybe two more trips. I'm guessing,
25 that sounds about right.

1 Q. So, do you know, ballpark, about the number of operations
2 Taquan conducts in a day, a week, a month? Just whichever one you
3 know.

4 A. Well again, we can look at it from a daily standpoint.
5 Typically, each of our aircraft will operate anywhere from a
6 minimum of four trips depending on if they're schedule operations
7 versus air tours, and up to, you know, maybe five or six. It just
8 depends on the assignment, where the airplanes (indiscernible)
9 those, you know, staying within the confines of our
10 (indiscernible). The Beavers typically is a fleet, obviously
11 you're going to fly more hours than the Otter's do. They're more
12 utilized on the shorter flights and so they get a lot more
13 operations than the others do.

14 Q. So, would you say then, since you mentioned four trips, about
15 four trips a day per aircraft for 15 aircraft, is that --

16 A. That'd be about right.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And again, it's going to vary because we have scheduled
19 operations also and some of those are rather lengthy and some of
20 them are very short. And then we throw (indiscernible) during the
21 season we have our tour operations that fit in there also. And we
22 go into the wintertime, it's going to drop dramatically. We're
23 only flying three airplanes over the winter typically.

24 Q. So, do you have a current list of the operational control
25 delegates?

1 A. We do.

2 Q. Where is that kept?

3 A. It's downstairs in dispatch, in the dispatch area.

4 Q. So, who has operational control? We said you do.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. The chief pilot.

7 A. The chief pilot.

8 Q. A couple of the senior pilots.

9 A. Yeah, we should have, there should be four of them. I think

10 that's senior pilots.

11 Q. Flight --

12 A. That have been designated.

13 Q. Okay. Flight coordinators?

14 A. Yeah, the flight coordinators have limited authority.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Under certain conditions, and then interoperations

17 (indiscernible) classify certain wind conditions, sea conditions,

18 water conditions, things like that. We'll not allow them to

19 conduct or dispatch a flight. You know, they would have to go up

20 to either myself, the chief pilot, or a senior pilot in our

21 absence to get approval. And that is in the manual.

22 Q. Does the president have operational control?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. Who is the director of safety?

25 A. Michael O'Brien. Title for him is safety manager.

1 Q. Okay. So, describe to me the role of the flight
2 coordinators.

3 A. The flight coordinators, at the beginning of the day will, as
4 an example if we're flying out to do bear tours, they will be in
5 contact with those locations getting the plan for the day so to
6 speak. Also working with our representatives and dock, getting
7 the numbers from the ships, getting all that information onto our
8 scheduled. Usually the night before, they are then programming
9 those numbers and coming up with a plan for the next day.

10 Once that next day arrives and they will be here either at
11 the same time or maybe just a little bit before the pilots arrive
12 and at that time, there again, they are obtaining all the
13 information they're going to give to the pilots as far as the
14 missions.

15 If there is weather available or someplace they can call and
16 talk to someone at the location, they will do that. And then as
17 the pilots come in there they're telling them what plane they're
18 going to be in that day, what they're assignments are going to be
19 to start out with, what to plan for.

20 And then at that point, the aircraft, when they're actually
21 being, you know, preparing the manifest and that brief respond of
22 the day give it to the pilot along with the risk assessment. It's
23 going to outline what the flight coordinator sees as the issues.
24 The pilot then looks at the risk assessment and says okay they can
25 add their piece of it also and then total the number up and see

1 where they're going to come out at. And, you know, it's a mutual
2 agreement system.

3 Once the aircraft are -- I'm sorry, the flight coordinator
4 also, if there's cargo, mail, is a scheduled flight, or just cargo
5 or freight, if it's a charter, is going to coordinate through our
6 dock and freight personnel and then they will report back the
7 weight to them for that, whatever it is, and it goes on the
8 paperwork. And then it goes down to the dock and the airplane
9 gets loaded up. It departs and then the pilot calls in their off
10 time and what time they're leaving, where they're going, how many
11 passengers, how much fuel. And then the -- or a coordinator
12 records it on our dispatch log. And then at that point, using our
13 CRABSSystem, they'll actually flight follow the airplane. And
14 they have some benchmarks about where they would expect it to be
15 at a certain time. And then, of course, the pilots are making
16 position reports and so they're recording that also.

17 Q. Okay. So, you mentioned that the risk assessment is a mutual
18 agreement.

19 A. It is.

20 Q. So, how do you see, how do you see this actually work? Does
21 the flight coordinator fill it out? Do they do it together? How
22 do, how do you come to the mutual agreement?

23 A. The flight coordinator does the first portion which is the
24 things that they know. And then, if you look at it, you'll see
25 where on the right-hand side it has like the manpower section,

1 that's filled out by the pilot. That's any stressors they may
2 have in their life that they want to account for.

3 So, when the pilot is handed the risk assessment, the
4 dispatch or flight follower has done that first part and they've
5 looked up the weather conditions. You know, they know has the
6 pilot have, you know, how much time and type, have they ever been
7 to this location before, those type of things. What's the wind
8 doing. And then the pilot looks at it. And I've done this
9 multiple times as a pilot, where I'll look at it and say, you know
10 what, it's actually a little higher. Like the winds in the
11 straits is higher than what it says here, I'm going to adjust
12 that, whatever it may be. I don't think I would ever subtract
13 anything from what they did, but sometimes I'll add an extra few
14 pieces to it just so it's a more realistic look at what's going
15 on.

16 We use the risk assessment as a tool. It's another thing
17 that we can utilize to assess the conditions and give us a moment
18 of pause to look at it, really study what's going on and make an
19 informed, intelligent decision of go/no-go. And we talk about,
20 airplane go by here, we talk about threat and error management.

21 One of the things that we do in our position is when we're
22 constantly evaluating conditions. What is going on? Choosing,
23 you know, who is going to be taking this mission or whatever it
24 may be. And then quite often having conversations with them as
25 to, you know, what to expect and we'll ask them, you know, is

1 there anything that you can see that we need to be aware of or
2 concerned about. And quite often there is and then we'll talk
3 about it and we'll try to find a way to mitigate that. If not,
4 then we'll come up with an alternate idea or work in a delay or
5 not go or whatever it may be.

6 And that risk assessment is just one piece of a tool that we
7 utilize that process. When we think about identifying threats,
8 the first thing we do is we ask ourselves what are the known
9 threats? What do we know about that's out there right now? And
10 then what resources do we have available to prevent those threats
11 from turning into accidents? That's our first step. You know,
12 we're developing a plan and how we're going to do it.

13 If the decision is made, yes this looks acceptable, we're
14 going to go forward, then as we're out flying these missions,
15 we're doing that same thing. We're constantly assessing. We've
16 already identified all these threats, now we're looking for the
17 ones we don't know about. The threats, errors, and changes that
18 are out there and we utilize the same process at that point.
19 Again, something changes, we reevaluate, assess, our options could
20 be continue, divert, go back to where we started, go someplace,
21 you know, whatever it's going to be. So, it's a constant process.
22 And again, the risk assessment is just one small piece of a bigger
23 picture.

24 Q. So, you feel that risk assessment form, as it's written right
25 now is adequate?

1 A. I do.

2 Q. Do you ever query the pilots and find out what they think
3 about it? How they use it? If it's a tool for them?

4 A. We do. We audit those on a quarterly basis. And so, quite
5 often, we will come across one that is maybe missing a signature,
6 something like that. And that gives us an opportunity to go chase
7 the pilot down and talk about it. Quite often we'll be standing
8 downstairs, you know, I might even be flying that day and we're
9 talking about things that are going on. And so, I think it's very
10 well received. I think everyone likes it.

11 Q. So, do you still fly the line here?

12 A. I don't now.

13 Q. Say again?

14 A. I don't now.

15 Q. When was the last time you did?

16 A. I believe it was July, no August. August of '17.

17 Q. So, for someone to exercise operation control they've got to
18 be qualified through training, experience, and expertise. How is
19 this met with the flight coordinators?

20 A. So, we do, when we had a new flight coordinator coming into
21 the company, they go through and they attend selective portions of
22 our initial pilot ground school. And then, there's also written
23 exams that goes this tailored to their position that goes with
24 that. And then, with the on-the-job training, they're also
25 constantly evaluated. We conduct regular emergency response plan

1 exercises which then gets everyone involved in how our system
2 works. There's typically two, if not three, people on duty down
3 in that room at any one time during the season. Even today,
4 there's two up there right now. And then sometimes you'll see
5 three people in there. And so, they have an opportunity to then
6 work side-by-side with someone with more experience doing that to
7 see how they perform the job function.

8 For recurrent training, then once a year, again we try to
9 have them observe something in our recurrent ground school, but
10 then again there's still a written exam that's done every year.
11 That goes back and it revisits all of our process procedures as
12 far as their function is concerned. Including getting into the
13 general operations manual, into our emergency response plan and
14 actually going through it.

15 In the several years past we've actually conducted more than
16 one ERP exercise per year just to make sure that all the different
17 flight coordinators that, had an opportunity to do it, instead of
18 just doing it one time.

19 Q. How long is the (indiscernible)?

20 A. I'm not sure.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I think it really depends on the person. We don't have a
23 formalized program for that. We have several people that are work
24 down in that area that have been here several years and I think
25 they have more of a feel for that.

1 Q. Do the flight coordinators go on ride-alongs? Like an en-
2 route for familiarization?

3 A. I know it's happened in the past, but I don't know how often.

4 Q. It's not part of their training?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Who's responsible for training them?

7 A. (Indiscernible), the ultimate responsibility is
8 (indiscernible), as director of operations. And then for, when it
9 comes time for the recurrent, I will pass out the recurrent exams
10 to our station manager, their supervisor, and then, at that point,
11 then she will go out there, hand them out, return them back to me
12 again, and I'll go through and grade them. And if I need to I'll
13 go back and correct it to 100 percent with the individual and then
14 they go into a file.

15 Q. So, any time there's a new flight coordinator, you come out
16 and do the training?

17 A. I haven't, I'm just responsible for making sure that it gets
18 done. Typically, our station manager is the one that actually
19 does the training. Or her number two in command, one of the two
20 of them will do it. And all I do is make sure it gets done.

21 Q. Is it documented anywhere?

22 A. It is.

23 Q. What about any hiring qualifications for flight coordinators?
24 Do you know of any?

25 A. I don't. I'm not involved in that process.

1 Q. So, moving on to talking about the pilots a little bit.

2 Minimum requirements for hiring?

3 A. Sure, 500 hours total time, 100 cross-country, 25 night just
4 the typical 135 mins. Very rarely do we hire at that
5 (indiscernible). We have a few times and it's worked out very
6 well, but for the most part we're much higher.

7 Q. How much higher?

8 A. An average, I'd say 1200, 1400 hours is probably the more
9 average of our lower times. Sometimes we'll see an 8- or a 900 in
10 there. It just depends on the background. Hiring an 8- or 900
11 hour seaplane instructor is a lot better in most cases, as far as
12 from a fundamental point-of-view than a 2500 hour commercial pilot
13 who has a brand new float rating. So, there's a tradeoff and so
14 we look for those fundamental skills.

15 Q. So, who hires? Who does the hiring?

16 A. The chief pilot.

17 Q. Are you involved with that at all?

18 A. I am.

19 Q. At what level?

20 A. Typically when we're going through the process I will talk to
21 the individuals as much as I can. Sometimes, especially in the
22 wintertime, we have a lot of people calling and I might be the one
23 that answers the phone. And so, I might be the first one to talk
24 to them and then I'll hand them off to the chief pilot. And then,
25 you know, many a time we'll sit in his office and go through

1 resumes and just put a team together for the year. We have quite
2 a few returning pilots every year, so it's not a very difficult
3 process.

4 Q. Tell us a little bit about the training.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. Pilot training.

7 A. Sure. Our new hire pilots will arrive here and they will go
8 through our general indoctrination training and that's here in our
9 building. And in addition to all of the basic, mandated training
10 there, we also do CFIT or controlled flight into terrain cue based
11 scenario training in visual simulators here at our facility. Once
12 that part or portion's completed, we go into our flight training
13 portion, then once the instructor recommends them for check ride,
14 then they go into that. If they are going to be a schedule
15 operations pilot, then OE commences soon after that. And then we
16 also, as part of our CFIT program we will go back, typically
17 within about 60 days, no more than 90 days, we will go back and
18 have a check airman ride along with those pilots. As a
19 verification that they understand how our cue-based training is
20 intended to be flown and ask them questions about operating
21 equipment in the airplane as far as the maps, the PFD or primary
22 flight display navigations, display equipment. And just a general
23 assessment of how they're doing.

24 Q. Who's responsible for pilot training?

25 A. Chief pilot.

1 Q. Do you ever supervise that?

2 A. No.

3 Q. When was the last time you sat through pilot training?

4 A. My recurrent which would have been, I want to say it was
5 February or March of '17, is that right? No, '16. I can't even
6 think anymore, '17, yeah. Because I started in '16. So, I did
7 one initial and one recurrent here.

8 Q. So, you're not a, you're not a current pilot? You're not
9 qualified as a current pilot?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. About how much Beaver, Otter time do you have?

12 A. In the Beaver, about 14- or 1500 in the Beaver. And then in
13 the Otter, maybe two, maybe.

14 Q. Two hours or 200?

15 A. Two hours. Yeah, very low.

16 Q. I just wanted to clarify.

17 A. Two hours, here. I've been in it twice. And I flew the
18 Caravan here also, just sporadically.

19 Q. How many check airman do you have?

20 A. Let's see, I'm wanting to say we have four today. No, I'm
21 sorry, five. Five.

22 Q. So, what do you do as a company to ensure pilot
23 proficiencies, areas like equipment, instrument failures,
24 emergency procedures and that sort of thing?

25 A. Can you be more specific?

1 Q. As far as, is it just covered in initial training? Do you
2 cover, how do you gauge pilot proficiency if they're bouncing
3 between the Otter and the Beaver? How do you make sure everyone's
4 proficient, where they should be?

5 A. I'm not sure how to answer that exactly. If we had a pilot,
6 we do have them that fly both airplanes. I'm not sure how to
7 answer that.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. So, you mentioned cue based training a little bit. So,
11 let's, can jump there here for a second.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Can you describe the cue based training?

14 A. Sure. In our, we do it in two cases. The first part is a
15 simulator scenario and then we also include it as part of our
16 flight training. So, in the simulator scenarios, we will put them
17 into situations starting off in a VFR condition and then over a
18 representative route that is typical to our operation and we try
19 to keep it within points of areas that we fly on a normal basis.
20 And then we will, again put them in a scenario that requires that
21 they react to decreasing visibility or a decreasing ceiling. And
22 then we teach reference points. Looking out ahead of the
23 airplane, and (indiscernible), you know, can you tell me where one
24 mile in front of the airplane is, where five miles in front of the
25 airplane is, and so on. And also judging the cloud distance. In

1 one of our scenarios we even, you know, go into a mountain pass
2 type of a scenario and then looking for that turnaround point.
3 That point where they're going to make that decision, okay this is
4 now reaching a point where it's not prudent to continue. So, then
5 they will turn around, divert, whatever they're going to do. If
6 that doesn't happen, we'd stop the scenario, retrain, talk about
7 it, do it again.

8 Q. What about CFIT avoidance training?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. Just as a whole, what is a CFIT avoidance training at Taquan
11 look like? Is it just the cue based? Is there more to it?

12 A. Well, again, we talk about, such as flying into an area of
13 reduced visibility and then we don't teach a specific escape
14 maneuver. It's really tailored to the situation, whatever it may
15 be. You know, turning away from the terrain, turning in a
16 direction that's going to afford the most or the greatest
17 visibility. But as far as, we don't go into the actual maximum
18 performance type capabilities of an aircraft as part of that
19 training. So, our training is more of avoidance instead of
20 getting into the situation.

21 Q. So, you don't teach anything once they get into it as far as
22 the actual escape? There's no company --

23 A. (indiscernible), pitch set, power settings, pitch altitudes -
24 -

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. -- nothing.

2 Q. Nothing like that?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. Is there ground and flight?

5 A. There is.

6 Q. Is it a SIMS? Is it an airplane?

7 A. Well, the ground training is in our visual simulator and

8 then, as part of the flight training, we also do, very similar cue

9 based exercises in the aircraft.

10 Q. Is there a classroom portion as well?

11 A. There is.

12 Q. About how long is that classroom portion?

13 A. I don't recall.

14 Q. Aircraft, are they equipped with the TAWS system?

15 A. The turbine, they all are to a certain degree. Yes.

16 Q. What is the company expectations or company policy on the

17 TAWS system utilization?

18 A. As far as normal or inhibit?

19 Q. Right.

20 A. Okay. So, anytime we are in an area of decreasing

21 visibility, as part of our CFIT program, the pilots are required

22 to fly it in the enabled position.

23 Q. So, explain to me the decrease in visibility.

24 A. So, any situation that would require the pilot to do

25 maneuvers to avoid conditions with your ceiling visibility or

1 they've already gotten themselves into that position, then the
2 switch is required to be in the enabled position.

3 Q. So, when it's not would then --

4 A. If it's --

5 Q. -- not in that situation?

6 A. It can be in inhibit.

7 Q. What's a typical duty day for the pilots?

8 A. (indiscernible) wise or just typically we show 6:30 in the
9 morning and we require pilots to review the pilot read file when
10 they first report for duty. And then they'll get their aircraft
11 assignment. They'll go down, usually in groups, and then launch
12 the airplane if they're on the dock or up to the hangars to have
13 them pulled out, warmed up, and put in the water. And that's
14 typically at least an hour in advance of our first flight. And
15 then our scheduled departures happen first and then the tours just
16 a little bit later. And so, we may have the pilots maybe, some of
17 them arriving a little bit later than others. But typically
18 though, any airplanes that are on the dock they'll be in the water
19 together. We'll actually put them in the water in a certain
20 order.

21 Q. So, who manages pilot scheduling?

22 A. The chief pilot.

23 Q. Are you familiar with the accident pilot?

24 A. I am.

25 Q. Inside of work? Outside of work?

1 A. Just inside work.

2 Q. Can you tell me a little bit about him?

3 A. Highly experienced, very personable, very good attitude to,
4 and cooperative with all of our programs, initiatives we have in-
5 house, never one that had to be corrected for anything. He was
6 one our senior pilots. I always, my impression was rule follower.
7 A very, you know, he's a Navy pilot and had that manner and
8 demeanor about himself. That he was always, you know, very
9 cautious.

10 Q. You said he was one of your senior pilots?

11 A. Well, I guess he still is.

12 Q. Describe to me the company's approach to managing safety?

13 A. All right. So, at the very beginning, we stress it during
14 our interview process. And so, we try to attract people and we
15 screen people that we feel are going to be individuals that will
16 be receptive to our way of flying the airplane. We're very
17 conservative. You know, I've heard people in town say that we're
18 the last ones to fly and the first ones to stop. And I think
19 that's very true. So, starting at that point of the interview
20 process, we talk to them about our commitment to safety and then
21 how we expect them to follow our procedures and, you know, we
22 don't break rules, we don't bend them. When they arrive and
23 they've been brought into our program as a pilot and they go
24 through their ground training and they're going to, they hear that
25 same thing repeatedly. The same thing when they go, and they do

1 their CFIT scenario in the simulator to when they go do their
2 flight training in the airplane. If they're a scheduled pilot,
3 they're hearing it in their OE. If they're not, then we start
4 them just as a tour pilot on a very short lease and then certain
5 weather conditions, certain wind at maximums. And then we have
6 our senior pilots or our check airman will ride along and do
7 observations and make sure. And then also we tend to fly in
8 groups together and so someone's always, a check airman, senior
9 pilot, chief pilot, when I was flying, myself, flying with these
10 groups of pilots. So, we're able to observe them, what they're
11 doing out in the field and see what they're doing. Safety
12 meetings, so we will try to do several of those per season and
13 with an agenda. And again, we're re-stressing our safety
14 programs. One of the big pieces of that there's a safety
15 reporting system and we get a, when I was first brought on here,
16 our safety reporting system, I think we were averaging about 20 to
17 30, maybe 40 reports a year. In our first year at high emphasis
18 there, we brought that number up to 75. In the second year, went
19 over 100. And at the same time, the operation did grow in size
20 with the addition of more aircraft and more pilots. In addition
21 to everything I just said, again there is a culture inside our
22 company and with it being a Medallion Shield carrier, that we're
23 always focused on the safety aspect of things and the pilots have
24 the opportunity to see myself or the chief pilot or one of our
25 senior pilots, again stopping the operation under, when the

1 conditions warrant it. So, they know it's not just talk, we're
2 really serious. You know, we're not going to, we're not looking
3 at the financial side of things, we make our decisions in the
4 flying the aircraft. It's purely operationally driven normally,
5 safety is our focus. And so, and that's one of the things that
6 I'm really proud of at this company is that all of our employees
7 here get to see that quite often.

8 Q. You mentioned the new pilots starting tours.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. And there could be different minimums.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. What are those minimums for new pilots?

13 A. It really depends on the individual as far as how much
14 experience they have and what type of tours we will send them on
15 under what weather conditions. And it's very individual to each
16 pilot. And I can give you some examples. We had a pilot we
17 brought in that was just past the 500 hour mark and we started him
18 actually working in the dock. He went through his, did his flight
19 training, a check ride, and then worked on the dock and then, when
20 the conditions were, like today, there's zero wind, it's a
21 beautiful day and we had a tour group going up, we might have him
22 go out and fly it with one of our other pilots riding with him.
23 And we've just very slowly bring them up in that way and that
24 pilot is still here and that happened two years ago. And again,
25 it's very individual, to say the least.

1 Q. So, who sets that limit?

2 A. Myself and the chief pilot.

3 Q. Together?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Or either/or?

6 A. No, together.

7 Q. So, you mentioned that Mike O'Brien is the safety manager. I
8 believe you said that is his title.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. So, what are the expectations from him?

11 A. Um-hum. So, he works with me quite often with special
12 projects having to do with either our safety meetings, our annual
13 safety committee meetings. He helps me do audits and so, as far
14 as, I can give you an example. We have two main locations that we
15 operate out of and one of the things that we're running into in
16 our auditing process is we kept finding fire extinguishers and eye
17 wash stations expired. And there was no rhyme or reason and so,
18 as a safety manager, he devised a system and a roadmap and
19 documented the location of every single fire extinguisher and eye
20 wash station and life ring on the docks in the entire company.
21 And color coded it with expiration dates for each one. That's one
22 of the many things he does. He works with us very closely when
23 we're developing new, anything that's going to affect safety, such
24 as a process change. If we're going to change the way we do
25 something, we'll look at a cause and effect scenarios with those.

1 When we enlarge the size of the operation, we did several tabletop
2 exercises incorporating his expertise.

3 Q. Do you know what the current revision of the GOM is?

4 A. Let's see, ops spec should be at 53 and in manual I think is
5 at 11.

6 Q. Okay. So, --

7 A. And then our emergency response plan is at 8.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Safety (indiscernible) five.

10 Q. So, with Mike O'Brien being a safety manager.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. Who does he report to?

13 A. That's the president.

14 Q. Okay. So, who manages the actual safety program at Taquan
15 when you're talk about the different forms and stuff like that?

16 A. I share that with Mike O'Brien our safety manager.

17 Q. Since the accident, has there been any operational changes in
18 the company?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Been any change in policy for visibility or anything like
21 that?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. Does the company monitor trends in operations, good or
24 bad? As far as like a FDM program for like data monitoring or
25 FOQA or anything?

1 A. We derive data from our safety reporting system to locate
2 areas of higher risk. That would be the closest that we do. We
3 don't have a local program right now like that.

4 Q. So, if there, go back to my previous question there, if there
5 was going to be a change in, an operational change or procedural
6 change or anything like that, would that come from you? Would
7 that come from the chief pilot? How would that be developed and
8 disseminated to the pilot group?

9 A. I think it would depend on what the change was. If it's
10 something that's directly affecting the pilots, then the chief
11 pilot and myself would discuss it and then the chief pilot would
12 implement it. If it was more administrative in nature, and then
13 most likely I would discuss it with chief pilot and it would come
14 from me.

15 Q. So, different weather minimums or anything like that?

16 A. That's a joint decision.

17 Q. Joint decision? Okay. In a letter from August of 2017 to
18 NTSB Board Member Weener, tally the contributions of Medallion
19 Foundations in the CFIT program. How has Medallion Foundation
20 contributed to the culture as far as the CFIT avoidance?

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. You said being a shield carrier has helped Taquan.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. So, explain to me, in what ways?

25 A. It's a formalized process in something that an external group

1 looks at and helps us to develop our process, procedure, the way
2 that we train. They audit, we also internally audit ourselves on
3 it. And then, being part of the Medallion Foundation give us and
4 also the ASAP program, gives us visibility to what other operators
5 are doing. And then we can evaluate what we're doing and see if
6 there's a change that we would need to make on our side, even
7 though it had been, it wasn't something that happened to us
8 individually, we can still look at it.

9 Q. So, you mentioned ASAP.

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Are you guys, do you participate in the ASAP and Medallion?

12 A. We do. We still go into the training process internally, but
13 we are on the letter.

14 Q. So, it's not current?

15 A. It's not current.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. No, but it will be before this year's over with.

18 Q. Okay. Who's the, who manages the Stars and Shield for
19 Medallion?

20 A. I do.

21 Q. You do?

22 A. Yeah and then with the maintenance and ground service, I
23 share that with the director of maintenance and then the chief
24 pilot manages the CFIT portion.

25 Q. What about the operational control star?

1 A. I do.

2 Q. You do? When was the last audit of that?

3 A. I'd have to look in the book, but it's recently.

4 Q. How recently?

5 A. I want to say it was December, but I'm guessing.

6 Q. When those audits take place are you, do they take place
7 here?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Do you do them in Anchorage?

10 A. No, they're (indiscernible) was done here.

11 Q. Do you recall, were there any findings from that audit?

12 A. I would have to look back at it. We've had findings in the
13 last 12 months, but I don't recall which ones are on which one.
14 Where they fell in. Thank you.

15 Q. Does Taquan still hold the Medallion Shield?

16 A. We are in, I think the term they use is, we're in a hold.
17 Our shield status is in a hold status right now. And then, we
18 just went through our annual Medallion audit which is done in two
19 phases. The first one happened prior to the accident, the second
20 one was after. And we had no findings on either one of them,
21 other than what we'd already found ourselves. They didn't find
22 anything additionally. And then when we do our next pre-audit,
23 which is going to happen in December, then if all that goes like
24 it's supposed to, then our, we'll go back to full shield status.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I'm going to pass it to Sathya.

1 BY DR. SILVA:

2 Q. Great. Can you describe your roles and responsibilities as
3 director of operations?

4 A. Um-hum. Yeah. So, my primary role is the administrative
5 side of our operating certificate and specifically, the first
6 thing that I look at is I look at safety as my number one
7 responsibility, just to keep the operation safe. The second part
8 is to be compliant. Making sure that we're following everything
9 that our manual's that we said, we told the FAA we would and then
10 of course, to the (indiscernible) regulations.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. Number three, I support the chief pilot and in that position
13 what they're doing. And also work with our director of safety and
14 then I, auditing and I manage our shield.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And then other assignments as needed by our president.

17 Q. How do you make sure that the operation's compliant with
18 what's in the manual?

19 A. Um-hum. So, through observation, number one, and then
20 through our director of maintenance, chief pilot, to our senior
21 pilots, to the flight coordinators and then talking to individual
22 pilots.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And then, when I'm flying, when I was doing that also being
25 in the field and observing, you know, what we're doing. Also

1 working with our principal operations inspector, principal
2 maintenance inspector here locally in Ketchikan, is another way
3 that we do it. We operate in a very visible environment and so,
4 there are times when things may happen. Maybe another operator
5 will call us and say hey something, just saw this happen out
6 there, we're not really sure exactly what we saw, but maybe you
7 want to look into it. We'll get that sometimes.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. Not very often, but occasionally.

10 Q. So, with these responsibilities that you have, how are you
11 managing the workload between your current position at Grant
12 versus your current position here?

13 A. I just do them at the same time.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Just think on this position, just a little bit bigger.

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 A. But they mesh very well together. Never had a situation
18 where I had to put one on hold while I did the other one.

19 Q. Okay. So, you consider yourself fully, fully effective here?

20 A. I'm fully engaged here. Yeah.

21 Q. Do you delegate any tasks now that you, didn't necessarily do
22 that when you were local?

23 A. I think other than just being downstairs in the operation,
24 you know, down with the flight coordinators, no.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. No, that's, you know, I'm just on the phone with them more
2 than I, but even when I was in the building, I'd be on the phone
3 with them. Because either they were or I was too lazy to go down,
4 one direction or the other, so we'd call. And we still do the
5 same thing.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Are you responsible for manual revisions?

9 A. I am.

10 Q. Are you continuing to do that?

11 A. I am.

12 Q. Let's see, how would you describe your role in the safety
13 program here?

14 A. The position as director of operation is the leader for the
15 safety program. And so, as that person I am the one that
16 disseminates that program out to our group, with the help of other
17 people in the organization. The chief pilot holds a very large
18 piece of that, but we are in lockstep with each other at all
19 times.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. There's never a time that I've been here and we've both been
22 working together in these same roles, where one of us was ever
23 doing something the other one wasn't aware of. So, that was, as I
24 managed this program, again, I'm the auditor and I'm also looking
25 for, you know, anything in our system that's going to cause a

1 problem. And so, if we're seeing data coming in on our safety
2 reporting system that's indicating we have a trend, so I would be
3 the one to look at it, I've identified it, then I will ask
4 someone, maybe our safety manager, go look at this and see what
5 you can find. You know, I have a question about this. We are
6 (indiscernible) set program, an aviation safety action program.
7 And then that is another piece of that safety that we're rolling
8 out right now. And so, I spend a lot of time interacting with
9 our, everyone in the company that's affected by it.

10 Q. Um-hum.

11 A. So our ASAP, in our initial letter, we've included our
12 pilots, our flight coordinators, and our maintenance department
13 (indiscernible).

14 Q. All right.

15 A. I spend a lot of time just talking to people. And not only
16 our pilot group, but I travel quite often down onto our docks and
17 I talk to our guest service hosts. And I've done that, you know,
18 multiple times during the season just to go down and just get
19 their impressions, how are things going. Not only am I looking at
20 the airplane side of things, but also looking at our ground
21 transportation side. Looking for things that are, you know, could
22 possibly cause an issue. We've identified several things doing
23 that by going at it away from this building and seeing things that
24 were going on and we were able to correct. We have plenty of
25 things that happen, you know, our highest level of risk in our

1 operation is on our dock.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. We have more incident reports revolving around that than
4 anything else that we do. And so, we focus a lot of our energy
5 looking down there trying to prevent things from happening. You
6 know, whether it be the condition, you know, the painting of the
7 lines in the dock, to the passenger briefings in the, video
8 briefings that we have downstairs in very elaborate and pointing
9 out the issues that are down there. The pilots, or our guest
10 service people that will walk our guests down to the dock, they're
11 going to be constantly talking about those things, making sure
12 everyone's aware. If you were to go down there to the dock right
13 now at one of our departures, you're going to hear the pilot, you
14 know, standing out there and picking, well one at a time, watch
15 your head, step here, you know, that type of thing to make sure we
16 don't have anybody end up in water.

17 Q. Regarding the reports that you, that you get with your
18 reporting system. Can you give us some examples of any relating
19 to flight safety that you've received in the last --

20 A. I would have to go back and look at that. Now, I mean the
21 one that just came to mind here was a situation with a loading
22 ramp on a dock at George Inlet Lodge. That was one that got our
23 attention very quickly. As far as something that was actually
24 airplane related, nothing's coming to mind right now.

25 Q. (indiscernible), do you get any regarding weather --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- or any concerns about procedures?

3 A. No.

4 Q. How is it that you oversee the check pilots? How do you
5 accomplish that?

6 A. So, the check airman?

7 Q. Oh sorry, the check airman, yes.

8 A. Sure, well the chief pilot is the oversight for that. And
9 so, and then I do that by getting reports from the chief pilot.
10 And also, the FAA, because they will occasionally ride along and
11 provide feedback.

12 Q. Um-hum. What are the company minimums for weather?

13 A. Okay. So, we go above the basic VFR weather minimum. As far
14 as uncontrolled airspace, uncontrolled is an example. When we do
15 overland flights, we bump our in-flight visibility limit to 4
16 miles for any portion that's going to be over a landmass, that's
17 going to be over gliding distance of the water. We also take into
18 account tour quality in our tour flights. So, we cancelled
19 flights well before we ever approached the FAA weather minimums
20 because it just isn't a good tour, so we don't go. One of the
21 things that we implemented at the beginning of last season was
22 Northern tour package (indiscernible) opposite direction
23 (indiscernible) yards to, usually well there's bad air, it's
24 (indiscernible) air go the other way around. So, we never really
25 get ourselves into a situation where we're getting up against

1 those legal minimums.

2 Q. Okay. How are these minimums communicated to pilots?

3 A. So, well through pilot training. So, as a new hire pilot,
4 they're getting it in the ground school, they're getting it in
5 their CFIT training, they're getting it in their flight training,
6 and then even a question and answer during their check ride, and
7 then again at their evaluation period. Usually within 60 days of
8 their initial check. And then through our safety program, our
9 safety meetings where we're talking about, it's a constant
10 conversation. It never really stops. You know, the last thing we
11 want to have happen is to have somebody end up in a situation like
12 what happened. So, we're very cognizant of that and we're
13 constantly stressing that we follow the rules.

14 Q. Um-hum. Who runs the safety meetings?

15 A. Typically myself or the chief pilot and occasionally, the
16 safety manager.

17 Q. Okay. When was the last meeting?

18 A. The day after the accident.

19 Q. Okay. Did you run that meeting?

20 A. The president did. Yeah and then I spoke, and then the chief
21 pilot spoke, and then our owner did.

22 Q. And what was conveyed during that meeting?

23 A. Everything that we knew up to that point. Restressing our
24 commitment to safety, one of the things that I stressed was I
25 didn't want everyone to approach, let me back up for a moment.

1 When this accident occurred, we ceased operations for the day.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. And we did not start our operations back up again until after
4 that meeting happened the next morning.

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. And my stress to everyone there was this is not business as
7 usual. I want you to take it slower, more deliberately, let's
8 really think about what we're doing here and just restressed our
9 commitment to our safety programs. And we did not have any real
10 information to give them at that time.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. But again, as I'm sure have happened anywhere, everybody's
13 going to go a little slower, a little more deliberately than maybe
14 they would otherwise.

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. And for us, that's really saying something because we're very
17 deliberate on what we do.

18 Q. What is the policy on checklist usage? Do you have a
19 specific policy?

20 A. Yeah in our general operations manual, what the statement
21 says, that the checklists are in the aircraft and they shall be
22 used.

23 Q. Okay. And do you give guidance on how they can be used?
24 Whether it's memory and verification or (indiscernible).

25 A. Again, the only requirement in our operations manual is that

1 the checklist is used. How the pilot approaches it individually
2 is up to them. The checklist use is still required.

3 Q. Okay. So, regarding, let's use that as an example, how from
4 an operational oversight perspective do you oversee that kind of -
5 -

6 A. Yeah well it's hard --

7 Q. -- requirement?

8 A. -- to do that because, when we're observing, we're observing
9 model behavior. And so, the only way that we can really know is
10 if other things are happening that would have been prevented with
11 the use of a checklist. That's our only real way to circle back
12 to that.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But we obviously look at it during their initial training,
15 during their recurrent training, light observation, whatever it
16 may be. But, you know, we don't have a camera in there, so.

17 Q. Have you had any instances, not necessarily with checklist
18 usage, but have you had any instances where you've recognized a
19 problem with procedural compliance? Given --

20 A. I know we have, but I can't think of an example right now.

21 Q. Okay. You said you gave 30 days' notice to Taquan.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. When did that happen?

24 A. It was actually more than 30-days. It was actually 60 now
25 that I think about it.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So, it would have been in the month of July.

3 Q. Of?

4 A. Of 2017.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And my intention to leave at the end of the season.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And then we had immediately started the process to obtain a
9 replacement and that proved to be impossible. And so, as we
10 approached the end of the season, I agreed to remain in my
11 position and with, again talking to the FAA, our principal
12 operations inspector and, I don't want to put words in their
13 mouth, I'll just paraphrase. My understanding was, it's much
14 better to have you in that position doing what you do rather than
15 have nobody in that position. And that was the FAA's position. Q.

16 DR. SILVA: Um-hum. Okay. I think that's all I have for
17 now.

18 MR. CURTIS: Great. Okay.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Matt?

20 BY MR. RIGSBY:

21 Q. Okay. (indiscernible)?

22 A. (indiscernible).

23 Q. Okay. You said that you had pretty, fairly regular contact
24 with the POI.

25 A. Um-hum.

- 1 Q. Who is the POI right now?
- 2 A. Well, we just got a brand new one, so I can't answer that.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. I can tell you if I pull my phone out.
- 5 Q. When did you get notice of that?
- 6 A. Just a few weeks ago.
- 7 Q. Just a few weeks?
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. After the accident?
- 10 A. Well after, yeah. Jon Percy (ph.) was our POI during the
- 11 accident. And then Brian Fredericks (ph.) before him.
- 12 Q. How often did they come visit you?
- 13 A. That's hard to say because we had so many people here. And
- 14 it wouldn't, sometimes they would just show up without
- 15 (indiscernible) when they were in town. They'd drop in and our
- 16 principal maintenance inspector was, it's probably at least every
- 17 week or two on the premises and quite often we would see people
- 18 from the general office.
- 19 Q. Okay. Yeah.
- 20 A. Sometimes people we'd never seen before.
- 21 Q. When they were, were they ever here during one of your audits
- 22 or did they ever participate in the audit program?
- 23 A. No, never.
- 24 Q. Did they ask to see the audits from you?
- 25 A. Yes, yeah.

1 Q. And you provided those?

2 A. Oh yeah, yeah.

3 Q. Did they ever have any comments?

4 A. Yeah, the comment was I can't believe you're showing us all
5 this.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I heard that several times. And an example was our safety
8 reporting system, you know, can you share anything with and I
9 opened my desk drawer, I pulled the whole thing out, bam here you
10 go. Here's the whole program, here's every report going back to
11 2007.

12 Q. Okay. On that, on that you said you do, I don't know if you
13 used the word trend analysis, but you do trend?

14 A. We look for trends.

15 Q. You look for trends?

16 A. Yeah, areas of risk.

17 Q. How do you do that?

18 A. Usually by, I try to classify by severity and then number of
19 reports. And then, so on our severity reports, you know, it's
20 going to be injury, no injury, was there damage to equipment,
21 those type of things versus it was just an advisory, this could
22 happen as a different. And so, when I looked at the risk, I was
23 looking at people getting hurt, equipment being damaged. And
24 that, from that perspective then I would develop a trend off of
25 that by the number of reports and just a simple spreadsheet.

1 Q. Okay. Okay. So, you'd do those reports and get input into a
2 company (indiscernible)?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. Who does that?

5 A. I do.

6 Q. You do. What type of weather training do the flight
7 coordinators get?

8 A. They sit through the meteorology portion of our pilot ground
9 school.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. That's the main, that's where they're going to get the bulk
12 of that knowledge is from there. And then, when they are being
13 trained, then we have specific websites they will go to, such as
14 the FAA weather camera sites, looking at that National Weather,
15 even use Canadian weather down in Dixon Entrance sometimes just
16 for trend moving (ph.).

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. It's typically the weather forecast down there is much more
19 accurate than the one out of the general office. It's closer to
20 us.

21 Q. Did they, I mean, admittedly weather reports aren't always
22 easy to interpret.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. (indiscernible).

25 A. Very tough.

1 Q. Has there ever been a need to have additional training for
2 the flight coordinator? Because, you know, or do they, are they
3 instructed to do something else? If they don't understand what's
4 in that weather report, who do they go to?

5 A. Yeah, typically they go to the pilot first and the pilot has
6 that go/no-go decision.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And again, the flight coordinator doesn't, it's not like a
9 121 operation where they're sharing dispatch responsibility with
10 the pilot in command. They're just there as an information
11 gatherer and then a flight follower, that is their function.

12 Q. When you hire a flight coordinator, do you look for dispatch
13 background?

14 A. We do.

15 Q. Okay. But they're not required to be licensed?

16 A. (indiscernible).

17 Q. Does the station manager ever have limited operational
18 control?

19 A. Every day, yes.

20 Q. Do you know has that person, male, female, have they ever
21 exercised that limited operational control?

22 A. Absolutely.

23 Q. Okay. On the pilot training and the candidates that you look
24 at, about what percentage, if you can estimate on, do you have a
25 rejection?

1 A. Probably 30 to 40 percent, maybe a little higher. Actually,
2 it would be higher. If we counted the people that applied that
3 don't even meet the basic VFR 135 minimums, it's much higher.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. But of the people that meet the requirements, I'd say we're
6 at least at 40 percent.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Maybe 50.

9 Q. For the flight training that you do, both the cue based and
10 the aircraft (indiscernible), is there a formal syllabus for this?
11 (indiscernible)?

12 A. (no audible response).

13 Q. Okay. And those are on file in your --

14 A. (no audible response).

15 Q. Okay. And who's the training, in charge of the training?

16 A. Chief pilot.

17 Q. VFR, you mentioned VFR routes.

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. Are those for all the flights that you take? I mean, like
20 the flight that the accident occurred on, was that a specific
21 route that --

22 A. It was a commonly flown route.

23 Q. A commonly flown route.

24 A. We don't have any specifically designated routes --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- for that type of operation. When we fly our tour routes
2 up to Misty Fjords, we have designated routes for those.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. But not for charters.

5 Q. Okay. I think that's one of the things you mentioned was at
6 the previous job or someplace.

7 A. The current position, Grant Aviation.

8 Q. At Grant.

9 A. We have VFR routes for everywhere we're flying.

10 Q. Okay. Is that something that you would consider for, could
11 be a benefit for --

12 A. Anything's possible.

13 Q. Okay. Does the person who has operational control, whoever
14 has it for that day, are they allowed to fly? Go take a flight?

15 A. They're last on the list and the only time they would go is
16 if myself or the chief pilot were available, either in person or
17 by phone to have that responsibility.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. But we will not have them out if there's no one else that
20 maintains that full control.

21 Q. Okay. So, if they had to take a flight, they'd have to
22 coordinate with yourself or Mike --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. -- before they (indiscernible).

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Has Mike O'Brien, the safety manager, has he been provided
2 any additional ASO aviation safety officer training --

3 A. No.

4 Q. -- courses?

5 A. Well, actually, can I change that?

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. He has had training through the Medallion Foundation for this
8 position.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So, that's, and then prior experience in the military.

11 Q. Okay. So, he was in the military?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Do you know was he an ASO in the military?

14 A. I think he did something along those lines, but I don't
15 recall exactly.

16 Q. Okay. I'm sorry, aviation safety officer.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, you'd have to ask him.

20 Q. Since being the DO, have you performed any check rides or
21 even just a ride along?

22 A. No, well ride alongs yes, but no check rides.

23 Q. And when you're riding along, are you observing, I mean, what
24 are you observing? What are you looking for?

25 A. All aspects of our operations. So, my observation starts

1 with the first interaction with the pilot during their preflight
2 planning and I talk to them, what are we going to go do? You
3 know, what's the weather doing? What's your fuel level? All the
4 way to walking the guests out of the aircraft, observing the
5 briefing, the adherence to the policies. And then, how they
6 depart the Ketchikan area and again following their company power
7 settings and routes and altitudes and just everything you can
8 imagine having to do with the operation of the airplane.

9 Q. Okay. Since you've been the DO, have you had to do any
10 manual revisions or perform any updates to the manual?

11 A. Oh, yes.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Many.

14 Q. Many? Okay. What about the training manual itself?

15 A. Chief pilot does the training manual.

16 Q. Okay. Do you know, have those manual updates, have they been
17 approved by the FAA or are they in process?

18 A. We don't have anything in our manual that's not either
19 approved or accepted.

20 Q. Okay. Your overall involved with the FSDO, is it positive,
21 negative?

22 A. Very positive.

23 Q. Do you feel like you could share, be open and honest with
24 your inspector and not have a result that he would --

25 A. Absolutely.

1 Q. -- take the correct and appropriate action? Okay. And that,
2 Shaun hit on it, you said you are in process of getting an ASAP
3 program approved.

4 A. We are. So, the program is approved and then the only thing
5 we're waiting on right now is ERC member training and then the
6 actual ASAP submitter training for our cutter groups.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And we've had that scheduled several times and it gets
9 cancelled because, with the constraints and other things on the
10 Medallion side, so --

11 Q. Sure.

12 A. We're getting there though. It's going to happen this year.

13 Q. How large is Grant compared to Taquan?

14 A. Apples and oranges.

15 Q. Okay. Okay.

16 A. I'd say 10 times larger.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah, at least and then spread out over huge geographical
19 area.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. All the way up to Emmonak all the way down into the Aleutian
22 Chain all the way back into Anchorage.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And everything in the middle.

25 Q. Okay. So, it's not a comparable, your tour?

1 A. No, it's all scheduled and chartered, mainly schedule.
2 Q. 121?
3 A. 135, IFR, VFR.
4 Q. 135? (indiscernible).
5 A. Um-hum.
6 Q. No, 121?
7 A. No.
8 MR. RIGSBY: What's going on? I think that's it right now.
9 MR. WILLIAMS: Brad?
10 MR. SIPPERLEY: Need a break or you want to keep on going?
11 MR. CURTIS: Go for it.
12 MR. SIPPERLEY: Okay. Yeah, I always have to go back and
13 cross out the questions people asked that I wanted to ask, you
14 know.
15 MR. RIGSBY: You can ask him again.
16 MR. SIPPERLEY: Yeah. Probably will.
17 MR. RICHMOND: No, no, no, no.
18 MR. SIPPERLEY: As Bob knows, I only get one question.
19 MR. CURTIS: Forty-seven parts to the exhibit.
20 MR. RICHMOND: Just don't ask him again, that's fine, yeah.
21 MR. SIPPERLEY: There you go.
22 MR. CURTIS: Yeah.
23 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:
24 Q. Who's responsible for maintaining the aircraft checklist?
25 A. That (indiscernible) shared between myself and the chief

1 pilot.

2 Q. So, where's the policy for the TAWS usage written? Is that -

3 -

4 A. In the CFIT training manual.

5 Q. You think the installed system, if used per your manual, is
6 effective?

7 A. I think it is effective as it's installed to the best of its
8 ability, yes. I think there could be many improvements made
9 regulatory wise to allow a much better system, but that hasn't
10 happened yet.

11 Q. What recommendations did you make?

12 A. Just the certification process that the manufacturers have to
13 go through. The FAA has certain requirements that have to be met
14 and they are outdated. They have not kept up with the technology
15 that is available out there right now. That's one of the things
16 I've been working on the last several months is trying to get that
17 changed.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Through the Alaska Air Carriers Association.

20 Q. So, Mike O'Brien is the safety manager. Is there any place
21 that his duties or responsibilities are defined?

22 A. In (indiscernible) safety manual. In the safety manual, it
23 will say director of safety and then in parenthesis safety
24 manager. That means the same thing. One title, (indiscernible)
25 title, the same position.

1 Q. So, those duties include special projects, whatever they may
2 be.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. And you also said he helps with the audits?

5 A. He does.

6 Q. So, then, along that line, he shouldn't, we were here 3 weeks
7 ago, we were looking for audits.

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. And Mike had taken us to your office and literally gave us
10 two binders, two Medallion binders --

11 A. Yeah, still trying to figure out who made off with our
12 binder.

13 Q. Well, no, we didn't take it, you know, everything's still in
14 here, we didn't take it.

15 A. Somebody did, it wasn't you.

16 MR. RICHMOND: They'll take a picture of you right now, Brad.

17 Q. Yeah, I have pictures of --

18 A. Where were you?

19 Q. No, but we were given two Medallion --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- binders, but there were no completed audits.

22 A. No, the audits don't reside in the Medallion binders.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. The audits are actually in the, whatever, let's say as an
25 example that they say, the emergency response plan. The auditing

1 would be in the back of the master ERP manual. So, one of the
2 requirements of Medallion is that we don't have separate books for
3 those programs. They're incorporate into our existing books and
4 so that's how we track them.

5 Q. Okay. So, the actual audit results and the trends and things
6 you find exist outside of the Medallion?

7 A. We don't have, we don't have Medallion manuals.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Those don't exist. Those were eliminated.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And so, every, we use our actual manuals whether it be an
12 ERP, a safety, a ground service, AAIP, general maintenance manual,
13 whatever it's going to be, the audits will be in the master manual
14 of each of those.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And Mike is not involved in placing those in those manuals,
17 that's the (indiscernible) thing that I do. So, the audit happens
18 and then I do the paperwork side of it.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And then I record the findings. And then, when it comes time
21 for Medallion Foundation, well they showed up here in May, I
22 believe it was or the first part of June, and we went through our
23 pre-audit which is our entire program. So, I had to produce all
24 of those audits for the last 12 months, go through the findings,
25 answer questions. And then, just a few weeks ago, we had our

1 annual audit which once again they go back and look at all that
2 again. But more specific to this year's focus. So, this year was
3 maintenance, group service and operational control. Those are the
4 three things they looked at.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. But, the pre-audit looks at everything.

7 Q. Okay. So, you stated one of the things when POIs have come
8 here and asked hey what's your audits, they're like man, I can't
9 believe he showed them to us.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. So, --

12 A. I just grab the whole manual and say here you go.

13 Q. Well, yeah, because as part of being a POI, one of the things
14 we do look for when we come and do certain inspections are audits
15 for those (indiscernible). So, you do have those and those have
16 been made available to --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Absolutely. And we go far beyond that. You know, again,
20 like I said before, we provide our safety reports.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. They say, can you share the trends, I say I'll share the
23 whole thing with you and just hand the whole folder over.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. You can have it for a couple of days, just don't leave my

1 office.

2 Q. I don't have it.

3 A. Put a GPS tracker in all the manuals. Yeah, we've never had
4 a problem with the manuals disappearing until just a few weeks
5 ago, you know.

6 Q. Okay. Let's see, so they just want to clarify, the cue based
7 CFIT training, what we have for actual cues and distances, that's
8 based on the Misty Fjords tours?

9 A. No, it's based on anywhere (indiscernible) flies.

10 Q. Anywhere you fly.

11 A. So, as an example, maybe we'll do a scenario flying out of
12 Ketchikan going the opposite direction of Misty Fjords at the
13 (indiscernible) Narrows and then across into Clarence Strait, the
14 modeling we have is very specific to this area in the simulator.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And so, we'll certainly, can do something going towards
17 Misty's but it's not the only thing that we do.

18 Q. Okay. So, looking at just the basic qualifications in the
19 GOM for the, for the flight coordinators. Do you feel those basic
20 qualifications are enough for them to actually exercise
21 operational control?

22 A. Limited operational control. And that means one of us,
23 somebody who has operational control has looked at the conditions
24 and said okay, with what's going on right now, we're good. You
25 can now release flights, you know, and do what you're going to do.

1 If anything changes then we have to be involved again. Such as
2 the wind changes, the ceiling of visibility change, whatever it's
3 going to be. Anything that's going to result in some kind of a
4 different number being recorded on our risk assessment. If all of
5 a sudden the numbers are increasing, that's a change. So, now we
6 have to go back and be involved again at that point. And so,
7 you'll notice when you look at our risk assessment form, you know
8 like zero through 10 as an example, it's just pilot and flight
9 coordinator. You know we go up to the 15 number, now there's a
10 management notification. Then we go to the 25 number, now there's
11 management approval. If it goes past, you know, to 36 or higher,
12 it doesn't go.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So, that's the hierarchy and how that steps up.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And so, as an example, if I tell our flight coordinator, okay
17 the condition is this right now and our risk assessment for our
18 most junior pilot is an 8, that's below the 10 threshold, okay go.
19 Now, if that number goes above 10, somethings changed. Now, we're
20 going to go back, now that management approval and they have to
21 record on the form, I notified the DO, the chief pilot, or a
22 senior pilot and then they record it on the form who it was that
23 was notified. When it goes into the caution, you know 10 or
24 higher, well it goes to 11 or higher now because 10 is the
25 threshold again. Now it requires management approval from the DO,

1 chief pilot, senior pilot. Then if it goes to 36 or above, it
2 doesn't go.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So, that's how they know things are changing is all of a
5 sudden, those numbers start going above, something's different.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And again, if you look in our manual, it will say we drive
8 those numbers to the lowest common denominator. Such as an
9 example, if we're going to fly a trip with multiple legs, the most
10 restrictive leg in there becomes the controlling number for the
11 entire mission. Or we may just ought to take it out of the
12 equation and now the most restrictive one with that one gone
13 drives the equation. So, it's not just, we're going to fly from
14 here to Craig and that number is an 8 and then from Craig over to
15 Thorne Bay is a 12, well now 12 is the entire mission. We could
16 elect to take Thorne Bay out of the equation and take it back to
17 that number 8, but does that make sense?

18 Q. Yeah, and I know --

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. -- and I see that on your risk assessment form.

21 A. Right.

22 Q. I just, when I read the manual, it says that the flight
23 coordinators are routinely delegated operational control. It
24 doesn't use the verbiage limited.

25 A. Oh.

1 Q. And so, limited is not really defined.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. So, I'm just trying to get an idea of what --

4 A. Yeah, yeah, we have a very tight grasp on that. So, it's got
5 to be very defined.

6 Q. Okay. Yeah, and that's what I'm saying, I just, I don't see
7 the definition clearly to me in the manual. So, I'm just trying
8 to get and understanding --

9 A. Sure.

10 Q. -- what you're talking about when you say limited ops
11 control.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. Let's see, and I think, I know that you had touched on this
14 already, but in 2016 there was a letter sent out by FAA region
15 it's called the CFIT letter basically. Do you recall that?

16 A. Uh-huh, I do.

17 Q. Okay. And one of the things that was touched on there was
18 actually establishing the VFR route structure.

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. And you said you've done that with, you helped Hageland with
21 theirs?

22 A. We did.

23 Q. Establishing theirs?

24 A. Yeah. And we did it in a different way with Hageland. We
25 actually put in ops specs by route. And it was very, very locked

1 down and defined. The type of missions that they operated in, in
2 made sense to do it that way. It was, plus it was easier to
3 control in that point-of-view. There wasn't a lot of change
4 needed. In our operation at Grant Aviation, we went through and
5 put it as an addition to our GOM. So, it's an actual chapter
6 added in (indiscernible) revision number 10, added the VFR routes
7 into it. And we have hard cards in each of our aircraft, they're
8 also available online. Also, through our pilot portal, pilots can
9 log in with their smartphone that the company provides and
10 anywhere in our system has internet access they can bring them up.
11 If the airplane one falls out, you know, falls out of the
12 airplane, they lose it.

13 And then we have flight followers at Grant that actually, I
14 can show you a picture of it, but they have, you know, very large
15 monitors in the dispatch center that has the VFR routes are
16 actually electronically depicted on there and they can see the
17 airplanes following the lines. If they start to go off then they
18 can send a message to the airplane, what are you doing?

19 Q. So, along those lines to then, two of the three of my
20 operators have defined VFR routes too and just recently put in
21 place.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. But the dividing line seems to be between charter and
24 scheduled operations. Because you're, like this, the accident
25 flight was a charter --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- do you see that an issue to actually make VFR routes for
3 charter operation? Do you see that as an issue? Or do you see,
4 because there are routine routes that you fly to those, to
5 Steamboat for example and Waterfall?

6 A. I think it's possible.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And maybe even sector altitudes. We can just draw a circle
9 and say anything within this circle has to be this. That's a
10 possibility. Again, with a charter, there's so many possibilities
11 of destinations, it would just be a cluster and you couldn't even
12 see anything after a while with all the lines going everywhere.
13 So, because we operate such a small area here.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. Everything's so close together.

16 Q. But Steamboat and Waterfall they're charters but they are
17 very routine charter.

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. So, for routes to get to that other side of the island, would
20 defining some routes with specific altitudes and way points make
21 sense? And do you feel that that would help avoid this type of
22 accident? Or could avoid this type of accident?

23 A. I think it's definitely worth looking at it. But I would
24 like to look at unintended consequences with that.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Before I went any further. I wouldn't want to just implement
2 it.

3 Q. No.

4 A. Because there could be something else out there that we
5 haven't realized.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And I think the best way to do that is through gathering a
8 data, I mean, go fly it 50 times and over the course of a certain
9 amount of time and then look at the routes and the altitudes and
10 see how that all fits in. But again, it'd take a lot of study.
11 Because again, unintended consequences is something we don't want
12 to have happen.

13 MR. SIPPERLEY: No. That is all I have.

14 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

15 MR. SIPPERLEY: Thank you.

16 MR. CURTIS: Thank you.

17 MR. O'CONNOR: No questions.

18 MR. RICHMOND: How much more do you think you have?
19 (indiscernible) need a break or not. And you know how much more
20 you have, so can you give us an idea?

21 MR. WILLIAMS: I don't have a whole lot, but I can't speak
22 for everybody else.

23 DR. SILVA: How are you feeling?

24 MR. CURTIS: Good.

25 DR. SILVA: You want to finish this off?

1 MR. CURTIS: Sure.

2 DR. SILVA: Or would you like a break?

3 MR. CURTIS: No.

4 MR. RICHMOND: Is it likely to be in 10 or 15 minutes? Is
5 that --

6 DR. SILVA: Do you need a break, Bob?

7 MR. RICHMOND: I don't need a break, but here's what's going
8 to happen, if it's going to be a lot more than 10 or 15 minutes
9 we're going to take a break, so I can see what Brien's schedule
10 is.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Then let's take a break.

12 MR. RICHMOND: And you two can kind of go through your notes
13 and see what you're going to do.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: We'll go off the record at 3:35.

15 (Off the record at 3:35 p.m.)

16 (On the record at 3:44 p.m.)

17 MR. WILLIAMS: All right. So, we're back on the record at
18 3:44. So, I just wanted to come back around and ask a few more
19 questions that I have and take it for another round here.

20 MR. CURTIS: Um-hum.

21 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

22 Q. You said that there are no more Medallion manuals.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. But you mention a CFIT training manual. Is this separate
25 than your regular training manual?

1 A. It's the same training program. So, we don't have a
2 Medallion named manual for anything. So, it would be, just like
3 if we had our own CFIT program that had nothing to do with
4 Medallion, it's in the same place that it would have been
5 otherwise.

6 Q. So, is that place your FAA approved training protocol?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. So, that's the only place you guys have CFIT training --

9 A. Again.

10 Q. -- materials and that's, the modules, everything is contained
11 within that program?

12 A. The CFIT is above and beyond the FAA program.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. It's a separate entity in itself. But it's not a Medallion
15 manual's what I was trying to say.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It's our controlled flight into terrain avoidance program.

18 Q. So, you, it's a separate manual --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- from your approved training program?

21 A. Yes, because it doesn't have to be accepted by the FAA.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. It's not part of that.

24 Q. Okay. Who schedules the pilots in the aircraft?

25 A. The chief pilot develops the schedule on about a monthly

1 basis and then manages that program and provides that information
2 to our flight coordinators and that's how they build the schedule
3 the evening before for the next day.

4 Q. So, who assigns or who schedules pilots to airplanes?

5 A. The chief pilot.

6 Q. The chief pilot says you're going to fly 959 tomorrow?

7 A. Yeah. We typically fly the same airplane every day. We
8 don't jump around it.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. The only exception would be a dual qualified pilot in a
11 Beaver and an Otter and they may just a little bit. But for the
12 most part, we try to keep them pretty much in the same place.

13 Q. So, then will the night before the chief pilot say you're
14 going to be on Beaver for this on this tail number and then you'll
15 be on Otter for this on this tail number?

16 A. Yes. If you look at our schedule, you'll see aircraft
17 numbers inside the color blocks.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. They show which airplane that they're assigned to.

20 Q. Okay. So, in the GOM it lists the responsibilities for a
21 flight coordinator's as schedule and flight follow.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. What are they scheduling?

24 A. They're taking the chief pilots pilot schedule and then
25 applying it to the missions. So, as an example of the tour

1 companies, we'll call or the cruise lines, with how many numbers
2 their going to have for particular times during that next day and
3 they allocate the number of seats to the different airplanes.

4 Q. Okay. You mentioned something earlier where you talked about
5 doing Grant and as a DO as well as Taquan.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. And there's not really an issue doing both of them.

8 A. I treat them as the same company for my purposes.

9 Q. Okay. So, but just a few minutes ago you said they're apples
10 and oranges, completely different.

11 A. It's size wise.

12 Q. So, the operations are the same?

13 A. As far as my interaction, how I manage my programs are the
14 same.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. So, how many operations does Grant do on a daily basis? Any
18 idea?

19 A. Yeah, let's see, Bethel's our largest base. We're probably
20 turning 150 operations to 200 operations a day in the Bethel base.
21 The Kenai base is doing 50 or 60. King Salmon is going to be an
22 addition 40, about 40 range, maybe 50 range, depends on the time
23 of year. Dillingham is going add another 20 or so to that. Cold
24 Bay, probably 10. Dutch Harbor, probably 15. Emmonak, probably
25 25 to 30 range and again, I'm using a typical good weather day.

1 Q. Okay. All right. Just taking the low end that's 200, 40,
2 50, 60, 70, 95, 310 operations per day for Grant.

3 A. Yeah, easy.

4 Q. And another roughly 60 for here?

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. How much of your day would you say you devote between Taquan
7 and for Grant?

8 A. I tend to do them both at the same time. It's kind of hard
9 to quantify that. Typically, my day starts with Taquan because
10 their operation starts earlier in the day, by about 3 hours. And
11 then, when they, Taquan stops, I'm still running another 3 or 4
12 hours typically after that with Grant. But each day's different.
13 Some days I may be very involved here with, you know, 20 or 30
14 different things that are going on that I'm working with. Other
15 days, maybe one or two and some days nothing. So, it tends to
16 balance out rather well.

17 As an example, you know, if I'm in Anchorage and I'm working
18 on something with Grant and the phone rings, it's Taquan, I'm
19 right there with it. And on my computer on my desk there I also
20 have all the weather cameras already prepositioned up there every
21 morning. When I walk into the office I watch everything there. I
22 have a home office, I do the same thing there. I have them all
23 shortcutted onto my phone.

24 We also, as a company, have our own weather cameras that we
25 actually have hosted onto the FAA website and I remotely can reset

1 those cameras from my mobile phone if need be. So, like the FAA
2 would have to go out if they couldn't get it to work, I can
3 usually do it on my phone.

4 When I'm here doing things, quite often I'll be working, like
5 on the break, I was doing Grant business. You know, returning
6 some phone calls and checking emails and, you know, just seeing
7 again, just knowing what's going on. I can see there's a test
8 flight happening and then they're putting a plan together for
9 moving an airplane tomorrow. You know, just things like that that
10 I need to be involved with.

11 With the technologies that we have today, it's a, it doesn't
12 really matter to me geographically where I'm sitting when I'm
13 doing it. Because in the Anchorage office, about 99 percent of
14 our operations happen hundreds of miles away from where I'm
15 sitting. And so, I'm doing it all by remote control there. And
16 so, I just treat this as an extension, this is just going 600
17 miles the other way. And it's worked out rather well. I mean,
18 there, really, I can't see any issues that have developed with me
19 not physically being here. Even if I was in town on a day off and
20 something, I got a phone call, I usually wouldn't come down here
21 to deal with it. I'd do it on the phone.

22 Q. So, with weather conditions and everything in the rest of the
23 state, like with Grant, is it the same as what you deal with here?

24 A. It's different. You know, here it can happen a lot quicker.
25 Typically, with the maritime environments, the only thing that's

1 really similar to here is down in the Aleutian Chain with Cold Bay
2 and Dutch Harbor, they're very similar in a lot of ways as far as
3 the wind. You know, the wind loves to blow here and there, and
4 you get that maritime influence. Over there you've got two
5 different ocean systems, you know, competing with each other
6 across a very small land mass. And here we're more hemmed in with
7 the terrain and the fjords and such. But there's a lot of
8 commonality and there's some things that are different.

9 If I compare the weather system out in western Alaska in
10 Emmonak or Bethel as an example, completely different. Everything
11 out there is all frontal based and typically the weather moves in
12 from the southwest, almost always in those regions. And so, you
13 know, every day when I get -- in the morning I pull the weather
14 maps up and I'm looking, hey where are the lows, where are the
15 highs, what's going on, what's the TAF, what's going on.

16 I'll do the same thing here. On my phone I have program, I
17 have KTN Flying as a thing I'll tap and opens up a menu and I'll
18 start popping through all the weather apps for here and just to
19 get a picture of what's going on. You know, I compare it, when I
20 was a chief pilot of Scenic Airlines down in Las Vegas, we
21 operated over an even larger area than what I'm talking about here
22 as far as geography and different flying conditions.

23 And again, the technology we have today is so much better
24 than it was back then. Back then we had a mobile phone the size
25 of a brick and that was it. There was no other, so everything I

1 had to do I had to use my mind to imagine what was going on
2 someplace. And now I can just pop up look at pictures and weather
3 forecast and maps and trends and so, it's a lot different. But
4 again, the big piece is that safety and operational control piece.
5 That's just huge and I can do it sitting on the beach in Hawaii
6 just as easily as I could sitting up here in this conference room.
7 It doesn't matter.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I'm done.

9 BY DR. SILVA:

10 Q. Does Taquan have an SMS?

11 A. We are, we have SMS training, but we haven't entered into the
12 SMS. It's not required for (indiscernible) 135 yet, however, we
13 have been in discussions with the FAA to go into a voluntary SMS
14 program. But we haven't implemented it yet.

15 Q. Okay. Do you plan on implementing it?

16 A. We don't know yet. So, we're still waiting for some
17 additional information from the FAA as far as how this is going to
18 look.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And then we've had some personnel changes, we've had, we're
21 in our third POI in 6 months right now, so a lot of it's getting
22 derailed.

23 Q. When was the last ride along you did with a flight, in a
24 flight?

25 A. September of last year.

1 Q. (indiscernible)

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. How often do you typically do these ride alongs?

4 A. I didn't do them that frequently. I think in the 2017
5 season, you know, maybe 10, 12 times maybe. And I flew quite a
6 bit also, so that gave me a very good vantage point to observe
7 also. Like I said, we typically, tour operation we fly in groups.
8 And I did schedule flights also. Very rarely did I ever do a
9 charter, but every once in a while.

10 Q. So, when you say that you can observe with the group flights.
11 How is that?

12 A. We're flying in close proximity to each other, so we can see
13 on our airplane through ADS-B I can see their position, their
14 altitude. I can hear their position reports and hear what they're
15 doing. I can see, you know, where they're operating, what
16 altitudes they're at. And you develop a feel for a pilot pretty
17 quickly as far as how receptive they are to our policy. And
18 there's been many times out there where they didn't know I was out
19 there. You know, they don't know who's in that airplane until
20 they get a position report and then they know.

21 But I can do the same thing when I'm sitting down in our
22 operations downstairs. I can look up at our monitor up here and
23 look at their altitude and see where they're at. And that's
24 something we watch very closely. With the technology again today,
25 I can even pull my phone out right now and I can look at our

1 planes on an app. So, it's pretty amazing. And so, the airplanes
2 are pretty evenly matched as far as performance and that's how we
3 can tell with power settings, you know, if they're flying what we
4 want them to fly. You know, they should be pretty evenly speed,
5 it shouldn't be blatantly different.

6 Q. Who's in charge of maintaining the safety manual? Do you
7 have a safety manual?

8 A. We do. So, the safety manager and myself share that
9 responsibility.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I take the lead on the audit and then the safety manager
12 assists on the audit.

13 Q. Have you received any safety reports that relate to the
14 conditions that were similar to the accident?

15 A. Not that I recall, but I would have to look. Nothing
16 recently.

17 Q. Okay. And is a pilot's job in jeopardy for revealing a
18 safety issue?

19 A. Absolutely not.

20 Q. How would you handle a pilot who, let's say inadvertently got
21 into IMC and reported that?

22 A. Well, the first thing we would want to find out is we want to
23 look back and see how they ended up in that position. And then
24 determine if training could be accomplished to correct that now so
25 it doesn't happen again. And again, it would be how receptive are

1 they going to be to that correction. And we would have to treat
2 it on a case by case basis, absolutely. But if it's the
3 situation, like if it's in the confines of an ASAP report, there
4 is no punitive action that could occur in that situation. But
5 there is remedial training. If it was reported on the outside of
6 an ASAP program, then again, we would want to look and see, well
7 what were the factors that lead up to this. Where, at what point
8 could that pilot have done something different and had a different
9 outcome and then try to figure that out. Okay, now why did they
10 go past that, that's what we want to look at.

11 Q. Have you had any cases similar to that?

12 A. We have.

13 Q. Can you give me an example?

14 A. We had a pilot, we have a policy that says on our tours and
15 an airplane turns around, every airplane behind it turns around
16 and goes back also. And in this particular situation, a pilot
17 didn't turn around and everybody else kept going. And then we're
18 looking at the weather cameras and determining that there was no
19 way that that was within our policy. And they were terminated.

20 Q. Okay. I'm still a little unclear on, when you say that you
21 treat Taquan and Grant as the same operation in terms of doing
22 your job.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. Can you elaborate on that a little bit more?

25 A. Sure. The day-to-day things that I do in both positions are

1 very similar. I'm looking at the big picture, again I'm the
2 number one person in that operational control position. And so,
3 I'm looking at our safety and I'm looking at our compliance as my
4 two number 1 goals.

5 I don't have to mentally switch gears when I'm doing
6 something on this side to come over to the Taquan side. It's the
7 same, we're onto Part 135, we're operating under the same set of
8 rules. There's nothing different in that regard. Our operation
9 at Grant is over a wide variety of topography. All I'm doing with
10 Taquan is adding one more little piece to it, to what I normally
11 do. And when I look at the size of the operation at Grant versus
12 the size of Taquan, I hardly notice the increase, it's not that
13 much bigger. It's just, and I have the ability to form a mental
14 picture of what's going on here quickly. It's not like I was
15 never here or not like I don't have any flying experience in this
16 area.

17 It's, again -- and then I have a lot of -- I grew up in
18 southeast Alaska and including living here for several years when
19 I was a kid. I know what the weather does here and how things
20 operate. I know what the rules are, I know what our policies and
21 procedures are and how to know if we're going to, if we're
22 starting to deviate outside of those lines as an operation.
23 Individually, there's no way I could control once a flight has
24 left out there, we don't have the ability to communicate with an
25 airplane in certain places that it goes. And so, we rely upon the

1 pilot in command's training and their adherence to our policies,
2 procedures, the FARs. And then there are certain times we can see
3 them on the system, but it is limited. ADS-B is line of sight and
4 so if they're outside of the line of sight of one of the receiving
5 antennas, we can't see it.

6 DR. SILVA: Okay. That's all I had. Matt?

7 MR. WILLIAMS: Matt?

8 BY MR. RIGSBY:

9 Q. (Indiscernible) who developed the preflight risk assessment
10 that's in the main?

11 A. I don't know who did it. It was way prior to me.

12 Q. Prior.

13 A. Yeah, several years prior.

14 Q. But when you came onboard did you take a look at it?

15 A. I did.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And I just recently put together the OCC program for Hageland
18 Aviation and so I compared what we did to what was here.

19 Q. At Grant, do you have an assistant DO?

20 A. No.

21 Q. As far as compensation for your pilots, I understand it's 5-
22 to 6-day job.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. If one of them calls in sick that day, do they get a benefit
25 of sick day or they don't -- they just don't get paid that day?

1 Okay.

2 Have you ever run into a case where either you or Mike have
3 seen a pilot come in, say he's hacking, just looks like a cat
4 (indiscernible), tell him to go home?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Absolutely. Wintertime, okay.

8 Q. And is he paid on that day since he came in?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. They get paid a half day.

12 Q. (Indiscernible). Okay.

13 A. Sorry.

14 Q. Electronic flight bags --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- is that something that's been considered here?

17 A. Yes, it is.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. As far as like (indiscernible) white, do you encourage the
21 pilots to go out on their own at this point?

22 A. We are looking at the EFB program.

23 Q. Okay. Do you ever get reports from the passengers and/or the
24 tour companies on the pilots?

25 A. Occasionally, sure.

1 Q. Positive?

2 A. More positive than negative.

3 Q. More positive?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. But there are some negatives?

6 A. Very rarely, but it has happened.

7 Q. What would be an example of a negative?

8 A. Not providing a tour narration.

9 Q. I'm sorry?

10 A. No tour narration.

11 Q. No tour narration?

12 A. Yeah, that's probably the most common one.

13 Q. Third POI in 6 months. Have you been given any explanation?

14 A. The first one got a job in the industry.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And then the second one, it was workload and the general FSDO

17 was such that they had to just spin off several operators, so now,

18 I think we're in North Carolina now. North or South, I can't

19 remember which now, it just happened.

20 Q. And other than the email contact, that's the only reason, or

21 that's the only contact you've had?

22 A. Well, I knew, I knew from our previous POI that it was going

23 to happen.

24 Q. Sure, that he --

25 A. A few days prior.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah, and he offered, you know, I'll still be a sounding
3 board if you need it and then we're here if you need anything.
4 But the administrative part of it's gone.

5 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. I think that's it.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Brad?

7 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

8 Q. So, how many, if any, of your DO duties here at Taquan do you
9 delegate, you know, for daily operations? Did you find the need
10 to do that?

11 A. No.

12 Q. No?

13 A. Not really.

14 Q. Okay. You mentioned being able to look at aircraft on your,
15 what type of flight tracking technology are you using?

16 A. So, there's several. Flight RadarBox is one that does very
17 well. Any of our ADS-B equipped aircraft can be seen on that
18 program. Planes Live is another one that does very well.

19 MR. RICHMOND: It's my granddaughter, so you can keep going.

20 MR. CURTIS: Flightradar24 is the third one. So, between
21 those three, I'm going to catch it.

22 Q. So, what was the last one?

23 A. Flightradar24.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And then if we have our aircraft that are flying out to

1 Hyder, up on the BC border, then we have Spidertracks units there,
2 so I can use the Spidertracks app to see it.

3 Q. Okay. So, some aircraft do have Spidertracks?

4 A. Some of them do, but they're removable. They just have the
5 holder in the airplane, so there's two of them downstairs. If
6 they're going to go on that flight, they're going to take the
7 satellite phone, they're going to take the Spidertracks unit up
8 and in the holder.

9 Q. And last question, so do you, is there any thought or
10 consideration for adding any upgrades to the current avionics
11 packages?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. For, you know, for situational awareness --

14 A. Absolutely.

15 Q. -- and technology? What are you considering?

16 A. We're looking at all the new units that are out there on the
17 market right now. That current system that we have is no longer
18 supported by the manufacturer because it's no longer in business.
19 And so, replacement parts are difficult if not impossible to find.
20 So, the only way we're able to keep utilizing them is buying other
21 used units from other operators. And that's going to dry up here
22 very soon. So, we will be in a situation we have to upgrade.

23 Q. So, there's current plan in place to start replacing --

24 A. Yes. We have two aircraft that are arriving here, hopefully
25 within the next 30 days, they're going to have new systems in it.

1 And then our ultimate goal is to change all of our aircraft over
2 to all the same.

3 Q. Okay. And, of course, that's going to require an upgrade to
4 the training program and the ops specs, okay.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. So, you have any specific timeline to retrofit the
7 whole fleet that you know of?

8 A. Not yet. Again, I would be guessing here, because it just
9 depends on what we end up settling on exactly what we're going to
10 install and then, you know, probably at least four to six
11 airplanes every winter until we get them all done would be my
12 guess. If the parts dry up sooner than we think they're going to,
13 then it's going to happen quicker.

14 Q. Is any of the technology you're looking at have synthetic
15 vision --

16 A. No.

17 Q. --or anything that gives a pilot, you know, a look ahead
18 which gives them an idea of the terrain that's coming toward,
19 they're going towards?

20 A. It does, but it's a much better system that we have now
21 because it's a lot newer. The systems we have in our aircraft
22 now, you know, they're looking, they're 15, 17-year-old technology
23 at the best. So, you know, every 6 months it just increases
24 rapidly. So, there are some options. Not all of them do that,
25 but some of them do. And I will also mention that on some of the

1 newer systems, they lack some of the features our current system
2 has which is really good. So, there's a tradeoff. But, it's
3 really going to become, you know, if we're able to utilize the
4 technology to its fullest extent. That's going to be, that's
5 going to be a, but you have to be (indiscernible) from a
6 regulatory point-of-view.

7 MR. SIPPERLEY: Okay. I don't have any more questions.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Mike?

9 MR. RIGSBY: No.

10 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

11 Q. So, you're saying with the technology, are you saying Chelton
12 went out of business?

13 A. (Indiscernible), they're gone.

14 Q. When did that occur? Any idea?

15 A. It's been several years now. Yeah, they were absorbed by
16 somebody else who then terminated the product line. And so, --

17 Q. And when is your POI change effective or when was it
18 effective?

19 A. Can I refer to my devise here?

20 Q. Yeah, (indiscernible).

21 A. I can tell you exactly when it happened.

22 Q. If you've got his name while you're at it, if that's on the
23 same thing.

24 A. It's out of West Columbia, South Carolina and it happened on
25 August 8th. Todd Clamp is our new principal operations inspector.

1 West Columbia, South Carolina.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

3 DR. SILVA: I'm good.

4 MR. RICHMOND: Anybody else?

5 MR. WILLIAMS: All right. So, thanks for taking the time to
6 talk --

7 MR. CURTIS: Thank you.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: -- with us.

9 MR. CURTIS: Yeah.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: If you think of anything else, please, you
11 have our --

12 MR. CURTIS: Yes.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: -- you have our contact info and all of that.

14 MR. CURTIS: Perfect.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: So, we will go off the record at 4:10.

16 (Whereupon, at 4:10 p.m., the interview 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: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of George Curtis

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA053

PLACE: TAQUAN AIR, KETCHIKAN, AK

DATE: AUGUST 15, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Sonya M. Terry
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T

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OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

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Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: KEVIN ROOF

APPEARANCES:

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

MIKE O'CONNOR, Chief Pilot
Taquan Air

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I N T E R V I E W

1 DR. SILVA: Hi.

2 MR. ROOF: Hello.

3 DR. SILVA: Are you okay with us recording this?

4 MR. ROOF: No, that's fine.

5 DR. SILVA: Okay. So, as we, we talked on the phone, I'm
6 Sathya Silva. I'm a human performance investigator on this case
7 working with Shaun who does operations. You've been through our
8 interview process before it sounds like.

9 MR. ROOF: Unfortunately.

10 DR. SILVA: So, you should have a pretty good idea of what to
11 expect, but I'll go through our standard, our standard spiel.

12 MR. ROOF: Okay.

13 DR. SILVA: So you are fully aware. So, let's just start
14 with introductions. Shaun, you want to --

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams, I'm the ops group chairman,
16 NTSB out of Anchorage. I think you and I have met previously.
17 Like she said, just looking at the background of the Taquan
18 accident and any other information we can gather that can kind of
19 help us out.

20 DR. SILVA: Yeah. Mike?

21 MR. O'CONNOR: Mike O'Connor, party rep, NTSB.

22 DR. SILVA: Okay.

23 MR. SIPPERLEY: I'm Brad Sipperley of the FAA. I'm the party
24 rep for the FAA on this investigation, so not here for any
25

1 enforcement actions. Just here looking into the safety side of
2 it.

3 MR. ROOF: And what office are you out of?

4 MR. SIPPERLEY: I'm actually out of Fairbanks.

5 MR. ROOF: Oh, okay.

6 DR. SILVA: Yep, so we have a party system essentially so we
7 can get as much expertise as we can from different sides. So,
8 that's what you see here. Again, hopefully you should know this
9 by now, but we are here for safety.

10 MR. ROOF: Sure.

11 DR. SILVA: We're not here to assign any fault, blame,
12 liability. That said, we are a public organization, so we can't
13 offer any kind of immunity or confidentiality for this. So, what
14 will happen with the recording is that we will transcribe, or it
15 will get transcribed and that transcription will become part of a
16 public docket once this accident, once the accident docket is
17 released. You are entitled to have a representative. Would you
18 like to have one with you?

19 MR. ROOF: Not at this time.

20 DR. SILVA: Okay. So, again, you are the expert here, so
21 keep that in mind. If you don't understand a question or you
22 don't know the answer, feel free to ask or say that you don't
23 know. If you need a break, also feel free to stop us. Sometimes
24 I lose sight of that. I will start with a handful of questions
25 and we'll just go around the room, usually twice by the time that

1 everything's answered. Any questions?

2 MR. ROOF: No, none at all.

3 INTERVIEW OF KEVIN ROOF

4 BY DR. SILVA:

5 Q. Okay. Can you state your full name for the record?

6 A. Kevin Roof, R-O-O-F.

7 Q. And I think we do already have a summary of your background,
8 but can you, can you go through what the last couple of years
9 since you've left Taquan? What kind of aviation work you've
10 been --

11 A. I currently work for Guardian Flight Alaska flying a medevac
12 jet as a First Officer.

13 Q. Why did you leave Taquan?

14 A. Well, I just, I thought it would be time to do something
15 different actually. I was offered a job with the FAA to be an
16 inspector, well actually I believe it was safety inspector based
17 in Ketchikan where I lived for the last 25 years. And went
18 through the entire process, they didn't give me a lot of
19 information on the process to get hired with the FAA and it was a
20 lot of hoops to jump through.

21 Anyway, I ended up going down twice to do a check ride in
22 Dallas, Texas and the first time I didn't do it because of weather
23 and the second time I actually did do it. Long story short, I
24 failed the check ride. One maneuver I did I didn't do to his
25 satisfaction and he failed me. And he said, well, you can come

1 back in a year and try again at which point I called a friend of
2 mine at Guardian who had offered me a job flying a jet and I said
3 do you still want me to come work for you? Because I'd just spent
4 \$15,000 getting a multi-engine instrument instructor rating.

5 Q. Oh wow.

6 A. As is required for the FAA.

7 Q. So, when did you leave Taquan?

8 A. Well, it would have been in January of 2017.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I worked there for must have been close to a year --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- when I helped interview and hire the director of
13 operations, George Curtis, who took my position. And I worked
14 there for the entire summer and fall and started the winter after
15 I resigned my position.

16 Q. Oh after.

17 A. I still was going through the process of trying to get on
18 with the FAA and I'd resigned my position and helped hire my
19 replacement.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And I was still a pilot at Taquan.

22 Q. Until January 2017?

23 A. January 2017.

24 Q. Okay. And when did you start at Taquan?

25 A. Geez, I don't know. That would have been in May of 2002.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. For Brien Salazar. I worked at Taquan from 1997 till 2000
3 for Jerry Scudero, the original founder of Taquan Air.

4 Q. Mm-hmm.

5 A. And then I worked at Pacific Air for 2 years in between that
6 and helped them start their company.

7 Q. I see. Were you DO at Taquan this whole time or --

8 A. I was originally hired as a chief pilot.

9 Q. Okay..

10 A. I was a chief pilot for 2 years. Then I was the director of
11 operations for 13.

12 Q. Okay. Can you run through your duties and responsibilities
13 as DO?

14 A. Well, as the director of operations you are oversight over
15 the entire operation of the company. I mean, whether it be for
16 the dock, freight, dispatch. Basically, flight ops, the oversight
17 and helping with the pilot training, pilot hiring, budgets, we did
18 all the Medallion stuff. I personally got us our CFIT avoidance
19 training star, our operational risk management star, the audit
20 star. The safety star was done by the chief pilot at the time and
21 the maintenance star was done by the director of maintenance at
22 the time. And then we got our shield. I think it took us about 4
23 years from the, we started it in 2004 and got it in 2007 or '08.
24 But it was basically oversight of everything.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. The company tree, basically of responsibility, normally in a
2 normal company it would be the director of operations was in
3 charge of everything, but the previous director of operations and
4 the director of maintenance did not get along at all. So, the
5 owner of the company had taken that and the director of
6 maintenance went directly to the president and the director of
7 operations had no oversight over maintenance whatsoever. Because
8 one refused to work for the other.

9 Q. I see. Okay.

10 A. And in a town with very limited resources and personnel, the
11 simple solution was just to not make them accountable to each
12 other.

13 Q. I see. So, how did you accomplish the oversight when you
14 were at Taquan?

15 A. By being there every freaking day of my life.

16 Q. Okay. What'd you look for?

17 A. What did I look for?

18 Q. Yeah, so --

19 A. Could you explain that better?

20 Q. Kind of detail in terms of, in terms of operational
21 oversight, how exactly did you, did you reach that, I guess? Like
22 what were you doing? Who were you talking to? Were you --

23 A. Well, basically it was a hands-on type deal. As Mike well
24 knows, when he came onboard he stated, I believe, that he had
25 never worked for somewhere where the chief pilot and DO flew more

1 than anybody else, because basically we did.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Typically, the chief pilot and DO in this town have been the
4 most experienced pilots in the company. So, generally we did the
5 most flying because this is not a place where the weather is
6 conducive to being friendly all the time. But no, I mean, through
7 oversight, just day-to-day, hands-on, doing everything. I mean,
8 literally, there were times when I would go to the post office
9 with the truck in the morning and get the mail, and then divvy out
10 the mail to the carts, and take the mail down to the planes. And
11 help load the planes and then take a flight, one of those flights
12 myself. So, I mean, I was basically there every day doing
13 everything.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. That's what we did. It was a small company. When I came
16 onboard, we had five airplanes and we slowly built up to, when I
17 resigned my position, we have nine. And then he acquired the
18 assets of Promech Air after their accident, literally just months
19 after I had resigned my position. It was not, I didn't know that,
20 as he didn't know, that Promech was going to go out of business.
21 When I resigned my position, that wasn't even in the stars, so to
22 speak, at the time.

23 Q. So, what was it like? Were you still flying that often
24 towards kind of the end of your tenure there? Once the operation
25 got bigger?

1 Q. A. Yeah, I worked the first summer that they acquired
2 Promech as a line pilot and all the way through up until the day I
3 left as a line pilot. So, yeah, I was working 5 days a week.
4 Doing a normal line just like I was when I was a DO and doing all
5 that stuff.

6 Q. How were you, do you need to get that?

7 [NON PERTINENT CONVERSATION]

8 MR. ROOF: Yeah. Okay. Put this on silent. Okay.

9 Q. I lost my train of thought.

10 A. But that's how, I basically made sure that things were
11 getting done was by doing them. I was a check airman, as was
12 Mike, and the previous chief pilot, and the chief pilot. I went
13 through a chief pilot every couple of years. It seemed like I was
14 going through chief pilots because they would move on to airline
15 jobs because there was a pilot shortage going on. And so, most
16 every chief pilot I had previously with the exception of one that
17 works there today, Mike, moved on to a 121 job. And it was, it
18 was a lot, it was a lot to do. It was all consuming to do budgets
19 and schedules and training and fly the line full-time. But that,
20 but by doing so, you literally, you had a pretty good idea of what
21 was going on on a day-to-day basis.

22 Q. Can you give us some examples of that? Of how, being --

23 A. Well, being involved, you know, neck deep into the stuff
24 every day, you knew if anything was going not the way you wanted
25 it to, you were there to know. I mean, you literally, if I was

1 out flying the routes, doing tours with guys I was there, I would
2 see somebody maybe doing something they shouldn't be doing. So, I
3 could address that right then and there. But I usually made sure
4 that I flew, every tour we did, I wouldn't just do one or other
5 because I felt, I felt an obligation to, the company was my
6 company when I worked there. That's how I felt about it and so I
7 literally was hands-on in every aspect of it, from the freight and
8 the dock and the pilots or operations. And Brien pretty much let
9 me do that.

10 Q. How were you able to balance the priorities of the DO and
11 flying the line? Do you have any strategies you used?

12 A. Well again, the DO position mostly was, with the paperwork
13 and stuff I didn't have a problem doing that because I literally,
14 I had started at the old Taquan as a check airman, instructor
15 pilot, check airman. Then I was moved up to a position of
16 assistant chief pilot and then when they went under I was made
17 chief pilot because they still had contracts they had to view.
18 So, I had kind of been groomed into it over time. So, I could
19 literally do the paperwork requirements pretty easily because I'd
20 been doing them for a longtime. So, I knew what was required, I
21 knew what the training manual said, I knew how to do it. And as
22 far as the Medallion stuff, that took a whole different stuff off
23 my plate, but a lot of that stuff was taken as homework. So, what
24 I didn't do at work during the day I would take home and do it at
25 home on a computer at night.

1 Q. Mm-hmm. What kind of paperwork were you responsible for?

2 A. Well, I was responsible for maintaining the Medallion
3 program, shield program. I was responsible for all the drug
4 enforcement stuff. I was the drug program manager. I was
5 responsible for all the HAZMAT training and paperwork. And I was
6 responsible, ultimately responsible for the pilots hiring,
7 training and paperwork and scheduling.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Obviously, the chief pilot would share in some of that
10 responsibility with the pilots as far as hiring and training and
11 paperwork.

12 Q. Mm-hmm. How often did you interact with the FAA?

13 A. Well, only when I had to.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Because they would come down, obviously and do inspections or
16 they would just stop by and make themselves aware, their presence
17 known. Usually, if anybody from the FAA gets off a jet in
18 Ketchikan, phones ring all over town and everybody knows. But my
19 theory was, I don't care. You don't have to call me and tell me
20 the Feds are in town. If you don't have anything to hide, you
21 know, why would you care? So, --

22 Q. Did --

23 A. -- I always had an open door policy with Feds too. You could
24 ask Brian Frederick or Jon Percy. Brian's dad, Dave Frederick,
25 was one of our PMI's for a longtime. But, no, I was always come

1 on in, take a look around and even if I wasn't in the office, the
2 door would be open, it would just (indiscernible).

3 Q. Mm-hmm. Did you ever see them observing training or
4 anything?

5 A. Yeah, actually they did. They sat through several of my
6 ground schools. Doug Waddell (ph.) who was a POI at one time in
7 Juneau sat through one of my ground schools. Mr. Mic Green (ph.)
8 or Michael Green (ph.) sat through one of my ground schools. I
9 think Jon Percy did as well. It was common practice for the FAA
10 to sit through a ground school occasionally to see how it was
11 being taught and if you were covering everything you needed to
12 cover. According to Douglas Waddell, after my ground school was
13 over, he said and I quote, "you effectively scared the shit out of
14 all those guys". Because I talked about accidents and causal
15 factors of accidents a lot in my ground school. I went through
16 every accident that happened in southeast Alaska in the area we
17 handled every year. And there's been, in the State of Alaska,
18 there's 25 incidents or accidents per year on average, four of
19 those are fatal on average per year, and I talked about everything
20 in this area and what caused it. Because I've been here for 25
21 years, so a lot of these I had actually, intimate knowledge of the
22 people involved. And as a DO, I took a, I felt, when I was a
23 pilot before I became a check airman or a chief pilot or a DO, I
24 was like everybody else. Young guy, wanted to set the world on
25 fire, show them how it's done, make a name for myself. But once I

1 started being responsible for people, I started feeling that it
2 was my responsibility to make sure they came home at the end of
3 the day. I've had a lot of my friends in the back of my planes in
4 rubber bags over the 25 years that I'd worked here and it was
5 pretty sobering after a while. So, you do everything you can to
6 make sure that that doesn't happen to them.

7 Q. Was there someone who was specifically in charge of safety
8 while you were there?

9 A. Well, let's see, the safety officer was me.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. We actually, the chief pilot before me, before Mike, Adam, he
12 was not. The one before him was a tech, Tom Guadagno, who flies
13 for Alaska now, he was a safety officer. And before that it was a
14 Tim Bercher who flies for Delta now, he was a safety officer. But
15 when they left, I became the safety officer slash everything else.

16 Q. Okay. So, what were your roles then as safety officer?

17 A. We had anonymous reporting system that, where you could fill
18 out a safety, identify a safety hazard and fill out the paperwork
19 and we would have to look at it and make a decision on it and see
20 if it was something. We'd go through a risk matrix and see, you
21 know, whether it was a likelihood or a severe or very severe or,
22 you know, was it likely to happen or not likely to happen. We had
23 a little matrix box that we used for everything. And we also had
24 a safety reporting where if they put their name on a safety
25 report, they got their name in a hat for a drawing at the end of

1 the season for \$100. So, we were getting safety reports all over
2 the place from people. And then we came up with a fix it award
3 where if they actually found a problem and fixed it themselves and
4 put down on that safety sheet that they, I took care of this, I
5 saw this and took care of it, they got their name in another hat
6 for another \$100 for, they called it a fix it reward, if I
7 remember.

8 Q. Do you know any cases where reporting resulted in a kind of
9 punitive action?

10 A. None.

11 Q. Okay. What kind --

12 A. That wasn't allowed for the safety program.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Nobody's going to make a report if there's going to be
15 punitive action on the safety report. That'll get people to shut
16 up quicker than anything.

17 Q. What kind of safety reports did you get?

18 A. Well, let's see, I had to go to talk to other operators
19 because their planes weren't talking to each other in the Misty's.
20 You're supposed to do reporting points from point A to point B and
21 back and a lot of the operators pilots weren't talking on the
22 radio. So, there were several near misses out in the Misty Fjords
23 as a result. There was aggressive behavior on some of the pilots'
24 parts out there, not necessarily Taquan's that caused me to go
25 talk to some of the other operators who I had worked with. We had

1 all worked at Taquan Air back in the '90s because it was the
2 biggest float operation probably in the world. And most of these
3 operators had either worked at Promech or Taquan, so we're all
4 friends. So, it was easy for me to go talk to them about things.
5 I actually went and talked to the City Council because one of our
6 van drivers had wrote a safety report saying that pedestrians were
7 going to get hit where the new cruise ship berthing because there
8 was no stop light and people were crossing the street in a busy
9 highway during the day. And one of our van driver's felt that
10 there needed to be a stop light or some kind of lighted crosswalk
11 because they had accidentally, almost accidentally hit somebody on
12 a couple of occasions. So, I called the City Council and talked
13 to them and they said well we know the problem's there and we want
14 to get a stop light there, but we don't know if the burrow has to
15 pay for it or if the city has to pay for it. And I said, so
16 you're going to wait until somebody gets killed to put a stop
17 light there. And they, no, no, that's not what I said. And
18 there's still no stop light there. But those are the kinds of
19 things. Most of them were really just boards on the dock, frayed
20 ropes, didn't have this or that available when they needed it,
21 little things like that.

22 Q. Any reports regarding weather or anything related to CFIT --

23 A. No.

24 Q. -- that you recall? Okay.

25 A. No. No, we had a clear understanding that I would never get

1 mad at an employee for turning around, but I might get mad at them
2 if they don't.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I expected them, if they did not have the weather minimums
5 needed to fly, that they turn around and go to where they do have
6 the weather minimums to fly.

7 Q. What were those weather minimums?

8 A. Well, obviously there's a standard 1,000 and a mile, which I
9 didn't even train anybody on that. They had to have at least a
10 500 foot ceiling, 2 miles. They had to have 2 miles at all times
11 as far as they were concerned in their ground school.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I never mentioned the 1,000 and 1 because that's just silly,
14 I think. And when we had our accident in 2007, we had two
15 accidents when I was there at Taquan. One was a side of a hill,
16 pilot and four passengers dead in 2007. One was, I believe, in
17 2010 or '11 or '12, I could be wrong, a pilot on a beautiful clear
18 VFR day decided to head up a narrow, a place that was narrowing as
19 he headed towards it and do a step turn, a step taxi turn to take
20 off with six people, or four or six people onboard. And he
21 flipped the plane on its side and bent the wing up and it flipped
22 right side up again. It was a miracle. But he could've, he could
23 have step taxied to Ketchikan in a straight line almost from
24 Fjords. And what he did, other pilots witnessed the whole thing
25 and didn't know what he was doing. I was off that day. I was off

1 the day that we hit the side of the mountain in the Fjords, those
2 were both my days off.

3 And I was actually one of the first planes onsite in 2007, I
4 was in a plane, onsite when we found the wreckage. I ran into
5 town, got in a plane and went. And the same thing with the one
6 that bent the wing, I ran into to town, took a plane out there,
7 made sure everybody was okay. The passengers had already been
8 taken by other planes to town at which point made a phone call to
9 the FAA, I think I had to call the NTSB too as well and took care
10 of everything out there.

11 Q. So, what's changed or what changed in the company between
12 2007 and by the time you left?

13 A. What we did was, we got together with the head of the
14 Medallion Foundation at the time. We called the Medallion
15 Foundation and Dennis Ward was the president of the Medallion
16 Foundation, we'd asked him to come down and orchestrate a taproot
17 or root cause analysis on our accident for us because we had a
18 pilot, four passengers dead on the side of a hill. And we wanted
19 to do anything we could to make sure it didn't happen again and we
20 felt the best way to do it, rather than do it in-house was to get
21 somebody from the outside to come down and facilitate this for us.
22 So that, since we, if you don't do taproot all the time, you don't
23 know what the hell to do with it, so we took somebody who did know
24 what they were doing and asked them to come down and to facilitate
25 it for us. And at the time, with the information we had, we

1 determined that obviously 2 miles visibility wasn't enough. You
2 guys are probably familiar with the narrative on that accident.
3 If you're not, I can tell you about it.

4 Q. Go ahead.

5 A. Three pilots, probably one of the highest time pilots of
6 southeast Alaska leading the way, another high, I mean these guys
7 are mid-20,000 hour pilots, 24-, 25,000 hour pilots, three pilots.
8 The one in the middle, he'd been here 2 months. He was a
9 previous, he'd worked for Scenic down in Vegas. He had worked for
10 America West flying a Dash 8 and he was a helicopter pilot in the
11 military, been in Ketchikan 2 months, low time, float plane pilot.
12 He's in the middle, the weather's beautiful, except for one spot
13 in the south arm of Rudyard bay. The first pilot, high time pilot
14 comes in at 2,000 feet, sees the big clouds in front of him, sees
15 water below him, he dove to 700 feet to get under the clouds.
16 Second pilot, the 2-month guy, comes into the pass, sees the
17 clouds, flies into the clouds, initiates a turn, left or right, we
18 don't know which and descended in that turn and hit the side of a
19 rock arm off of a ridge and killed everybody onboard. Third
20 pilot, comes in, sees the cloud, nonchalantly does a 180-degree
21 turn and goes back the other way in clear VFR weather. It was
22 clear VFR in 270 different directions according to other pilots in
23 the area.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And so, we instigated or we established that 2 miles should

1 have been enough, the guy could have done a turn. I always taught
2 in ground school, you don't wait until you're in a cloud to make a
3 decision. If you see a cloud, you turn away from the cloud. You
4 turn away from terrain, you don't wait until you're IMC to make a
5 decision in a Fjord where you got 4,000 foot cliffs around you and
6 you're at 1,000, 2,000, 3,000 feet. And so, it's anybody's guess
7 as to why he did it.

8 So, we upped the ante by giving it 4 miles visibility as a
9 result of our root cause. We figured well 2 miles should have
10 been enough, but obviously it wasn't. So, on tours, to make sure
11 this didn't happen again, we doubled the visibility requirement to
12 4 miles. Because again, we had four dead passengers and a dead
13 pilot, so we didn't want it to happen again. So, anytime they
14 were flying over areas of land or in the Fjords themselves, they
15 were supposed to maintain 4 miles visibility.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Over areas of water, we allowed them to stay to 2. We handed
18 out maps during ground school that had red lines to show them what
19 4 miles looked like from this point to that point. So, as they're
20 in the air, if they're over this point, they should be able to see
21 to this point to know if they have 4 miles. If they don't, they
22 have to go a different way. And it had little red lines all over
23 the place showing 4 miles through the Fjords, across the island,
24 whatever. And we instigated a buddy system. As we had three, two
25 of the most experienced pilots in southeast Alaska with this guy

1 in the middle, and they were just minutes apart from each other.
2 They both came back to town and the dispatcher says where's Joe?
3 And they said we don't know. Well, what did you, did you hear
4 him? No. Did you talk to him? No.

5 That bothered the shit out of me because here you've got two
6 guys that have probably more knowledge than anybody in their right
7 mind could have and they weren't paying attention to the guy that
8 had 2 months experience. So, we made them, they had to act as a
9 team out there. They had to talk to each other, they had to stick
10 together and whoever was in the lead became the lead pilot. If
11 you didn't have weather or the weather was whatever, you would
12 relay that to the people behind him. If you couldn't continue on
13 with the minimums we had established, the 4 miles, then he would
14 initiate a turn, turn everybody else around and then now, the guy
15 in the back can become the lead pilot and they can go in an
16 alternate direction or go back to town. And they all had to
17 communicate.

18 In the Fjords, they were expected to land within sight of
19 each other. That way, there would be no where's Joe? I don't
20 know. So, even if he had a dead battery or a bad starter, they
21 would, somebody would know that this plane was on the water with
22 him out there. I expected the pilots to take a role and take
23 ownership of the tour and be responsible for every other person on
24 that tour, not just fly their own flight. That, to me, seemed
25 like a reasonable way to get them actively involved in safety.

1 Q. Okay. Any other changes that you can recall?

2 A. You know, I think that was it. We already had rules that
3 they couldn't circle wildlife because LAB had killed several
4 people doing, circling bears at low altitude and stalled and spun
5 to the ground. That was learned over time. We wouldn't let them
6 fly through Ketchikan lakes because it was a -- which is behind us
7 here, Deer Mountain, just because it was kind of a choke point and
8 you get a lot of operators going up there circling wildlife who
9 don't work for Taquan and I can't tell them what to do. And then
10 we've got our guys flying through there, it just seemed like it
11 was an area just like here, it's ripe for a midair if people
12 aren't paying attention.

13 So, we tried to have people fly an established route. They
14 weren't allowed to wander off in other directions and give their
15 own little tour. Because pilots, pilots will tend to get bored
16 flying the same route every day, but I don't care because I'm not
17 paying them, I'm paying them to do what we tell them to do. And
18 the tour route, the way it was set up had a minimal amount of time
19 lingering over trees. So, if the engine were to fail on a single
20 engine airplane, they have water nearby, generally, most of the
21 time. But occasionally, you get pilots who would veer off this
22 way or that way to go show them mountain goats or show them
23 something different because they didn't like the tour route.

24 And that was one of the things with the group mentality that
25 became fairly clear pretty quickly. Other pilots would say hey

1 this guy's going over here, this guy's going over there or I would
2 be out there myself and see them doing it which was totally
3 idiotic on their part. Because then I would call them on it.

4 Q. How would you approach a situation --

5 A. I actually, I actually let a pilot or two go for that reason.

6 Q. Okay. Can you kind of go into detail about what you saw and
7 how you handled it? How you, in those cases?

8 A. Well, let's see, we had, we had pilots that were
9 unmanageable, it didn't matter what you did. Some of them just
10 wouldn't take it to heart. Without getting into specific details
11 or names or anything, I literally had to, we had to get rid of, I
12 had to fire one pilot because he was stealing money and drugs out
13 of the mail. It became apparent. The post office came down and
14 threatened to take our mail away because evidently things were
15 missing in the mail. We didn't know, they did. And they did an
16 investigation and thought maybe one of our freight guys was
17 stealing the stuff.

18 Well, the dispatcher and myself did a little investigation
19 and the same pilot was on every flight that the stuff in question
20 was missing from. And we fired him and shortly thereafter he
21 tried to hit me head on with his car on the highway at which point
22 I called the police, he was arrested for a DWI. He got out of
23 jail and that night my plane got cut loose from a dock, ended up
24 on a breakwater a mile away. All our planes had the masters
25 turned on and the batteries were dead. But we couldn't prove it

1 because nobody was at the dock in the middle of the night, so now
2 we have thousands of dollars of security cameras all around
3 Taquan.

4 Another time, a pilot had taken a flight with a passenger on
5 a mail flight. The engine had seized up on him, not necessarily
6 his fault except that the plane was way overloaded. He flew what
7 I thought was an exceptional altitude in a short amount of time,
8 which to my, meaning he was running the plane hard. And when they
9 landed successfully, the passenger said that she never got a
10 briefing, either before the flight, during the forced landing, or
11 after the landing. The FAA had told me this same pilot, they'd
12 done a route check with he worked at Promech and he never gave
13 them a briefing there either. Even though he assured me that he
14 had, the Feds I figured weren't lying to me when they said that
15 because they were surprised I hired him in the first place. And
16 so, when he told me that at Taquan, I didn't believe him either
17 because again, I had been told that that was something he did not
18 do. I let him go.

19 Q. Do you hold any other positions aside from flying for
20 Guardian right now?

21 A. I am the chief pilot at Southeast Aviation.

22 Q. Okay. Are you there full-time?

23 A. I'm in town full-time. I'm only there when I have days off
24 and go fly.

25 Q. Okay. How often is that?

1 A. Let's see, I think I've flown there maybe a half dozen times
2 all summer. I'll go down there and hang out and if he needs to
3 give somebody a day off, I'll take a flight.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. But generally I, I'm just available if he needs somebody.
6 Plus, I've actually imparted some of my knowledge on his pilots as
7 well as far as what I've been telling you guys. As far as how we
8 did things at Taquan.

9 Q. What kind of responsibilities do you have as chief pilot for
10 that company?

11 A. Well, like any chief pilot, again it's just making sure the
12 paperwork is where it needs to be. As far as the training, making
13 sure all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed on its training.
14 As far as PRIA paperwork, training records, drug records, things
15 like that.

16 Q. Mm-hmm. Do you do training for Southeast with that?

17 A. I did not, I didn't do any, I just took the position a month
18 ago.

19 Q. Oh, okay.

20 A. It was already there.

21 Q. I see.

22 A. Most of the operators in town have approached me about
23 paperwork and asked me to come down and look at their paperwork.

24 Q. Mm-hmm. Do you take them up on that?

25 A. I've told them I will after summers over.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah, it seems to be a weak link in the chain.

3 Q. I see.

4 A. Most people have an aversion to it.

5 DR. SILVA: Okay. I'll stop for now. Shaun?

6 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

7 Q. So, you were at Taquan as a line pilot when Promech was
8 incorporated, correct?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You were no longer DO, but you were still --

11 A. I was a DO when they had their accident, but shortly
12 thereafter I resigned my position to take an offer from the FAA.
13 And that was before Promech had discussed selling their assets to
14 Taquan.

15 Q. So, as a pilot at Taquan, what changes did you notice at the
16 company after the Promech assets were brought onboard?

17 A. Well, there was, as any company that almost doubled in size
18 overnight, there was a lot of growing pains involved. They had
19 two different base of operations, they were running off Promech's
20 side and our side. So, there, I mean, it's just a lot to take in,
21 to have running two bases from one central location for a company
22 that had never done that. I mean, a lot of companies have bases
23 all over the place and they run them from a central location, but
24 they weren't really set up for it. I believe they didn't actually
25 finalize purchasing the assets until the season almost began, if I

1 remember right. Is that right, Mike? Yeah, I mean, it was
2 literally the beginning of May when they decided to take over
3 Promech. So, again, everything was just kind of thrown into the
4 mix. Now, George Curtis, the DO, was there at the time as was
5 Mike and I believe I was still there as a check airman at the
6 time. So, there was a lot of people to take care of the disarray,
7 I guess is what you would, but it was, there were a lot of growing
8 pains involved because it was hard for dispatch to manage and
9 figure out, to absorb all the business from both businesses. It
10 was a thankless job, I'm sure. I was glad I actually wasn't the
11 DO anymore.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: That's all I have. Brad?

13 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

14 Q. You said, you know, being the DO, you felt that being
15 physically there was important on the job. Do you think that it's
16 possible to run a company as large as Taquan is now with the DO
17 remotely?

18 A. Again, I can only fall back on my experience. It's just my
19 personality. Like I said, I took, that was my company. I took
20 responsibility for it because I felt, and I knew that if anything
21 went wrong, you guys would come looking for me. And so, I took
22 that to heart. Like I said, I've witnessed a lot of my friends
23 not making through this occupation over the years and I had a lot
24 of people that I worked for that were hands-on and that's how I
25 learned to do it because that's the people I worked for did it.

1 They were out there all the time, doing everything and that's how
2 they knew whether or not you were doing the job the way you were
3 supposed to. And I think, well 121 everything's procedured out.
4 Okay? You have a procedure for, a checklist, a procedure for
5 takeoff, you're on a route for takeoff, climb, you're in route,
6 everything is procedured out. You follow this line, you do what
7 they tell you or you follow the approach and then arrival and all
8 of that. Anything, I felt, anything you can do to (indiscernible)
9 VFR in a Beaver to make it take some of the human factors out of
10 it and thinking on the pilots' part away, would be an improvement.
11 You know, by giving them a route to fly and this is the route you
12 fly, period. That it would take some of the guesswork off the
13 pilot and rather than having them fly all over Timbuktu trying to
14 do something. One of the things that I touched on with your, the
15 person you took the job from here.

16 Q. Alyssa (ph.).

17 A. MR. ROOF: Alyssa. When they called me up down to Southeast
18 Aviation, was I thought that Mike had flown a long ways out of his
19 way to crash that plane on the side of the hill. Because if you
20 look where Steamboat Bay is, that's where they left, it's a long
21 ways to get to that hill around the water. And my only question
22 was why didn't they just go to Craig and drop the people off and
23 have them bused over. I don't think that, me personally, I don't
24 think I would have done what they did. I know that one pilot went
25 one way and then two other pilots went another way and one of

1 those planes hit the side of a hill. Promech crash, one pilot
2 went one way, two planes went another way, one of those planes hit
3 the side of a hill. It's the Promech crash all over again.

4 Q. So, you mentioned, you know, specific routes, having specific
5 designated routes.

6 A. Yeah, we'll just tell the pilots, look if you're going, I
7 don't care if you're going to Craig or Thorne Bay or Point Baker.
8 I used to tell people on mail flights, if they're going to North
9 Prince Wales Island, I expect them to stay on the east side of
10 Prince Wales Island all the way up. I didn't want them going on
11 the other side of the island because there was no radio coverage
12 over there. I couldn't see them on our CRABS display and there
13 was open Chatham Strait open ocean and not landable water a lot of
14 the time.

15 Q. Okay. So, in 2016, the FAA region sent out a letter to all
16 of the operators. You know, CFIT letters is what we called it.
17 And one of the things was discussed in that letter was, you know,
18 the possibility of adding VFR routes and a lot of companies had
19 done that, added VFR routes. In the interest of increasing safety
20 in this area, do you think having VFR routes, established routes,
21 with altitudes, check points, things like that, like you said, it
22 makes it boring for the pilot, but at least you know it's, the
23 routes have been ran.

24 A. Well, I think that, I think, well there's only two companies
25 in this town that fly mail. It's Taquan Air and Pacific Airways.

1 And well, Island Air, but they do it IFR to caravan or PC-12 now
2 and they only go to one destination with the mail. But anyway, I
3 guarantee you if Pacific Airways and Taquan Air, the pilots have
4 specific routes to go to Thorne Bay, to Coffman Cove, to Whale
5 Pass generally. But, my personal belief is that you need to tell
6 the pilots during training that if you, if you can't do it this
7 way then you do it this way or come back. You give them an
8 alternative and not let them leave it up to them to decide what
9 the best course of action is. Because as a company, you have, it
10 behooves you to do this just to protect your ass if nothing else.
11 Because killing people's bad for business and it's a very
12 dangerous place that we fly in here. You would think that telling
13 people, I expect you to follow the rules is enough, but it's not
14 because you've got personalities out there and you've got egos out
15 there. And a lot of times, people think that if they get the job
16 done, that they've shined even though if they might've risked
17 everybody in that company's occupation or job in doing so. And
18 they don't even know that they're doing that though. You know,
19 whether it be the freight guy or the dock guy or the president of
20 the company, everybody depends on that person to do their job
21 correctly. And again, I'm just giving you my opinion here. But
22 like I said, when I was at Taquan, I felt that it was my
23 responsibility, my company and I expected things to get done a
24 certain way.

25 Q. Okay. Appreciate that. (indiscernible) --

1 A. But as far as the routes go, --

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. -- I mean, you could, you could do that. You'd have to work
4 with Mike or the DO, chief pilot down at Pacific Airways and they
5 could tell you the routes, standard routes that they fly. And I
6 don't have any problem with that and I'd be willing to bet that
7 Taquan, the pilots all know that, there are standard routes, but
8 it's what they do when things aren't standard that really, you got
9 to touch base on. What do they do when things aren't the way it's
10 supposed to be.

11 Q. Here's the million dollar question that we all wish we knew
12 the answer to. Any idea why, you described the guy just, one guy
13 flies under the cloud, one guy flies into it and crashes
14 (indiscernible). Any idea --

15 A. Oh, I didn't finish.

16 Q. -- why one would continue with that?

17 A. I didn't finish that story. If you look at the narrative of
18 that accident, it came to light over a year later that the pilot,
19 Joe Campbell, who had 2 months at their company had actually been
20 admitted to a hospital on suicide watch. He was on heavy doses of
21 anti-depressants which would take his fight or flee instinct.
22 That's what the FAA found as the main causal factor of that
23 accident. He was on huge doses of some kind of cocktail that
24 would make everything good. And 4 years earlier, a LAB plane,
25 pilot with four passengers in a Cherokee 6, I believe it was, did

1 the exact same thing up by Juneau. There was two flight, the
2 first plane turned around due to clouds. The second plane, the
3 pilot on the anti-depressants flew, told the guy, the first guy
4 says we can't get through this way, I can't see. And the second
5 guy says well I'm just going to take a heading and fly through and
6 right into the side of a mountain. This guy that we had was on
7 the exact same drugs that the pilot in Juneau was on.

8 Q. With that in mind, I mean, other than self-notifying --

9 A. Well, yeah, and well he had lied on all of his medical stuff.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. You know, he no, no, no. So, the FAA didn't know. We didn't
12 know. So, he had two doctors. One he went to, well he had even
13 been checked into a hospital for suicide watch. He shouldn't even
14 have been flying a plane. And even though we found this out after
15 the fact that we'd done this taproot and all this other stuff, we
16 kept all that stuff in there because we like the idea of making
17 our operation safer. Because it just seemed like a good idea.
18 But if you look up the narrative on it, it's all in there.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I've talked to Brien Salazar a lot since this accident
21 happened because it bothered me, as I'm sure it did Mike and
22 everybody else, that Mike Hudgins is at high time, experienced
23 pilot. It bothered me that he would fly all the way from
24 Steamboat Bay into the dogleg and turn around and go all the way
25 around Waterfall and over to Hydaburg into the pass there. And

1 the weather wasn't all that great in the first place. It wasn't
2 illegal, but it wasn't good, especially for getting across that
3 island. And he should have had options before he went. He should
4 have, he should have, that's where the company comes into play
5 where you can say look guys, you're going here. If you don't have
6 the weather to do this and this route, maybe you should just go
7 here and stay and wait. Drink coffee at the dock in Steamboat, go
8 to Craig, we'll boat them over, you know, and I'm sure that's
9 done. But it needs to be addressed and it needs to have a
10 contingency plan in place before the flight even initiates. Every
11 time that flight initiates, you need to have a contingency plan in
12 place. To me, safety's like a plant. You have to water it and
13 feed it to get it to grow. Unsafe acts are like weeds, you pull
14 them and they grow back. If you're not pulling them all the time,
15 they keep growing back. So, that's one of the reasons that I was
16 hands-on at that company all the time. Because the only way I
17 could stay on top of it was constantly to be there. Because
18 people tend to, you know, they toe the line and pretty soon they
19 start straying away from the line and then you've got to bring
20 them back. That's my take on it.

21 Q. In a company as large as Taquan is now, do you think wearing
22 more than one hat, you know, management hat or having to fulfill a
23 lot of, another (indiscernible) person's duties would in any way,
24 I don't know how to ask this, be too much to manage?

25 A. I think it's too, it's a lot for one person to manage. I did

1 it for a while myself when we had nine airplanes and it drove me
2 crazy. I mean, it literally would make you sick to your stomach,
3 you'd stress out. I gained 40 pounds in weight. I weighed 40
4 pounds more than I do now when I quit that job a year and a half
5 ago. Yeah, it was very stressful managing people, not the job
6 itself, the managing people is what's stress, because people are
7 not always onboard with the ideas. Especially, pilots have egos
8 and they're type A personalities and it's just not easy to get
9 them to toe the line and maintain a sense of humor doing it.
10 Because you got to, you can't, you got to treat everybody as an
11 adult because they want work for you if you don't, but at the same
12 time it's not always easy. I mean, it's just that way in any
13 business, but I was going to tell you, show you something. I got
14 a list here of things that we did that I'd sent to Brien. If I
15 can find it here. I'm sorry.

16 Q. That's all right. Do you mind if I ask you another question
17 (indiscernible)?

18 A. No, not at all.

19 Q. Okay. So, are there any programs you initiated when you were
20 at Taquan or that you're aware of that are no longer in use?

21 A. I don't know for sure. Again, the things I told you, the
22 visibility of 4 miles, I got a list here, required to when
23 transiting areas of land within the Fjords. When the tour routes
24 are being conducted over a waterway 2 miles remains. Maps of the
25 tour routes depicting 4 mile point-to-point references. Aircraft

1 to follow established routes to and from tour areas. Wandering
2 off in an alternate direction will not be tolerated. Tour routes
3 are such that aircraft spend little time over mountains or tree
4 covered terrain. Fly in groups. Cue based simulator training
5 will be conducted along the route to and from and within our Misty
6 Fjord tour area. And that's where you backed up that map in the
7 ground training with the cue based training. So, set it so they
8 could see the same visibility on that simulator that you had on
9 your map to, your maps from point-to-point. Because the simulator
10 has its limitations, so if you set it at 4 miles, they're going to
11 see way more than 4 miles. It doesn't work that way. So, you'd
12 actually have to visibly put it at a point you wanted to see 4
13 miles and bring the weather down to that next point. So, that it
14 actually showed you what they should see at 4 miles. Aircraft
15 will land, aircraft are expected to land in only those areas of
16 the Fjords that have shorelines, such as beaches. That way if
17 they have an upset on takeoff or landing, the passengers can
18 actually egress the water. Have you been to the Misty Fjords?
19 There's 3- and 4,000 foot rock wall cliffs in a lot of places with
20 no shoreline and the person couldn't get out of the water if they
21 had an accident. So, we made them land in areas that had beach.
22 That way, in a perfect world people don't make mistakes, but that
23 way if there's an upset taking off or landing, the people might
24 actually get out of the water. Also, if the plane had a
25 mechanical issue, they could paddle it to the beach and park it

1 there and another plane could come in and transfer the passengers
2 that way. I really had a big problem with people landing in the
3 middle of open, you know, in a 800 foot Fjord in the middle of a
4 half mile wide body of water. That didn't give the passengers a
5 fighting chance if there was a problem. I was taught that you
6 never land farther from shore than you care to swim because that's
7 what you'll end up doing some day. Stay with aircraft on standby
8 for tours, we do bear tours. A lot of the pilots like to take off
9 and go fishing somewhere, well now nobody knows where they're at,
10 they have an engine problem or they have an accident landing in a
11 lake to go fishing, we don't know about it. If the passenger gets
12 hurt on the tour, whether it's a sprained ankle or mauled by a
13 bear, they're their best chance of being taken to medical help
14 quickly. So, they were expected to stay onsite. That's what they
15 were being paid to do. Circling wildlife's not permitted. And
16 there's a lot of, a lot of things that go well above and beyond
17 the FAA training manual that are specific to this area because
18 again, the training manual just addresses a national standard. It
19 doesn't have anything to do with area specific stuff for this
20 area. That's what our cue based training are for and our CFIT
21 avoidance training was for.

22 MR. SIPPERLEY: I don't have any more questions right now.

23 DR. SILVA: Mike?

24 MR. O'CONNOR: No, no question.

25 BY DR. SILVA:

1 Q. Do you, were there any changes made after the Promech
2 accident? As far as you know to the Taquan company.

3 A. Well, they sold their company.

4 Q. Well, to Taquan's operation? Aside from (indiscernible)?

5 A. Well, besides the fact that it grew twice as large? No. I
6 mean --

7 Q. Any operational changes?

8 A. Well, sure, I mean, their DO of 15 years had resigned and
9 they had a new DO who came from, I believe he, I believe George
10 came from West Isle Air or down in Bellingham or Anacortes,
11 Washington. I'm not sure what he was doing, he was a sim trainer
12 for Alaska as well. But yeah, their managements changed. Mike
13 was new when I resigned my position he had just worked for us for
14 6 months and they doubled in size overnight. I mean, so that's a
15 lot for anybody to take on. Like I said, I did stay there and
16 offered my assistance with George and he didn't seem to need any,
17 but I was there if they had any questions which I don't think they
18 asked very many.

19 Q. In your opinion, in order to be an effective DO remotely,
20 what would you need to do? What would you need to have?

21 A. Well, first of all, let's make it clear that I don't think
22 that's possible.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I think in a company the size and scope of the operation that
25 they have and the area that they operate, I think you need to be

1 there. I personally, like I said, I've never worked anywhere
2 where the DO, chief pilot didn't go out and fly the planes too
3 because generally they're the most experienced pilots. On the
4 premises, that's how they got to that position. And they're
5 supposed to share that with the people that work for them, so that
6 hopefully they will learn from them and teach them as they go.
7 Because these new pilots, that's what you do. You instill your
8 knowledge into them because they'll never, hopefully they won't
9 have to learn it the hard way.

10 Q. Do you, so just again for clarity, do you feel like there's
11 any possibility of sufficient delegation of duties?

12 (indiscernible)?

13 A. Well, again, it depends on the people you have working for
14 you I guess. And the biggest hurdle that somebody like Mike or
15 whoever the DO is would have is instilling that sense of ownership
16 in the company and making them see more than just what's in front
17 of their eyes at the time. They need to take responsibility for
18 everybody on that flight. There's, Mike and the other turbine
19 Otter went in a different direction from the safety officer and I
20 think that the lead plane could have stopped that whole accident
21 from happening. I'm not saying he's responsible for it, but he
22 was a year-round employee, he saw the weather, how come he didn't
23 turn around? You have a seasonal guy and a year-round guy flying
24 planes and the thing is, they need to start thinking that way.
25 The hey, you know, this isn't very good we should just go back.

1 But there's a lot of pressure from, lodges are notoriously
2 pressure oriented people to work for. They have people that need
3 to get out of there because they only paid for this much time and
4 they got another group wanting to get in there that paid for this
5 much time and they don't have time for your problems. They want
6 their people gone and they want their people back. And if you
7 don't do it that way, they're going to tell you about it. And
8 you've got to have the ability, and I'm not saying I know one way
9 or the other if anybody does or doesn't do this, but you've got
10 the ability to say you know what, find another way, we can't fly.

11 Q. When you were DO did you get feedback from the customer's
12 directly? Like from the lodges for example?

13 A. We didn't service lodges.

14 Q. Didn't do that back then? Okay.

15 A. Promech serviced lodges.

16 Q. Okay. Okay. So, that was a change (indiscernible).

17 A. We didn't service lodges.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. That was Promech's thing and Brien always said he was not
20 interested in because of the pressure involved. But I think it
21 was part of the deal when they bought Promech was to take over the
22 Waterfall contract. Waterfall has always had its own airline.
23 Whether it's been West Flight or Seaborne or Promech, Waterfall
24 has been a major shareholder in several airlines in this town, so
25 that they could have service.

1 Q. When you think about your responsibilities as chief pilot and
2 your responsibilities as DO, how do those overlap and how do they
3 differ?

4 A. Well, historically the chief pilot has been responsible for
5 the training oversight and scheduling the pilots. That generally
6 has been the responsibility of the chief pilot and that was pretty
7 much it. Also, there's budgetary considerations during the
8 beginning of the year when you're doing budgets and the chief
9 pilot has historically been in charge of CFIT avoidance training.
10 That's their program and that's pretty much the only program they
11 had to do when I was there.

12 Q. Mm-hmm. Is that a full-time job?

13 A. Well, it's only, keep in mind that Taquan is a two or three
14 airplane operation 7 months of the year.

15 Q. Right. So, in the summer months?

16 A. Five months of the year, they might have 15.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. Southeast Aviation, where I'm the chief pilot, they have two
19 airplanes 5 months of the year and that's it. And then they
20 basically don't do anything the rest of the year. So, there is
21 time to do these things. Seven months of the year you've got, it
22 gets dark at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. There's plenty of time
23 to do things. You need to have all your ducks in a row before May
24 1st hits.

25 Q. Okay. And that's, that's when things --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- ramp up?

3 A. Yeah, and usually by the 15th of May is when they actually
4 start going.

5 Q. Mm-hmm. Is training usually done before then?

6 A. Yeah. I mean, the DO obviously has, historically has
7 oversight over the entire operation. He's supposed to be
8 directing the operation. The chief pilot is supposed to be the
9 chief of the pilots, he's supposed to be in charge of hiring,
10 training, scheduling. And again, he's supposed to have help from
11 the DO because the DO is right above him on the chain of command.
12 And they're supposed to work together.

13 Q. Do you think it's, in your opinion, is it possible to do both
14 jobs effectively?

15 A. It wasn't easy when we had nine airplanes because I had to do
16 it myself a few times before Mike came onboard.

17 Q. When you say it wasn't easy, what kind of difficulties
18 (indiscernible)?

19 A. Well, you're just working all the time. You literally, it's
20 consuming your entire life. It doesn't have to, but I thought the
21 only way you could do it effectively was if it did, you know.
22 Otherwise, your performance would just go from here to down. I
23 don't know, an operation like Taquan with the amount of flying
24 they do, the back-to-back flying for 5 months of the year, I think
25 that you need to have help. Whether that be a DO whose doing

1 paperwork from a satellite base or it be the check airman that he
2 has working for him. That they need to take ownership of that and
3 be responsible for it and that's one of the hardest things to do
4 though is getting people to take ownership and not just be there
5 as a job day-to-day.

6 DR. SILVA: Okay. Did you have anything else?

7 MR. WILLIAMS: No.

8 DR. SILVA: Mike?

9 MR. O'CONNOR: No.

10 DR. SILVA: Brad?

11 MR. SIPPERLEY: No. Really appreciate your time.

12 DR. SILVA: Yeah.

13 MR. SIPPERLEY: And your insight.

14 DR. SILVA: We really do. Do you have anything else you want
15 to add that we didn't necessarily ask you? That might help us
16 with the investigation? Thank you. Let me give you my card so
17 that just in case --

18 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
19
20
21

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

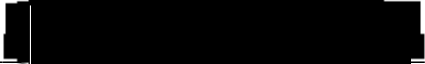
IN THE MATTER OF: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Kevin Roof

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA053

PLACE: CAPE FOX LODGE, KETCHIKAN, AK

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Sonya M. Terry
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T

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OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

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Accident No.: ANC18FA053

JULY 10, 2018

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Interview of: BRIEN SALAZAR

APPEARANCES:

SATHYA SILVA, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

BRAD SIPPERLEY, Party Coordinator
Federal Aviation Administration

MIKE O'CONNOR, Chief Pilot
Taquan Air

BOB RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. Salazar)

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I N T E R V I E W

(4:31 p.m.)

MR. WILLIAMS: On the record at 4:31. So, Brien, thanks for taking the time to talk with us today. We don't expect a super long interview, but we did want to kind of chat with you here. Like I said, my name's Shaun Williams. I'm the operations group chairman with the NTSB for the investigation. My role in this is trying to figure out from an operational side what happened, why it happened, and what could be changed or what we can learn from it.

MR. SALAZAR: Um-hum.

MR. WILLIAMS: NTSB, we're federal, independent federal agency. You know, we're trying to determine probable cause of the accident to promote safety. We are not a part of the DOT or the FAA. We've got no regulatory or enforcement powers, we're strictly safety based. I'm going to let everyone kind of go around and say who they are and where they're from and kind of the purpose here. So --

DR. SILVA: Sathya Silva. I'm a human performance investigator with the NTSB. I'm working with Shaun for determining what the causes were of the accident and how we can prevent it in the future.

MR. RIGSBY: I'm Matt Rigsby out of the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation here supporting Brad who's the FAA IIC on this. We're here purely for the safety role of it. There's no

1 enforcement activity or anything that we can do as a result of
2 anything that's developed during this, these interviews.

3 MR. SALAZAR: Um-hum.

4 MR. SIPPERLEY: And we've already met once.

5 MR. SALAZAR: Yeah.

6 MR. SIPPERLEY: But Brad Sipperley again from Fairbanks, the
7 investigator in charge for the FAA.

8 MR. O'CONNOR: I'm Mike O'Connor, party rep, NTSB. Party
9 rep.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: You okay talking with everybody in here today?

11 MR. SALAZAR: Sure, yeah.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So we're using a tape recorder to
13 record the interviews which will sent out for transcription. The
14 transcript, not the actual audio, will be a part of the public
15 docket when the accident investigation's complete.

16 Like I said, the purpose is for safety, probable cause.
17 We're not here to assign fault, blame, or liability. It's just a
18 part of the fact-finding phase of the investigation. Everything
19 we can gather helps. We cannot, however, offer any guarantee of
20 confidentiality or immunity.

21 The way these work, I'll start off asking questions. We'll
22 kind of go around, let everyone ask their questions. And then,
23 usually it's just two rounds. So everyone will have a chance.
24 Please answer all the questions to the best of your recollection.
25 If you don't understand something or you just need to have it

1 repeated, explained, please speak up. On the same token, if you
2 realize you misstated or want to correct a response, please do so.
3 We want the most accurate record that we can have and the most
4 accurate responses.

5 You're entitled to have one representative of your choosing.
6 Is there someone you would like to have as your representative?

7 MR. SALAZAR: Bob.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Bob, you may not answer a question, however,
9 you may request a short break to confer or again --

10 MR. RICHMOND: Thank you.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: -- tell him not to. Do you have any questions
12 before we get going?

13 MR. SALAZAR: No.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. The other thing, forgot to mention,
15 since it is being recorded, please verbalize instead of --

16 MR. SALAZAR: Okay.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: -- nodding like you'll probably see us do and
18 then realize we did it.

19 MR. SALAZAR: All right.

20 INTERVIEW OF BRIEN SALAZAR

21 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

22 Q. So for the record, could you please state your name and
23 title?

24 A. It's Gerald O'Brien Salazar. I'm the CEO and owner.

25 Q. So how long have you owned Taquan?

1 A. Since May of 2000.

2 Q. Okay. And what is your background?

3 A. Well, I grew up in aviation, my dad had a business like this.
4 And so, I flew, I worked in the freight room and flew summers in
5 college and got a college degree from Washington State University.
6 And then, I helped him manage his company, Ketchikan Air for about
7 6 or 7 years and then my mom passed away, so he wanted to sell it.
8 And I was the, basically, the chief operating officer, the general
9 manager at the time, and he ended up selling it Taquan.

10 And I decided to go get my master's degree in business. And
11 so then I was doing that and then he sold his business to Taquan,
12 and I was a station manager at Taquan, former Taquan, and I was
13 put in charge of running the company and basically selling it for
14 the native corporation because it wasn't making any money. So
15 then I put an offer in to buy the core assets of Taquan and I
16 started a company called Venture Travel which just succeeded the
17 little Taquan Air in May of 2000.

18 Q. Okay. So you've been around with it for quite a while.

19 A. Yeah, I've got probably 65 hundred hours of flight time as a
20 commercial pilot with a helicopter endorsement.

21 Q. Okay. Do you do any flying here with the company at all?

22 A. I haven't flown Part 135 in probably 6 or 7 years or longer
23 maybe. But I fly, you know, privately.

24 Q. Okay. So what would you say you're day-to-day duties or how
25 do your days go around here?

1 A. Well, I check in with the flight department, check in with
2 the dispatchers, check in with the freight department, check in
3 with the maintenance and just kind of get a feel what's going on,
4 whether one department needs help or not. And I try to steer the
5 company in the right direction. I'm not totally hands-on like I
6 used to be, but we've got good people in all our positions that we
7 can trust to run the daily operations. I probably more allocate
8 capital, or try to determine where we need, you know, improvements
9 or capital or aircraft maintenance or whether we're going to get a
10 different type of airplane or, you know, what our fleet demands
11 are. And try to forecast in the future, so I'm not really day-to-
12 day operations.

13 Q. Okay. So what can you tell me, what do you know about
14 operational control?

15 A. Well, operational control is just, you know, having someone
16 that is, has their, that has the ability to check the weather. We
17 use the flight risk assessment forms. Operational control is
18 basically, you know, when the manager's alerted that the flight
19 is, you know, the marginal weather gets out of the zone where you
20 need, the dispatcher and the pilot just can't make a decision.
21 It's, you know, it's high gross weight, it's marginal visibility,
22 or it's a pilot that isn't that experienced. Operational
23 control's basically looking at those factors and determining
24 whether we should send that pilot or we should even do the flight.
25 And, you know, I can be in operational control if I need to be.

1 But sometimes I try a man on things, you know, when the weather's
2 bad or we need help or guidance.

3 Q. So who has responsibility, ultimate responsibility for
4 operational control?

5 A. Well, George does, but he's not here, so Mike has it or Mike
6 O'Brien. He's our senior pilot too. Or even Clark Hassell could
7 be operational control or myself.

8 Q. So are you listed anywhere as having operational control or
9 is it just --

10 A. I'm not sure if I am or not. I don't know if we have a
11 document that says he's an operational control or not.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I'm the registered agent for the FAA.

14 Q. Oh, the agent for service?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But I'm qualified to be director of operations or chief
18 pilot.

19 Q. So you mentioned George has it, but he's not here. How does
20 that affect the operation? What is your take on that?

21 A. Well, we've, the reason George isn't here is because he moved
22 up to Anchorage to be with his family and we needed a DO, so we've
23 used him on a, like a part-time basis. He's still the director of
24 operations, but we have a new one starting on Monday. But he's
25 still, Mike O'Connor, our chief pilot has basically taken over the

1 officer, officer of the deck. And then when he's, his days off,
2 Mike O'Brien is an operational control.

3 Q. So when George is out and you said he's kind of got the part-
4 time type role, what is his day-to-day involvement? Or how often
5 does he get here?

6 A. He comes every, probably once a month.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And he, I can't remember if he, if he calls in very often or
9 not. I don't know, I mean he's basically, we're just basically
10 using him for his recordkeeping, as we needed a, we need a DO.
11 We've had a challenge finding him. We looked internally and we've
12 had some options, but we found one externally that, it wasn't an
13 ideal situation, but it seemed to work. And I don't, I don't
14 think it had any role in this investigation or this accident.

15 Q. And that's what we're trying to find out is looking at
16 everything. So we're looking at the company.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. We're looking at management structure. We're looking at all
19 of it and we don't know what --

20 A. Right, it --

21 Q. -- if it had any sort of effect and that's why we're here.

22 A. -- it wasn't, it's not an ideal situation, but it wasn't, it
23 didn't cause this.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I believe.

1 Q. So do you oversee or do you participate in any of the
2 training or anything like that?

3 A. Not, not very much.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Sometimes I'll come in and give a little company synopsis and
6 just, you know, welcome and kind of let the pilots know the new,
7 at the beginning of the season what my expectations are. About
8 safety, customer service, and work ethic, and treating our
9 employees with respect.

10 Q. So what are those expectations for safety?

11 A. Zero accidents and incidents. I mean, we have our safety
12 goals, that's what our safety goal is every year and we have part
13 of our management incentive structure is based on a safety. Any
14 bonus that the employees would make, some of its financial, but a
15 big chunk of it is safety. That means, you know, whether it's a
16 dinged wingtip or any aircraft that's out of service for more than
17 24 hours due to any damage. I mean, safety is paramount. We
18 can't be in business without being safe. And I think all my
19 employees realize that.

20 Q. What do you, what do you feel is your greatest, the greatest
21 risk? Safety wise, sorry.

22 A. An aircraft accident, I mean, similar to this. We train our
23 pilots to be, to follow, to adhere to higher standards than FAA
24 minimums and to avoid any type of a risk or to mitigate the risk
25 as much as possible. And I feel like that's our biggest, it's

1 kind of like how you teach your kid to look both ways to go across
2 the road and it's pretty tough because you train them, and train
3 them, and train them. Yeah, it's, it's hurt, you don't want
4 something like this to happen.

5 Q. The minimums you spoke about.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. As far as, you know, higher than the regulatory. Do you know
8 what they are? Is that --

9 A. Yeah, we try to do 4 miles over land and 4 miles visibility,
10 versus two.

11 Q. Okay. Do you have any, an active role in the hiring of
12 pilots?

13 A. No. I mean, I sit down with Mike in the spring and we just
14 kind of go over the resumes. And just kind of look at them and
15 just kind of second set of eyes and just make sure that he, and
16 he's got the authority, but I try to give him some guidance. And
17 I, you know, there's a couple of guys that might say oh you know
18 what maybe get a little more background on this guy or whatever,
19 but most of the guys, we've got a good crew and we weed them out
20 pretty quickly if they don't adhere to our company policy.

21 Q. So what do you look for when you're hire, when you're helping
22 him look at resumes, what are you looking for?

23 A. Competency, experience, seaplane time. Some of the younger
24 guys we get don't have as much time that they're, I like to get
25 younger guys that have like college degrees or they're

1 professionals, they want to adhere to the, they're easier to train
2 because they don't want to screw up. You get some older guys that
3 are, like a guy we wouldn't want would be a guy that's, was a
4 truck driver, a professional then he decided to be a commercial
5 pilot at the tail end of his career. We want guys that are
6 commercial pilots that have experience that have good work
7 history, good, they're employable, they have good relationships
8 with their prior employees, employers and they've got, you know,
9 solid resume for experience. And in smaller aircraft too. Like
10 some guys will come and fly 747's their whole life, but that's a
11 totally different type of flying than we try to look for.

12 Q. Were you familiar with Mike Hudgins prior to the accident?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. Any issues?

15 A. No, he's a good guy. Plays the bagpipes, rides his bike to
16 work every day, he's healthy, cordial, nice to the employees,
17 competent.

18 Q. What is the company's, can you kind of tell me a little bit
19 about the company's involvement with Medallion Foundation?

20 A. Well, when Medallion first started, I jumped right on the
21 bandwagon because I wanted to feel like I could be away from the
22 company and have it managed properly within the safety standards
23 that I wanted. And I felt like it was a good, I still feel it's a
24 good cause for, to have, you know, mechanics training, the risk
25 assessment forms, you know, pilot training, CFIT avoidance. You

1 know, simulator training, mechanic's training, the parts,
2 (indiscernible) control, safety programs. It's a, it just makes
3 us a better company. It actually, it's costly for us because we
4 don't fly when our competitors are flying and it, you know, for me
5 to be able to sleep at night, I got to run a safe company. And I
6 think it enhances safety.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm going to let Sathya --

8 DR. SILVA: Okay.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: -- ask questions.

10 BY DR. SILVA:

11 Q. So along those lines, how is the company doing financially?

12 A. We're doing fine. I mean, this year's going to be tough,
13 but, you know, one of the things I strive to, since I got my
14 master's degree was to run top notch businesses. And we've made a
15 profit every year, a solid profit and it's one of my goals to be a
16 top performer in our industry. Whatever industry we're in.

17 Q. Do you feel like you're kind of penalized for not flying in
18 conditions that other operators are operating in?

19 A. Yeah, all the time. But it's, but you know, you know, we've
20 had an accident before and it's very expensive and very
21 disheartening and very, emotionally draining. It's something, I
22 don't do this, you know? It's something I strive not to do.

23 Q. What kind of changes did the company go through after that
24 first accident?

25 A. We had a bunch of audits from the cruise lines, like Princess

1 did an audit, the NTSB did an audit. I hired an independent
2 company to do an audit. And we made some changes for cue-based
3 training, we increased our visibility requirements over to 4
4 miles. We instituted a buddy system on our flights where if a
5 lead pilot. And we did a TapRoot investigation on it and tried to
6 determine what we could do as a management team to alleviate or
7 make this problem not happen again. So we, and we've relegated
8 back to we're only as strong as our weakest pilot. You know, our
9 youngest pilot or the one that has the least amount of hours or
10 the least amount of experience in this country. So we basically,
11 you know, coddle them and put them with a lead pilot that has
12 experience in area, kind of use the convoy of a team to complete a
13 tour or a mission.

14 Q. Um-hum. Have there been any changes since this latest
15 accident?

16 A. No, we're going to do a TapRoot and try to determine how we,
17 we've thought of some changes, but we haven't implemented any
18 because we're, we just want to let the dust settle. And really do
19 a TapRoot and determine, you know, what's the best thing we can do
20 as a company to avoid this from happening again.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. So we've got some ideas, but we just haven't implemented it
23 yet.

24 Q. Okay. So speaking of that, how do you as a company identify
25 hazards within the operation?

1 A. Well we have S-1 safety form that many employees, we actually
2 give bonuses to employees because we try to get as many as we can.
3 I think we're up to like 70 something this year in the safety
4 hazard, potential safety hazard or an accident or slip and fall
5 or, you know, anything from a burr on the ramp or you know a loose
6 step or a board or anything that we can determine is a potential
7 safety hazard, we write up. It's fixed and that's put to bed.
8 And so, I feel like, you know, our safety culture's pretty strong.

9 Q. Who's in charge of safety?

10 A. Mike O'Brien's our safety officer.

11 Q. Okay. Is that equivalent to a director of safety?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. Do you live in the area?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. You're based here. Do you come into the office every day?

16 A. Yeah, pretty much.

17 Q. You mentioned bonuses. And regarding your first statement
18 about bonuses based on safety. Can you elaborate more on how
19 those bonuses are calculated? Does each person get a different
20 amount of a bonus?

21 A. Well, we have a short-term incentive plan that's annually and
22 it's most of the manager's and director's receive, if we hit our
23 target, which would be 100 percent bonus, it's usually upwards of
24 20 percent of their annual pay. Fifty-five percent is financial,
25 we hit our targets, 35 percent is safety and 15 percent is

1 customer service, trip advisor ratings.

2 Q. Okay. Do the pilots get bonuses?

3 A. I don't think they do. We used to give a safety bonus, but
4 then we give them a dollar an hour, or I think it was, I can't
5 remember. We gave them a bonus based on them not dinging
6 airplanes, but then I think we changed that last year because all
7 they care about is their net pay and it, so we just, I think
8 they're just getting paid, you know, a daily rate at this point.

9 Q. Okay. So you increased the --

10 A. Daily rate.

11 Q. -- daily rate?

12 A. Just to peel back the layers and give them just a paycheck.

13 Q. Okay. And that was across the board for all pilots --

14 A. Yeah, I'm pretty sure.

15 Q. -- or specific ones?

16 A. I don't go through, I don't oversee like our chief pilot will
17 put in a new hire thing, I don't look at all the pilots --

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. -- but it, some pilots are a little different thing.

20 Q. Okay. And then you also mentioned bonuses for issuing or for
21 reporting. How does that work?

22 A. We have a S-1 form that any employee can put in and it's, we
23 take drawings at the end of the month and whoever reports the
24 most, we give them like a couple hundred dollar gift certificate
25 for a meal or at a restaurant or just some type of monetary money,

1 150 bucks or something like that.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. Just to make it a positive thing and we promote, you know,
4 trying to look for safety items that the potential safety hazard.
5 So it's seen as a positive, not a negative.

6 Q. Is there a capability to report anonymously?

7 A. Yep, you don't even have to put your name on the form if you
8 don't want to.

9 Q. How would that fit into your incentive program?

10 A. They just wouldn't get their name drawn or they wouldn't get
11 recognized or Joe Blow wouldn't get 10 safety reporting slips or
12 whatever you call them.

13 Q. Okay. So from the customer perspective and the interaction
14 with you, whether it's the cruise lines or your customers at the
15 lodge, what happens when you have to cancel a flight?

16 A. Because of weather?

17 Q. Sure. Let's say weather, yeah.

18 A. Well, if it's a cruise line, sometimes we know before like
19 the other day it was going to be bad, so we notified the cruise
20 lines that, you know, tomorrow there's a front coming in and that
21 we could cancel. We actually just cancelled the whole day in the
22 morning because it was 100 percent chance of rain blowing 35. And
23 so, we were able to do that preventively before, proactively.

24 Sometimes we have to, we get people on the bus and tell them
25 their flights cancelled. Sometimes we -- they come here and the

1 weather's bad, I mean, it changes so rapidly sometimes we'll
2 cancel when they arrive here.

3 If it's a lodge, we just, we work with Waterfall Resort which
4 is one of the largest lodges in Alaska and Steamboat Bay. And so
5 what, since I had this contract and when we bought out Promech
6 back in, 3 years ago since we did that, they didn't have a
7 contingency plan to move their guests and they have like 92 guests
8 and fish boxes and bags. It's a big lift for our -- and we have
9 to use other companies too because we don't have enough lift. But
10 since we've done that, we've come up with a plan where they can
11 actually boat to Craig. They've bought some buses and they can
12 drive their people Hollis, and we either fly to Hollis because we
13 can't get across the island or we'll rent a catamaran to take them
14 there.

15 So, you know, that's kind of a difference between one company
16 and another, we want to have those contingency plans in place so
17 that we don't have the pressure. You know, when you get 100
18 people in your lobby and their all drinking beer and want to go,
19 it's very taxing on our system, our company, our people. So we
20 try to alleviate that pressure. And sometimes there's just
21 pressure from customers that just want to go, but -- you know, one
22 the other day, somebody didn't, said we weren't flying because we
23 had an accident. Danita, our station manager took care of that,
24 but it was kind of a little embarrassing to have somebody say that
25 to you, but it's what it is.

1 Q. So when a flight's cancelled, do you get any sort of
2 compensation? Does the cruise line lose that compensation as
3 well?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Have you ever gotten push back from the cruise lines for
6 example for cancelling flights?

7 A. We have most of the contracts, pretty much of all of them in
8 Ketchikan. When we, when Promech was in business, we flew Misty
9 Fjords side-by-side with them. A lot of times we would cancel our
10 flights and they wouldn't and it was, I think it was a little
11 frustrating for them. But, you know, aviation safety's pretty
12 paramount. It's, everybody's safe and you just don't want to risk
13 it and I think they've learned to respect our decision-making
14 ability and I think that's just, you know, the way we do business.
15 We do it safer than other people and it costs us revenue, but you
16 know, I can sleep better at night.

17 Q. Within the contracts that you have with these companies, is
18 there any type of performance metric that you have to hit?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Nothing stipulated in that?

21 A. They might have their internal budgets, but they've never
22 shared them with us.

23 Q. Okay. It's not like you have to do 50 percent of the flights
24 that are --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- scheduled or anything like that? Okay. So what happens,
2 let's say you take a flight and you can't get people back to the
3 boat before it leaves?

4 A. Most of the time the boat would wait.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. If they didn't wait, we would just fly them up to the next
7 stop. But we've never had to do that.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I mean, we've had incidences where, not at Taquan, but at our
10 sister companies, where we have carts and ziplines too, but if
11 someone got hurt or burned their wrist or broke an arm or
12 something, which doesn't happen very often, but they would -- we
13 would have to fly them to their next port.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. But from an airline standpoint, like in the Misty Fjords, we
16 land on saltwater. There was an incident 30 years ago where the
17 planes landed up on Big Goat Lake and had two Otters full of
18 people and they missed their boat. So after that, we just land on
19 salt water and it's safer and we got more runway and if our
20 battery's dead or something we can get a boat to it or we've got a
21 dock.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. So we don't, we've never really, we've pushed all aboard
24 before, but never, it's never been a problem.

25 Q. Um-hum. Can you describe your role's and responsibilities?

1 I know you went through a daily a day, but overall what do you
2 have responsibility over?

3 A. Just the direction of the company. I make sure we're
4 solvent, we're liquid, we have cash. You know, our margins are
5 enough to support our business and support, I like to do things
6 first-class. So I like to make sure that we have first-class
7 facilities, equipment, aircraft, vehicles, so we can support our
8 infrastructure. We can pay people well, we can treat our
9 employees well, give them a good work environment.

10 Q. Um-hum.

11 A. So I, you know, a lot of my time is spent on financial
12 issues. You know, some customer relations, banking relations,
13 insurance, some employee relations, but not too many.

14 Q. Um-hum. So in terms of safety, it sounds like you have a
15 number of policies in place. How do you know from kind of on top
16 that these policies and this culture are kind of filtering down to
17 the, to the actual operations?

18 A. I talk to our people. I mean, I think anybody you talk to in
19 this company safety is paramount. And I just, we have systems and
20 procedures in place, you know, if there's a freight guy driving a
21 cart too fast, I chew his ass, you know. There's just, I just
22 keep an eye on things. I mean, we don't promote recklessness. We
23 promote safety and conservatism and I think you'll find that in
24 our company, those people don't last.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Risk-takers, mavericks, it's just not the place for them to
2 be.

3 DR. SILVA: All right. That's all I have for now.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: Matt?

5 BY MR. RIGSBY:

6 Q. Okay. You mentioned that you just hired a new DO, he's going
7 to report Monday. Can you say who he is yet?

8 A. Sure, John Dorward

9 Q. What's his background?

10 A. He's been flying Twin Otters in the Maldives and, I don't
11 have his resume in front of me, but he's a competent DeHavilland
12 pilot, VFR, floats with a lot of management and safety experience.

13 Q. 135?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. Okay. Have you notified the FSDO yet?

16 A. Yeah and they've already approved him.

17 Q. All right. Okay. Do you deal much with the FSDO? With your
18 POI and that?

19 A. Not too much.

20 Q. Not too much? Okay.

21 A. Like when he comes in I meet him and say hi. I think that, I
22 think we're fairly well thought of from the FAA standpoint. I
23 mean, they respect us and I think that we run a good program and a
24 safe operation and they don't really mess with us too much.

25 Q. So you'd describe the relationship as a good relationship?

1 A. Positive, transparent and honest.

2 Q. Do you know, has the new POI talked to you about coming up
3 here at any time in the near future?

4 A. Mm-mmm. Most of the time, they deal directly with Paul for
5 maintenance or Mike and George for ops.

6 Q. Okay. And is this new DO, is he going to be here, present
7 and continually here?

8 A. Yeah, full-time.

9 Q. Okay. Will live here year-round or is it a seasonal thing?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Our business has changed quite a bit over the years. We used
13 to be busy year-round and it's becoming very seasonal.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. But we still have to have competent management year-round to
16 facilitate, you know, hiring and running 15, 14 airplanes.

17 Q. Do you know, on your pre-hire selection, are they given a
18 check ride?

19 A. The pilot?

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. Yeah, they do training, they do an eval ride before even
22 doing a check ride.

23 Q. Sure. Or yeah, that's what I should have said, an eval.

24 A. Yeah, we do an eval ride with them and just check their
25 competency and skills. And then we do a lot of training with them

1 and then we have, either a training pilot does a lot of the
2 training and then we have a check airman that does, you know, we
3 have dual controls. So that there's, you know, one guys not doing
4 all the training and one guy's doing, and the same guy's doing the
5 check ride. We have a, you know, it's a dual pronged approach.

6 Q. Okay. You mentioned the S-1 forms. Who tracks those? Or
7 who's responsible for tracking those?

8 A. Well, Mike O'Brien, the DO, George does a report with him at
9 the end of the year and make sure we're, it's an active, living
10 program and it's being managed and it's effective.

11 Q. Do they have the ability, if they identify an issue, do they
12 have, and say it's going to be a rather large capital expenditure,
13 do they have the ability to go ahead and make that decision?

14 A. No, if it was out of our budget or what, it would come to --

15 Q. Come to you?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Okay. Are you guys self-insured or do you have private
18 insurance like AIG?

19 A. Yeah, we have our own. We have insurance from Stars or
20 (indiscernible). We have \$25 million. It's taken me a long time
21 to get to those limits.

22 Q. Yeah. Okay.

23 A. I mean, we started out 500,000 seed and I paid two or three
24 times more for five airplanes than we do for a whole fleet today.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And that's from a good track record.

2 Q. Do you own any other aviation companies?

3 A. Well, I have an aircraft leasing company that I lease the
4 airplanes to Taquan.

5 Q. Okay. But they're not involved in 135 operations
6 (indiscernible)?

7 A. No, it's just a passive company that's shield the risk.

8 Q. Sure. I guess how many candidates, you know, before you
9 decided on John as the DO? Was the pool out there just kind of
10 limited? I mean, you --

11 A. Yeah, it's, we're in a small niche business. So flying
12 seaplanes in southeast Alaska and, you know, a lot of the older
13 pilots that we've, that are experienced in this area are retiring.
14 And it's, when I was in school, we had an aviation program in
15 Ketchikan. A lot of the guys still flying around here went to
16 that program, but it's getting so seasonal and such a niche market
17 it's hard to find guys with float time, with DeHavilland time and
18 that type experience.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But we've had a lot of, we've interviewed quite a few guys
21 and we, I think we found one that's, you know, work well for us.

22 Q. Okay. Are you involved at all in the CFIT training program?

23 A. Not, not too often.

24 Q. Have you sat through it yourself?

25 A. Not, not in a long time. I think that, you know, that's a

1 good candidate for robusting it after this, but we haven't decided
2 what we will do.

3 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. I have nothing --

4 MR. WILLIAMS: Brad?

5 BY MR. SIPPERLEY:

6 Q. Just a few questions. So you say you occasionally exercise
7 operational control, about how often would that be?

8 A. Not too often really. I mean, you know, I was thinking about
9 the other day, one time I was down south and they had to call me
10 to get a management approval. This was like 7 or 8 years ago, but
11 you know, we go through the risk assessment it needs management
12 approval, talk about the weight, the destination, the pilot. And
13 I just decided, you know, I'm in Palm Springs, the weather's
14 beautiful here, but I would say don't go based on that situation.
15 There's no financial, you know, the tours or the, those are like
16 spilt milk, if we don't do that we lose the revenue. But all our
17 mail and cargo and all our scheduled flights, or even like the
18 flight in question, we got to fly them today or tomorrow or the
19 next day so we're not losing any revenue by it. So, you know, it
20 doesn't matter when we go really.

21 Q. So you'd say rarely you --

22 A. Yeah, rarely.

23 Q. Rarely.

24 A. But I, I'm always in there checking things, making sure --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. -- overseeing things, just you know, I have the ability to
2 stop before I enter or change a pilot around if I feel, but I
3 don't do that very often. I mean, I trust Danita and Leah are
4 topnotch dispatchers, they've been around, they know what our
5 pilot qualifications are. They know we got good management people
6 in place, you know, there's nobody that's getting paid more for
7 these flights going out. You know, we're all a family and we try
8 to do it safely and make money while doing it.

9 Q. Okay. George, I think he said he put in his 60-day notice
10 last July. So he'd been obviously looking for a new deal for a
11 while. And then you said that mainly he's just been doing basic
12 recordkeeping since that time. Since that time have any of his DO
13 duties been delegated to anybody else here, the daily operations?

14 A. No, I think some of his clerical stuff, Mike, our chief
15 pilot, has done some of it, but he comes down. Like we do a
16 Medallion audit or we do a Medallion, yeah every year we get a
17 Medallion audit, so he basically makes sure our records are good.
18 And he recently just went through all our programs and updated
19 them, the previous year, last year I guess it was.

20 Q. When we were talking with George, he was talking about
21 there's a timeline maybe now to start looking into some avionics
22 upgrades. Along those lines, of course, you know, you said your
23 main thing is the financial side of the house. Is that all part
24 of the timeline as well? Finding the right avionics and providing
25 the resources to be able to do an upgrade?

1 A. Yeah, I mean the Capstone is definitely, it's outlived its
2 useful life I believe. And I think we need to start looking at,
3 you know, different avionics options. But, you know, nowadays
4 with ForeFlight you can do it for 3- or 400 bucks and an iPad, you
5 know, we don't need a primary flight display with boxes in there.
6 We're flying VFR, you know, so we don't need a heads-up display or
7 anything too crazy. So I think that, you know, we're definitely
8 looking at, we're building two new Otters and we're putting in the
9 Garmin GT550's in them and we're enhancing those with ForeFlight
10 on the iPads.

11 Q. So would that be a plan, eventually those work out and you
12 like those too, that it continue to refurbish the fleet?

13 A. Yeah, I mean a lot of the pilots have commented they really
14 like ForeFlight and I've flown with it and I like it. It's user
15 friendly and it's, but I don't know that we necessarily need a
16 synthetic vision. Because if you can't see out the window, you're
17 not supposed to fly, if you know what I mean.

18 Q. Well, along those lines, so one other thing we're talking
19 about, so with the terrain avoidance warning system. You know,
20 the current one in place?

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. You know, the general feel it seems to be that it's not
23 effective.

24 A. It's ineffective, in that it was made as an FAA rule that the
25 Otter falls into that's obsolete. I mean, we're a VFR only

1 airline and it's made for IFR operations. And it's more of a
2 hindrance and a nuisance to us than anything.

3 Q. So we're speaking about the synthetic vision. Just the
4 thought of that, you know, the fact that it does give you a look
5 forward in the terrain you may be going into. So in a situation,
6 we might get inadvertent, you know, IMC, the synthetic vision may
7 be a technology to look forward to?

8 A. Yeah, I don't know. I'm an old school guy and I believe if
9 you can't switch your brain to go IFR like that.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. And I think avoidance is the best policy.

12 Q. Well, I'm just talking about in terms of just as a heads-up,
13 that's all, versus, you know, what the current -- what's currently
14 being TAWS system.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. We're trying, I guess the whole point of the question is,
17 what I'm trying to get to is, you know, trying to find something
18 that's a better fit for the operation to enhance safety. So it's
19 one thing that's been talked about as a consideration.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. So I'm just wondering, any of the technology you're looking
22 at have that ability to look forward and give somebody at least a
23 heads-up.

24 A. Well, I mean, I don't, I guess I haven't looked at all
25 options. I've looked at the Garmin 1000 and, you know, there's a

1 lot of new equipment out there. But, I mean, we've got the
2 Capstone in there, it's a pretty good system. It's better than a
3 lot of the airliners have and it could be upgraded. But for,
4 unfortunately, Chelton doesn't support it anymore. But, you know,
5 I look at our pilots and our DO and our chief pilots to bring
6 recommendations to me and the ForeFlight and the GT550 was the
7 only one that, (indiscernible), I guess the 750, it was the only
8 one that had TAWS in it that was required for the Otters. It's
9 one of those, I can't remember exactly.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I haven't looked at the avionics specs in a while, but it
12 meets those, it was one of the only ones that meet those
13 requirements and it allowed us to get the iPad and ForeFlight too.
14 But I think that does have a screen that can give you a PFD if --

15 Q. And just one last question, you had talked about a local
16 aviation program. Does that still exist here?

17 A. No, we're trying to get it going again. You know, my son's,
18 he wants to start flying and I just feel like it'd be good for our
19 community. So we're going to try to buy an airplane or do
20 something and try to stimulate some kids and get flying.

21 Q. Yeah, that's just good question to me, I know they used to
22 have an aviation program in Bethel too and that one, you know,
23 went away. And so, now the whole local, you know, (indiscernible)
24 to get local pilots and which is, for this area of the country,
25 (indiscernible) it's really important. So just got my curiosity

1 question. But I don't have any other questions.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Does anybody else have anything?

3 DR. SILVA: I was curious, who does the safety manager report
4 to?

5 MR. SALAZAR: The safety officer reports to George and I.

6 DR. SILVA: Okay. To both of you?

7 MR. SALAZAR: Yeah.

8 DR. SILVA: Oh. Think that was it.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Brien, thank you.

10 MR. SALAZAR: You bet.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Appreciate it. You've got our cards, if
12 anything comes up that you think of, suggestions, anything for us,
13 please don't hesitate to reach out.

14 MR. SALAZAR: Okay.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: (indiscernible).

16 MR. SALAZAR: I'm just as interested as you guys to try to
17 have this, to avoid these kind of things.

18 DR. SILVA: Give Mike a chance.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Oh, Mike, sorry. Do you have questions?

20 MR. O'CONNOR: No, no questions.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

22 DR. SILVA: Just making sure.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: And we're off the record at 5:18.

24 (Whereupon, at 5:18 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

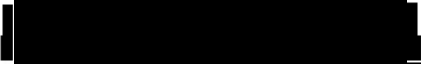
IN THE MATTER OF: HYDABURG, ALASKA DE HAVILLAND DHC3T
 OTTER COLLISION WITH TERRAIN
 JULY 10, 2018
 Interview of Brien Salazar

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA053

PLACE: TAQUAN AIR, KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

DATE: AUGUST 15, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Sonya M. Terry
Transcriber