

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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REGAL AIR DHC-2 ACCIDENT IN
WILLOW, ALASKA, JULY 18, 2018

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Accident No.: ANC18FA055

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Interview of: MICHAEL LAUGHLIN, Director of Operations
Regal AirThursday,
November 1, 2018

APPEARANCES:

NOREEN PRICE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

ERIC SWENSON, Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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(On behalf of Mr. Laughlin)

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I N T E R V I E W

MS. PRICE: I'm Noreen Price. I'm the investigator in charge, NTSB, of accident ANC18FA055. I'd like to take this time to introduce the other members at the meeting today. Starting with you, Paula, your name and title?

MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Paula Huckleberry. I'm an aviation safety inspector and the FAA IIC on this accident.

MS. PRICE: Go ahead, Eric.

MR. SWENSON: Eric Swenson, air safety investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

MS. PRICE: And Mike?

MR. LAUGHLIN: Mike Laughlin, director of operations with Regal Air.

MR. WILHELM: And Marc Wilhelm, representative of -- representing Mike here today.

MS. PRICE: Okay. Great. Thank you very much.

Today we'll be using a digital recorder to record the interview that will be sent out for transcription and will be made part of the public docket, that transcription.

The purpose of the investigation is safety, to determine probable cause and prevent reoccurrence. Our role is not to assign fault, blame or liability. This interview is part of the fact-finding phase of the investigation. We cannot however offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity.

You're entitled to have one representative of your choosing.

1 Who will that be today?

2 MR. LAUGHLIN: I'm sorry?

3 MS. PRICE: Who's going to be your representative today?

4 MR. LAUGHLIN: This fine gentlemen here.

5 MS. PRICE: And your name?

6 MR. LAUGHLIN: Marc Wilhelm.

7 MS. PRICE: Thank you very much.

8 And Marc, you can't answer any of the questions, but you can
9 advise, and we can stop like we discussed earlier.

10 Okay. We will now begin the interview.

11 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL LAUGHLIN

12 BY MS. PRICE:

13 Q. For the record please, if, Mike, you would state your full
14 name and your job title?

15 A. Michael Laughlin, director of operations for Regal Air.

16 Q. Okay. Do you have any other official titles at the company?

17 A. Director of safety and I'm president.

18 Q. Great. Thank you. If you could take some time to brief us
19 on your employment and aviation experience, background. You know,
20 keep it brief. I don't want all the details, but where'd you get
21 your aviation experience?

22 A. Aviation experience, private piloting-wise, I just grew up
23 around aircraft in Alaska. My family was into aviation. My
24 grandfather and my uncles all flew in small aircraft. And so I
25 grew up in and around aircraft and started flying as soon as I

1 could in high school. Got my private in high school and worked at
2 Regal Air as a dockhand the summer of 1999.

3 Went away for college in Colorado State University in
4 Fort Collins, Colorado, where I continued to fly and get ratings,
5 et cetera, while I was in school. And then returned to Alaska the
6 summer of 2005 and took over Regal Air as president. And so since
7 2005, this has been my aviation career.

8 Q. Okay. And you purchased -- so you purchased the company in
9 2005?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. And since 2005, you were the president and the director of
12 operations, both?

13 A. I couldn't sit as director of operations initially. It was
14 probably 2008 or '09 that I officially took over the title of
15 director of Operations. Dave Oberg was the director of operations
16 from '05 until '08, or '09. I can't remember specifically.

17 Q. Okay. No, that's okay.

18 A. And then becoming a pilot, you know, a PIC for the company in
19 2006, I believe it was June of 2006.

20 Q. Okay. And have you been flying for the company as well since
21 2006?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Do you currently fly flights for the company?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. So as a director of operations, what are your duties?

1 A. Well, I mean, in a small company it pretty much encompasses
2 everything, you know, hiring, assisting the chief pilot with
3 hiring and management of employees, the office manager with hiring
4 and management of the office staff, and just sort of the general
5 overarching business structure that we operate under, and
6 developing that and all of the above.

7 Q. And how many and what type of airplanes do you have? And
8 this is for the record. I know that you know I know a lot of this
9 stuff, but I need it for the record. So that's why it sounds a
10 little bit redundant. So at the time of the accident --

11 A. We had three De Havilland Beavers, three Cessna 206s under
12 Regal Air.

13 Q. And can you give us an idea of how many sorties, flights you
14 have a day, roughly in the summer and then in the winter?

15 A. Yeah. And it changes drastically as we roll into and out of
16 the season. I would say the six Regal aircraft average 500 to 600
17 hours a year. And of that, the average flight, you know, average
18 sort of mission is somewhere between 1 and 2 hours. So you could
19 put that at somewhere between 3- and 400 flights or trips, you
20 know, somewhere in that range --

21 Q. So on a --

22 A. -- per aircraft.

23 Q. Oh, okay. So on a typical summer's day, how many flights
24 would you guys expect?

25 A. Let's see. Each aircraft is usually 3 to 5, so, you know, 18

1 to 30.

2 Q. Okay. And in then in the wintertime, about how many flights
3 a day would you say?

4 A. Oh, now we're talking flights a week, and now we're to three
5 or four or five flights a week.

6 Q. A week. Okay. And what are your primary areas of operation?
7 Like where do you fly to typically? Do you have a --

8 A. South Central Alaska.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And all -- anywhere in between. I mean --

11 Q. How would you describe the financial status of the company at
12 the time of the accident? Just --

13 A. Very good.

14 Q. Okay. And is Tony Bannock a part owner of the company?

15 A. He is a 5 percent shareholder in Alaska Skyways,
16 Incorporated, which is the company that holds the operating
17 certificate, the FAA operating certificate.

18 Q. Okay. And are there any other owners?

19 A. No.

20 Q. So you're 95 and he's 5, is that --

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Okay. Is Regal Air a participant in the Medallion Foundation
23 Shield Program?

24 A. We are not.

25 Q. Why not?

1 A. A function of -- I've never, in my experience and when I look
2 at the roster of the Medallion Foundation, I don't typically see
3 the safest companies out there. And so that, from the outside
4 just looking in, it's sort of like the Better Business Bureau in
5 some regards. It's like you pay for a certificate on the wall.
6 I'm not saying it doesn't have value or isn't good, but, you know,
7 it just -- it strikes me, from an outsider's perspective, as kind
8 of being that, and things that I've just heard through the
9 industry. It's never prompted me to the point where I've thought
10 to myself, wow, if we do this, it's going to be a night and day
11 difference. In general terms, I guess I would be more open to a
12 discussion with them or to hear about what they offer, but just
13 the things that I've heard of and I've never been blown away from
14 an outsider's perspective.

15 Q. Okay. So as director of operations, I have some operational
16 control questions. How would you define operational control?

17 A. I would say on, you know, who is -- who is dispatching, is
18 what I would define operational control as. Who is, you know,
19 telling the pilots what the next flights are, who is watching the
20 aircraft and watching the trackers, and just general, who has the
21 knowledge of which plane is going where, with whom at any given
22 time.

23 Q. Okay. And then who at Regal has responsibility for
24 operational control?

25 A. Tony or myself, or Bruce Schulte.

1 Q. Could you take some time to explain how operational control
2 is managed, meaning how you actually schedule and release flights?
3 I know they're not technically released. So you have airplanes,
4 you have pilots, you have clients. At the beginning of the day,
5 how does that operational control piece, how does that all work
6 together?

7 A. Well, a typical situation is, you know, the pilots will walk
8 in, they'll show up typically 30 minutes to 60 minutes before a
9 flight is scheduled to depart, which is usually determined the
10 evening before. They are handed what we call a, you know, a
11 flight dispatch note, where it'll show the destination, the number
12 of passengers each way, and things of that nature and -- yeah.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And then the pilot will work with the dock manager to figure
15 out what the load is and, you know, after they figure out where
16 they're going, they'll do their weather check, either, you know,
17 we've got two -- you guys have been out there. There's two
18 buildings out there. So they'll either do their weather check
19 there at the office if there's room on a computer, or they'll go
20 next door to the pilot office and --

21 Q. Who's doing the weather check? The pilot or the --

22 A. The pilot.

23 Q. Okay. And then --

24 (Cell phone buzzing)

25 MS. PRICE: Do you need to take that?

1 MR. LAUGHLIN: No.

2 BY MS. PRICE:

3 Q. Okay. Who assigns the actual aircraft to the flight, which
4 airplane is being assigned?

5 A. That is usually determined the evening before, as well.
6 Typically we like to keep a pilot in a plane for the day so that
7 it's -- you know, there's not as much jumping out and into the
8 aircraft. It's just -- it's cumbersome and takes time, and the
9 pilots like to kind of make their home in a plane for the day. So
10 we try to do that as much as possible and usually that's
11 determined the night before. Of course, there's always variances
12 to that. The weather cancels one direction and this particular
13 pilot has to take this particular, you know, so there's always
14 changes. But in general it's determined the night before by
15 whoever is dispatching the evening before.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And that's a combination of Tony, Bruce, and I making that
18 decision as to who is going to fly what the next day.

19 Q. So do you call that position, the person making the decision
20 as to, you know, who's flying an airplane and sitting at the desk
21 during the day, is that a duty officer?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Is that who you call a duty officer?

24 A. Correct. Per our GOM, that's the duty officer.

25 Q. The duty officer. All right. I'll try and be consistent

1 when I refer to that position. So a pilot comes in and they're
2 handed a piece of paper that has their airplane and their clients
3 or load or the destination, correct, on that piece --

4 A. Destination and clients' names.

5 Q. Okay. All right. But the load isn't on there, right? Okay.
6 And then they go find their own weather. Do they also find their
7 own NOTAMs? Meaning, does the duty officer look at the weather?

8 A. No. Well, I mean, yes, absolutely the duty officer looks at
9 the weather. But officially, it's -- you know, per our company --
10 I mean, you know, the pilots will be flying and so he'll come back
11 and say -- he or she will come back and say, you know, you've got
12 to Kenai tour and -- or we'll say, here's your Kenai tour. I
13 looked at the cameras; things are looking good, but, you know,
14 after you check them, let me know what you think.

15 Or we'll say, you know what, we've got a Kenai scheduled for
16 you next, but I already looked at the cameras and I can already
17 tell you you're not going to want to go, but go take a look at the
18 cameras, you know. So it's up to the pilots to make the final
19 call as to what they're going to do. But yeah, everybody looks.
20 I mean, our office girls are looking at the weather and it's a
21 function of flying in Alaska.

22 Q. Okay. So for a duty officer, you are checking the weather
23 before you're assigning the flight, correct? Is that -- just want
24 to be clear. No?

25 A. No.

1 Q. All right. So --

2 A. That's not, that's not the role of the duty officer.

3 Q. Okay. Who's checking the weather?

4 A. The pilots.

5 Q. Only the pilot. Okay. But you are -- you just said that

6 everybody in the office is looking at weather?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. You're looking at weather but you're not --

9 A. Customers are looking at weather.

10 Q. -- you're not giving the weather to the pilot? You're not --

11 there's no official, here's your weather for the day?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. So who is operational control delegated to in the company?

14 You as a director operations overall, head of operation control?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Who is it delegated to?

17 A. As far as the position or the person?

18 Q. As far as operational control, the job, your responsibility,

19 but you're not there all the time, so it gets delegated to other

20 positions or specific people?

21 A. Duty officer -- yeah, Tony and Bruce, duty officers.

22 Q. Okay. Are they the only other duty officers?

23 A. Tony is the only other duty officer, correct. And Bruce is

24 the chief pilot.

25 Q. So Tony as a duty officer and Bruce as the chief pilot, also

1 can execute operational control on your behalf?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. Do you have a list of the operational control
4 delegates?

5 A. I believe it's in our ops manual, but --

6 Q. I'll take a look. Okay.

7 A. -- I'd have to double check to be positive.

8 Q. All right.

9 A. I'm fairly certain it is on A-6. Yeah.

10 Q. So none of the secretaries and no one -- okay, none -- only
11 you three people have operational control?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. Okay. So do any of the delegates of operational control, so
14 the three of you, have any training in operational control? Does
15 Tony have training in operational control? Does he understand
16 what operational control is and the duties?

17 A. Like a formal training program?

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Like out of company?

20 Q. Like what operational control is and what does he have to do
21 to make sure that he is positively --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- controlling the flights for the day in a positive manner,
24 in accordance with regulations? That's what I mean.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. You guys have standard training that you -- or is it
2 OJT, or how --

3 A. It's OJT. I mean, he's been there for now a decade. And so
4 when it really came to the forefront as far as when I was -- you
5 know, when I first started, you know, it was Dan Larsen at first
6 suggested that we put a list together and have it be very clear
7 cut. So at that time, you know, it was just Tony and and I, and
8 so we made that list. I can't remember what year that was.

9 Q. Okay. Who's Dan Larsen?

10 A. He is a POI from the FAA from years ago.

11 Q. Got you. Thank you. So because Tony -- and Bruce is a -- is
12 Bruce, Bruce is relatively new to the company, correct?

13 A. No.

14 Q. No? How long has he worked for you?

15 A. Twelve years.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Thirteen years -- 12 or -- yeah, this will be his 13th season
18 with me.

19 Q. So my understanding is that there's on-the-job training,
20 they've been doing this work for a long time, but you don't have
21 any formal annual refresher training on operational control and
22 what that requires?

23 A. No. Not a recurrent.

24 Q. Okay. And is it clear during the day who is the duty
25 officer? Because you're there as well, right --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- most of the time? And then Tony might be there and Bruce
3 might be there as well.

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. So if there is a question about whether a flight should or
6 should not go, does it go to the duty officer or does it go to you
7 or does it go to Bruce? Or who's actually answering those
8 questions and making those decisions?

9 A. Whether a flight should or should not go?

10 Q. Right. If there's a question.

11 A. For -- like a question from my pilot?

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. Well, it's ultimately the pilot's decision to make the
14 decision as to go or not to go, but typically a pilot would not --
15 you know, if a pilot is looking for a second opinion, then they
16 would come to Bruce or myself.

17 Q. Okay. So does the company provide any NOTAMs to the pilots?

18 A. No.

19 Q. How about airport or lake information?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And what does that format look like?

22 A. We have a -- we have what we call our Regal supplement, where
23 it's a collection of different lakes and strips that we go to. We
24 have a wheeled plane and a floatplane version of it. You know,
25 and of course, not every single lake is in it, but we try to

1 encompass the most frequently visited places or places that have
2 particular ways that are better in and out or, you know,
3 particular loads that one should or should not operate with,
4 things of that nature in them. But of course it can't, I mean, it
5 can't possibly cover every single place that we go to.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. So Google Earth plays a big part in our business and being
8 able to, you know, figure out generally the layout of the lake,
9 orientation of the lake, the length of the longest water lane and
10 things of that nature, and we use that on a regular basis.

11 Q. Okay. So if something was not in the supplement, then who
12 would spend the time to look at Google Earth and those --

13 A. Bruce or myself.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Yeah. If a pilot has not been to a lake or a destination
16 before, they're required to get a, you know, an orientation from a
17 pilot that has been there before and -- you know, Bruce or myself.

18 Q. And by orientation, what do you mean? That they're to look
19 at Google Earth or actual flight?

20 A. Well, it depends on the destination. There's some
21 destinations that we do require a flight to it with another pilot,
22 and sometimes multiple flights. Like one example would be the
23 Talachulitna River, that we won't send anybody there that hasn't
24 been there with -- on like a training flight with Bruce or myself,
25 at least -- I mean, we've got guys that have been there two or

1 three times now with me that we still don't let go there.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And it's, you know -- and so we'll take that, or you go to
4 the other end of the spectrum where a guy comes to me and says,
5 hey, I've never been to Big Lake before. Okay. Well, let's sit
6 down at Google Earth and let's look at it and say, okay, well,
7 here's your caution areas, here's your longest water lane, things
8 of that nature.

9 Q. Okay. Do you have a method for performing a formal risk
10 assessment based on weather, airplane, pilot readiness, or route
11 of flight before each flight?

12 A. Not -- no, not at the time. Not a formal risk assessment.

13 Q. Okay. How about route of flight to and from destinations?
14 Is that covered in that book as well? Do you have any routing
15 guidance?

16 A. No.

17 Q. You just tell a pilot, you have to get to this destination
18 and let them pick their own routes?

19 A. Again, that's part of whether or not a pilot has been to that
20 destination before, is the routing to get there.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But no, routing is not covered under the book.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. At that time.

25 Q. So I'm going to backtrack just a little bit. How would --

1 let's just say you're out of town and maybe Bruce and Tony are
2 around. How do they know that this destination that this client
3 wants to get to is something that requires that orientation sit-
4 down or an orientation fly to, or what -- is it in a book
5 somewhere that says, if you're going to these destinations or a
6 destination that's not in here, you require a sit-down with chief
7 pilot or the DO, or you need an orientation flight? Do you have
8 anything in writing? You have a guide book that has lakes and
9 destinations, right, and information in it?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. But for the duty officer to make the decision about can this
12 pilot just take this flight or is this a destination they need to
13 sit down with somebody, is there any guidance on that or is it
14 just --

15 A. Not at the time, no.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Again though, it's not the duty officer's decision to make
18 that call. It's the pilot to say, have I been there before? No.
19 Then it requires an interaction with the chief pilot or director
20 of operations.

21 Q. Okay. So --

22 A. So if Tony hands you a sticky and it says, you're going to
23 Lake Creek, you know, and just for that reason, it's hard to keep
24 track of where 14 different pilots have been to. A pilot says,
25 I've never been there before. Okay. Perfect. Go find Mike or

1 Bruce.

2 Q. And at the time of the accident, did the pilots have any
3 written guidance or any guidance with that information saying, if
4 you get assigned to a place that you don't know, you must have a
5 brief by the chief pilot or the DO?

6 A. You know, honestly, I don't know if that was in the policies
7 that were in place at the time or not. It was certainly
8 verbalized endlessly in ground school and has been a part of our
9 company for years. I mean, it's nothing I would be -- yeah,
10 whether or not -- exactly what form it's written in, I don't think
11 that it's very clearly written anywhere at the time.

12 Q. Okay. But you do believe that during ground school it was
13 talked about at some point?

14 A. Yeah. Absolutely.

15 Q. Okay. All right. So prior to this accident, when was the
16 last time the POI for Regal visited the base there, if you can
17 remember?

18 A. Probably during my check ride in May or June. That's my best
19 guess. So a month or two.

20 Q. Okay. And how often does the POI come by?

21 A. You know, it's hard to say. I would say everywhere from
22 monthly to semi-annually. Usually we're seeing some form of the
23 FAA every month or two, you know, whether it's a PMI, POI,
24 something like that.

25 Q. Yeah. Okay.

1 A. You know, they all have their sort of, their -- you know, the
2 PMI will come by and say, hey, I need to check out your fuel
3 system. And so what specifically -- is it all operational, no,
4 not specifically.

5 Q. Okay. No, that's all right. And how is your relationship
6 with the POI?

7 A. Very good. Yeah. We've always gotten along very well with
8 our POIs, and 90 percent of our PMIs, we've had excellent
9 relationships. Always have, and we strive to maintain those.

10 Q. Good. Did the POI have any concerns at the time, and if so,
11 what were they? Were there any burning issues that you guys were
12 working on with the POI?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Back in August when I was conducting the last round of
15 interviews, there was a lot of questions as to who was the
16 director of maintenance at that time and at the time of the
17 accident.

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Who was the director of maintenance at the time of the
20 accident? Do you know?

21 A. Well, according to who?

22 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: According to you.

23 MR. LAUGHLIN: Kennedy Cannar.

24 MS. PRICE: Okay.

25 MR. HUCKLEBERRY: What's the last name?

1 MR. LAUGHLIN: C-A-N-N-A-R.

2 MR. HUCKLEBERRY: Can I ask a quick question?

3 MS. PRICE: Yes. Yeah.

4 BY MR. HUCKLEBERRY:

5 Q. Who was prior to that?

6 A. Matthew Green.

7 Q. And who was identified in the OpSpecs?

8 A. At the time of the accident?

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. Matthew Green.

11 Q. And has that been corrected?

12 A. Yes and no. So they, after probably -- well, I first sent
13 the request to name Kennedy in May. Reached out probably biweekly
14 for 4 months -- or what is this month? This is November. So May,
15 June, July, August, September -- I think we finally got somebody
16 to respond to us in September or October, and at which point they
17 named Kennedy the director of maintenance. So yeah, no problem;
18 sorry it's taken so long. Here's your -- and then a few weeks
19 after that they came and said, you know, you asked -- and I can't
20 remember the phrasing -- you asked for a variance to this Part
21 119, but you're actually asking for an exemption, so no, we can't
22 do it anymore. And so we are in the process currently, as we
23 speak, of naming a new director of maintenance, as Star Farmer,
24 who was an old director of maintenance of ours for years and
25 years. And so he's going to oversee Kennedy, and Kennedy will be

1 the assistant director of maintenance.

2 Q. Who is your PMI?

3 A. I'm drawing a blank. It is a very nice gentleman. I know
4 Dan Anderson is our PAI and -- what the heck is his name?

5 MS. PRICE: Would you have it in your phone? You can look
6 him up if you, if you would.

7 MR. LAUGHLIN: No. I don't think I do. It'll come to me.
8 No, I don't. It'll come to me. I mean, it's listed on the
9 OpSpecs. It should be.

10 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: I can look it up.

11 MR. LAUGHLIN: Yeah.

12 BY MS. PRICE:

13 Q. And it is currently in the OpSpecs then, it's been -- or are
14 they working on that now? Putting it in --

15 A. As to the who the PMI is?

16 Q. Oh, no, the PA -- you have a PI, the --

17 A. The director of maintenance?

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Yes, it's being worked on right now.

20 MS. PRICE: Got you. Okay. All right. That is all I have
21 for general operational control. Do you have any follow-ups --

22 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Yeah. I've got a couple.

23 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

24 Q. So you're the director of operations, Mike?

25 A. Um-hum, correct.

1 Q. What qualifications do you hold to hold that 119 position?
2 A. I don't know.
3 Q. But you got the money?
4 A. For 14 years, 14 years of doing it. I don't know.
5 Q. Okay. So somebody had to review a resume and --
6 A. Correct.
7 Q. -- verify that you had the experience?
8 A. Correct.
9 Q. A minimum, I think, of 3 years; is that correct?
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. Okay. And the other 119 position is Bruce?
12 A. Correct.
13 Q. And what qualifications does he hold to hold that position?
14 A. He's been a PIC at Regal since 2006.
15 Q. Okay. So, all right. And then, so Tony, what qualifications
16 and certificates does he hold?
17 A. To have what position?
18 Q. Any position. Does he have a pilot's certificate?
19 A. He does, yeah. But you don't -- I mean, to work at Regal you
20 don't have to have a pilot's certificate.
21 Q. What grade certificate does he have?
22 A. He is a private currently.
23 Q. Okay. So he holds a private pilot certificate?
24 A. Um-hum.
25 Q. And does he have any -- he does not hold a dispatcher

1 certificate?

2 A. Correct. No, you're not required to under 135.

3 Q. Okay. However, what qualifies him to exercise operational
4 control? Because those are delegated to 119 positions. In other
5 words, you can have operational control; in fact, you do have it,
6 and you can delegate it. So how can we delegate that to --

7 A. Through training and experience.

8 Q. Okay.

9 MS. PRICE: Let me just interrupt. Their general manual does
10 delegate it to duty officers. So it is in that GOM that you have.

11 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Okay. That's all I have on that part.

12 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

13 Q. So had Colt ever been to Willow Lake?

14 A. He had not.

15 Q. Okay. And had he been to FBI Lake, I think was the
16 destination?

17 A. He had not.

18 MS. PRICE: I have another section of the actual accident, so
19 we'll get to that.

20 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Oh, okay.

21 MS. PRICE: Yeah. So we'll --

22 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: I just wondered if you'd had any briefing
23 on those two?

24 MS. PRICE: Yeah, we -- it's part of the next section, so
25 then we can do a lot of follow-up there.

1 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Cool.

2 MS. PRICE: So, Eric --

3 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: That's all I've got.

4 MS. PRICE: Eric, I know you were out for a bit, but do you
5 have any follow-ups -- we're just doing the operational control in
6 general questions. Now it's going to be a little bit about
7 training and then the actual accident.

8 How you doing? You all right?

9 MR. LAUGHLIN: Oh yeah.

10 MS. PRICE: Okay. Good.

11 BY MS. PRICE:

12 Q. Is your training program FAA approved?

13 A. Yeah, it is.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I hope so.

16 Q. And if you don't know -- I mean, you know, just -- yeah, I
17 know.

18 A. It is approved.

19 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Initial or final?

20 MR. LAUGHLIN: I believe it's final.

21 BY MS. PRICE:

22 Q. And who does the pilot hiring for Regal?

23 A. Bruce and myself, the chief pilot and myself.

24 Q. About how many pilots do you guys have?

25 A. At the time of the accident it was 14.

1 Q. Right. What's the minimum hours and experience you use for
2 hiring folks?

3 A. We shoot for 1500 hours total time, 500 PIC, 500 Alaska and
4 500 float.

5 Q. And how are pilots paid?

6 A. Hourly. And there's a few others. There's some standby time
7 and there's some bear view guiding pay and things of that nature,
8 but hourly.

9 Q. Okay. Out of your 14 pilots at the time of the accident, how
10 many are full-time, how many are part-time; do you know?

11 A. I'd say 10 -- if I just had to shoot from the hip, I'd say,
12 10 full-time and 4 part-time.

13 Q. And was the accident pilot part-time?

14 A. He was part-time.

15 Q. Okay. About how many pilots do you turnover each year?

16 A. Well, it's changed over the years. I mean, there's been
17 years where we've gone 3 or 4 years without hiring a pilot. And
18 then there's been years where we've had four or five new pilots in
19 a, you know, in a ground school. And so --

20 Q. How about this year? This last summer?

21 A. This year? I think it was four. I think we had four new
22 hires.

23 Q. And did those new hires meet your minimum standards, or
24 you're having a hard time finding pilots with your minimum
25 standards?

1 A. Yeah, I think, I think all of them did. I think maybe one of
2 -- a gentleman named Kole Van-Treese was a little bit under on
3 total time, but he had a year's experience for a 135 in Alaska.
4 And so we, you know, we felt better about him than other
5 applicants that had more time but had no Alaska experience. So we
6 liked his resume in general better than guys that had 2,000 and
7 3,000 hours, but were from Florida, you know. Kole had been
8 flying out of Glennallen, a PIC in a 206 for an entire season and
9 done it safely. And his previous chief pilot spoke really highly
10 of him. So we were willing to make that exception for him.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And he worked out really well. Really well.

13 Q. Okay. So when pilots are hired from other operators with
14 experience in your airplane's type, do you provide initial
15 training on that type again, or --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- what type of training does a new hire get?

18 A. Well, they just get an initial new hire. I mean, it's the
19 same for any pilot.

20 Q. And what is a typical duty day for your pilots during the
21 summer?

22 A. Typically it's 7 and 9, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

23 Q. And then how -- many of your pilots fly for other operators;
24 is that correct?

25 A. Can you say that again?

1 Q. Let me reword that. Do some of your pilots work for other
2 operators?

3 A. Yes. Not many, but a few do.

4 Q. Okay. And how do you manage their crew rest and day with
5 their flying with the other operator?

6 A. It is -- we like them to keep both of their, you know, duty
7 records in our book with what they're doing. But, you know,
8 ultimately it's up to the PIC to make sure that they meet their
9 duty requirements.

10 Q. Okay. So how is a pilot's availability to fly communicated
11 to the company, if there's a part-time pilot who works for other
12 folks?

13 A. We get a schedule built the month before. And so, I guess
14 you could say it's somewhat similar to like a bid process for the
15 next month. People go to the chief pilot and say, hey, if it
16 works out, I'd like these 2 days off in a row. We try -- we
17 strive to give all the full-time guys 2 consecutive -- well, we do
18 give all the full-time positions 2 consecutive days off in a row.
19 And then the part-time guys just give us their schedules, you
20 know, these are the days I'm available. And so we build the
21 schedule from there.

22 So we start, usually we start with the part-time guys and
23 say, okay, well, we've got coverage from part-time people here,
24 and then we kind of create the full-time schedule somewhat based
25 on that.

1 Q. So the accident pilot here was working for two other
2 operators at the same time he was flying for you. Did you know
3 about that?

4 A. We did not know that he was flying for Fly Denali, but we did
5 know that he was a Ravn pilot.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah, he never made mention to me about continuing -- yeah,
8 it was on his resume that he flew for Fly Denali, but he didn't
9 say, hey, guys, I'm also flying for Fly Denali. I had heard a
10 rumor about a week or two before the accident that he was --
11 somebody had heard him up around Healy, and -- but he didn't come
12 to me and specifically say that.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But of course we knew about Ravn. I mean, he had been at
15 Ravn for a while and we knew that. He was part-time with us and
16 his full-time commitment was to Ravn.

17 Q. Okay. So in regard to training for your seaplane ops, does
18 Regal train for maximum load takeoffs in both the 206 and Beaver?

19 A. Yes. But we are -- at the time, yes. But it's something
20 that we're obviously going to pay a lot more attention to in the
21 future.

22 Q. So yes, at the time you did do maximum load takeoff training
23 in the Beaver? That was part of the syllabus or just something
24 you did, if you know, at that time?

25 A. I don't think it's specifically listed in the syllabus.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. One of our clients has horses, and they have a Conex full of
3 horse feed, which come in 50-pound bags. So it's a very
4 convenient ballast for me to hit.

5 Q. So what would a typical weight be for the Beaver for a
6 training flight? Can you give me an idea of what you would
7 normally take off with if you were doing dedicated training for a
8 training flight for somebody?

9 A. Yeah. A pilot with standard fuel for the valley, I mean,
10 would say somewhere around 12- to 1300 pounds depending on the
11 aircraft it was in.

12 Q. And are pilots trained on how to load each airplane type? So
13 you have pilots that fly both the 206 and the Beaver. During
14 initial training, is there training provided on how to load the
15 airplanes?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And is it hands on or is it in a classroom, or --

18 A. Both.

19 Q. Does it include decision making regarding what goes in the
20 footlocker and what doesn't, or how to plan your load so it works
21 out properly?

22 A. Yes. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. Removal of the seats?

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. And is that done during the training flight, or is that done

1 during like a ground school period?

2 A. Ground school period.

3 Q. Okay. So during initial or recurrent pilot training are
4 child and infant restraint systems and regulatory seat
5 requirements covered at all?

6 A. Yes, they are.

7 Q. Does the company put any restrictions on new pilots' flights,
8 such as distance, mountains, confined area or off airport? And,
9 if so, where is it written?

10 A. Yes. At the time -- I can't remember exact limits that the
11 policy was in place at the time for new hires. And I don't
12 remember what those limits are, but yes, new pilots can do all of
13 the things that multi-year pilots get.

14 Q. And how would you define a new pilot? Is that the first
15 season pilot or --

16 A. First season pilots, yeah.

17 Q. Okay. And I know you can't remember exactly what the
18 limitations were at that time, but were -- do you believe they
19 were written down somewhere? Was there --

20 A. Yeah. We have a, you know, a pilot policies -- you know,
21 visibility, things of that nature.

22 Q. And where would pilot policies be located? Say, Bruce
23 Schulte has the duty --

24 A. Bruce.

25 Q. -- office that day. So does he have it in a -- is it a

1 manual or is it online? Or does he just know what the limitations
2 are for new pilots?

3 A. Well, the new pilots should know the limitations for
4 themselves because they've all been handed the policy.

5 Q. Okay. So it's a policy that gets given to the new pilots?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. And they manage it --

8 A. That's given to all pilots.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. But it has specifically, there's areas that say, okay, new
11 pilots will adhere to this, you know.

12 Q. Okay. So essentially the duty officer is not responsible for
13 making sure that the restrictions for new pilots is complied with?
14 It is the new pilot's responsibility to make sure that they are
15 complying with the restrictions?

16 A. Correct. At that time.

17 MS. PRICE: At that time. Thanks.

18 Okay. That's all I have for training right now. Do you have
19 any training, specifically general training --

20 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: No, nothing more on that.

21 MS. PRICE: Anything, Eric?

22 You all right?

23 MR. LAUGHLIN: Um-hum.

24 MS. PRICE: Okay. So this is a little bit more in regard to
25 the accident flight and the accident pilot. We've already

1 answered some of these questions.

2 BY MS. PRICE:

3 Q. Can you describe the transition syllabus that the accident
4 pilot had for the Beaver airplane that he was flying?

5 A. Describe it in what way?

6 Q. What is accomplished during the transition? He was -- he had
7 Beaver experience --

8 A. I'd have to --

9 Q. -- in a wheeled airplane. Do you remember what that --

10 A. He had Beaver experience in a wheeled and float Beaver. And
11 I'd -- I mean, you know, it's a lot of the same things that's
12 covered in the initial new hire syllabus. It's water work. It's
13 step turns. It's short takeoff and landings. I mean, it's pretty
14 much our entire syllabus again.

15 Q. Okay. The transition syllabus is 3 hours. What's the
16 initial -- if he had never flown a Beaver, what would that look
17 like? Maybe in general terms can you describe --

18 A. Well, he was hired as an initial pilot though. He went
19 through initial flight training.

20 Q. Initial ground training -- we'll take a look at his training
21 record again, but I think it's labeled transition.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. But --

24 A. Well, I guess, I guess technically he could have been initial
25 trained 206 and then transitioned trained into the Beaver. I

1 thought he was just initial trained on both. But I might be
2 mistaken on that.

3 Q. His initial on the 206.

4 A. Okay. And then transitioned in the Beaver.

5 Q. Transitioned.

6 A. So I think if -- I think initial is 4 or 6. Off the top of
7 my head I can't remember.

8 Q. Okay. And is that how you train all of your new hires, is on
9 the 206 as initial and transition into the Beaver on floats or --

10 A. No. We had another pilot, Rhyan, this year that she
11 initialed into the Beaver just because that's what all of her
12 previous experience was.

13 Q. Okay. And if somebody had no experience in the other
14 airplane that they were transitioning into -- right now your
15 transition syllabus is for 3 hours of training. Is that what you
16 would provide them, is 3 hours of training, as an unfamiliar pilot
17 with the airplane?

18 A. We provide them with, you know, whatever they needed. You
19 know, if we felt they weren't ready at 3 hours, then we would give
20 them whatever training they needed.

21 Q. Okay. Were you aware when you trained him that all of his
22 experience virtually, except for perhaps an hour or two, was on
23 wheels and not in floats in the Beaver? All of his experience
24 with Fly Denali was on wheels?

25 A. Yeah. As far as who -- in the Beaver?

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. I can't remember.

3 Q. You may not have a memory.

4 A. Yeah, I can't remember.

5 Q. I'm just wondering because it's you that gave him those

6 initial flights. So I thought you might remember if he had --

7 A. Initial check ride?

8 Q. No. Those transition flights, wasn't that you that gave

9 those to him?

10 A. In the Beaver?

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. No.

13 Q. No?

14 A. It was Dave and Devon, I believe.

15 Q. Okay. All right. All right. So did you ever fly with the

16 accident pilot in the Beaver on floats?

17 A. I don't recall.

18 Q. Okay. Did you fly with him in a 206, at all?

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. And how would you describe his performance?

21 A. Incredible.

22 Q. Incredible in what way?

23 A. I mean really in every way. He was just -- it was an

24 absolute, for a first-year pilot -- his wheel plane ride was very

25 good but it didn't strike me as being anything of -- it struck me

1 as being a very good first-year pilot. But his float plane check
2 ride struck me as a guy who's been a 10-year pilot with us. I
3 mean, it was just textbook in every way. I mean, I couldn't -- I
4 almost couldn't critique a single thing he did. It was
5 phenomenal. For a first year, low time float pilot, it was
6 fantastic.

7 Q. Okay. Is there pressure on the pilots to complete a flight
8 on time?

9 A. I mean, I would say, no. You know, we certainly strive to
10 create a system that puts as little pressure on them as possible.
11 But, I mean, in any industry there's going to be certain external
12 pressures that everybody deals with. But we try as hard as we can
13 to alleviate those.

14 Q. In what way do you try to alleviate those, take the pressure
15 off the pilot themselves?

16 A. Just tell them that, you know, you guys can turn down a
17 flight any time. You get paid regardless. If you weather turn,
18 you get paid. You know, you don't have to complete the flight to
19 -- you know, it's not as if you're not going to make money when
20 you turn around. That's one of the reasons that we separated out
21 the pilot room area from the customers and from the duty officer,
22 just to give them their own space for them to kind of -- on a
23 weather day, there's no -- you know, they can just sit over there
24 and check cameras and there's nobody staring at them, when are we
25 going to go? When are we going to go? So, I mean, in every way

1 we try to alleviate the pressure on the pilot staff.

2 Q. Great. So what if there's a delay at a destination for a
3 load issue or a weather issue and the plane can't make it back on
4 time because they have to split a load or whatever? What would
5 happen when the pilot returned a couple of hours late? Are there
6 any repercussions or discussions about --

7 A. No. A pat on the back.

8 Q. And how would a pilot communicate that to the -- because a
9 lot of times they operate at remote areas and they have perhaps a
10 load that they were not expecting and now they need to do
11 something different? How do the pilots typically communicate with
12 the base?

13 A. Through our Spider texting.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. The Spidertracks units that we have in all the aircraft, you
16 can text through those. Or, you know, some missions we'll --
17 well, usually if a plane is going across the range, we'll put a
18 satellite phone on it. He actually had a satellite phone on board
19 that day. So Spider texting, a satellite phone. He was also
20 within cellular service, texting.

21 Q. Do you know if he communicated with base at all regarding the
22 load that day or any problems with the flight?

23 A. Not that I'm aware of.

24 Q. Okay. The accident flight was a Medicaid contracted flight.
25 How often does Regal do Medicaid flights prior to this accident?

1 A. Very infrequent. As a matter of fact, it had probably been 5
2 to 7 years since the last Medicaid flight, roughly. I don't know
3 for sure. But we became a Medicaid vendor for a previous client
4 that liked to fly with us, and so we became a vendor for them so
5 that they could continue to use us. And since then, when they
6 left the state, I don't think we've -- when I saw the flight
7 request come through, it actually stood out. I was like, wow, I
8 didn't even know we were doing this anymore. You know, I wasn't
9 even aware that we were a Medicaid provider anymore.

10 Q. And do your knowledge, did the Medicaid travel office provide
11 you with any rules governing the number of people, the baggage, or
12 the equipment you were supposed to use or carry or --

13 A. Not to my knowledge, no.

14 Q. Do you know if Medicaid would have reimbursed the company if
15 the pilot had split that load that he was carrying into two
16 flights because he couldn't carry it all?

17 A. Honestly, I don't know. I don't know the answer to that
18 question. I'm going to guess not, but I don't know. We have had
19 other trips. So Medicaid books through Corporate Travel
20 Management, CTM, and we've had other trips with CTM where changes
21 have had to been made and the billing has had to been adjusted,
22 and it's been fine. But those weren't specific Medicaid flights.
23 The one in particular that I'm thinking was a GCI flight and it
24 was very -- it was a very non-event. They said, yeah, that's
25 fine.

1 Q. Okay. So if they --

2 A. So, but I don't, I don't know what --

3 Q. -- made adjustments for those flights?

4 A. They did. But, you know, whether or not they had to go talk
5 to GCI, I don't know. But they were very cordial in dealing with
6 that one. But again, we do so infrequent with the Medicaid that I
7 don't know what Medicaid would do.

8 Q. When does like --

9 A. When we do a split flight, we don't amend the bill. We don't
10 charge the customers more typically, unless it is like a blatant
11 misjudgment. Because a pilot decides to split a flight in half,
12 doesn't mean that the customer's going to pay any more.

13 Q. So if they come with two moose on a hunt, you're not going to
14 charge me twice for two trips if you can't put it on the plane?
15 Is that what you're telling me?

16 A. Well, it depends on where you're coming from and how long the
17 shuttle is. I mean, if he's just jumping to the next lake over,
18 no, we're not going to charge you for that, especially if it was
19 just because the pilot said, hey, you know what, it maybe could
20 have been done but the wind was such I didn't feel comfortable, so
21 we shuttled it. We're not going to go to the client and say, hey,
22 we're charging you more. I mean, it's just a function of doing
23 business.

24 Q. Okay. All right. So on the flight -- is Willow Lake a
25 common destination for Regal Air?

1 A. No, it's not.

2 Q. To your knowledge was the accident flight the first time this
3 -- the accident pilot had landed there?

4 A. I believe it was. I don't know that for sure, but I believe
5 it was.

6 Q. And what about the passenger's destination lake, which is
7 commonly referred to as FBI Lake, was that a destination that your
8 company had ever been to before?

9 A. We had been to it before but very infrequently. You know,
10 the only time that season that we had been there was for that
11 client.

12 Q. And had the accident pilot been there?

13 A. I don't believe so. I don't believe so.

14 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Do you have the actual name of the lake?

15 MR. LAUGHLIN: I don't. I believe it's FBI Lake, but I don't
16 know for sure.

17 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: That's kind of a slang thing, isn't it?

18 MS. PRICE: My understanding there's no --

19 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: No name?

20 MS. PRICE: -- designated name, but there's a location and
21 it's called the FBI Lake. But --

22 MR. LAUGHLIN: Yeah. I guess an FBI agent used to have a
23 cabin there. So I don't know. I don't know where it came from,
24 the origins.

25 MS. PRICE: So we will call it --

1 MR. LAUGHLIN: That's pretty --

2 MS. PRICE: -- FBI Lake for the purposes of this
3 investigation.

4 MR. LAUGHLIN: That's pretty frequent in our world. Swan
5 Lake or Moose Lake. Okay. Well, let's add that to the list of
6 1,000 Swan Lakes out there.

7 MS. PRICE: Yeah. Well, what's fun is flying around, when
8 you're flying and someone's like, hey, I'm over this lake.

9 MR. LAUGHLIN: Yeah, right.

10 MS. PRICE: Right. That'll help.

11 MR. LAUGHLIN: Good. Well, I'll look out for you then,
12 right? Yeah.

13 BY MS. PRICE:

14 Q. Okay. So if this was the first flight to Willow and the
15 first flight to that destination lake, to your knowledge, did the
16 duty officer that day brief the accident pilot on those
17 destinations?

18 A. Well, the duty officer does not brief them on the
19 destinations, but the DOM -- or myself or Bruce would, and I did.

20 Q. Okay. And you did?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. So you sat down with --

23 A. With Colt.

24 Q. -- Colt?

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. And you talked to him about what?

2 A. All of it: Fuel load, you know, which dock he's going to use
3 when he gets there. We talked to the pilot who dropped her off as
4 to exactly where he dropped her off, and so where we would expect
5 her to be for the pickup. And specifically we spent a lot of time
6 on his fuel load and what he thought he would need for the trip,
7 you know, aside from talking about FBI Lake and Willow Lake, you
8 know, what was the fuel load. And he was -- when I came to sit
9 down with him, he was going back and forth before deciding to
10 bring front and 20 or front and center for fuel. And we, you
11 know, we were stringing it out and it was going to be really tight
12 with front and 20, so I just said, you know what, the hell with
13 it, bring front and center and if you can't get all her stuff,
14 don't get all her stuff. And that was it.

15 Q. And you said those words to him? If you can't get all --

16 A. Exactly those words.

17 Q. And at that time --

18 A. And then we both were sitting there and we looked at Tony and
19 said, do we have any idea what her load is? Tony said, no, we
20 don't, but I'll call her and find out. And that was the last that
21 I had heard from him.

22 Tony had since talked to her. And Tony may have -- you guys
23 have probably asked this to Tony, but the story I heard from Tony
24 was he called her on her cell -- or she called him on her cell
25 phone to check in, and he said, what's your load? And it was kind

1 of a broken, and he heard 600 pounds. And he says, is that you
2 plus 600 pounds or 600 pounds including you? And she said,
3 including us. Which would lead us to believe that there was like
4 400 pounds of stuff. And so as far as I know, that's the
5 information that Colt had when he left our dock.

6 Q. And do you normally tell clients what the maximum they can
7 show up to flights with?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And how much is that amount?

10 A. It depends on the destination, but I would guess for FBI
11 Lake, 1,000 to 1200 pounds.

12 Q. Okay. But in this particular case, you have no knowledge
13 that she was told what the maximum amount she could show up to the
14 flight was?

15 A. I don't. It would be incredibly unusual for a CTM flight not
16 to have been told a weight.

17 Q. Um-hum. Okay.

18 A. Those are just the types of questions they ask. I mean, they
19 go through a list. And most of the stuff is stuff we're not going
20 to have, like what gate will they be at. You know, it's like,
21 well, we don't have gates, you know what I mean?

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. So they have a running list of things that they do when they
24 book a flight. I don't know.

25 Q. Did you know there would be a child on board?

1 A. I don't -- I don't recall. I don't recall. I knew that
2 there would be two passengers, but I don't know if I remember the
3 age of the passenger or not.

4 Q. And in your aircraft, are children over the age of 2 allowed
5 to sit on a passenger's lap?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Is that information you believe Colt had that day?

8 A. Absolutely. You know, we specifically talked about it in
9 ground school, second birthday, once they reach their second
10 birthday.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And as a 121 pilot, I mean, familiarization with that reg
13 should be pretty --

14 Q. Um-hum. So when a client calls in and says they need to get
15 to Point B and they have so much baggage and weight, is there a
16 record made anywhere of that, or does it -- I'm assuming --

17 A. No.

18 Q. -- a duty officer or secretary takes that phone call?

19 A. You know, yeah, I should say, if they specify -- you know,
20 any time somebody calls in, if it's a per seat flight, like if
21 we're doing like a Denali flightseeing tour, for example, where
22 we're not giving you the entire aircraft, we're saying, okay,
23 well, we have a flight at 1 o'clock and so we'll divvy up this
24 flight between five flightseeing customers, we always ask the
25 passenger a hundred percent of the time. Like it's part of --

1 like our office staff, our new hires, everybody gets a list of
2 things: We need their phone number. We need passenger weights.
3 We need names of the -- you know, and all those things. So
4 typically we're in the habit of asking just because of that, of
5 what the passenger weights on, and if the passengers happen to
6 tell us what they think they're going to have.

7 But a lot of the times in this industry people are pretty
8 aware of what -- you know, I mean, most of these people have been
9 -- there's people that have been flying with Regal for 25, 30
10 years. And there's people that jump between Russ and Trail Ridge,
11 you know, and they're not oblivious to what aircraft can take and
12 nor was Mrs. Stone, from the sounds of it.

13 Q. So the answer to the question is you really don't keep a
14 record? Sometimes you have the records, but no --

15 A. We -- officially no.

16 Q. Officially no?

17 A. Officially no.

18 Q. But --

19 A. But if they divulge it and Tony and I are taking that
20 message, yes, it will go under the notes of the flight.

21 Q. All right. So during a typical preflight do pilots inspect
22 the floats, you know, the float lockers, to see if there's any
23 water or other objects in there, or is that something the rampers
24 do?

25 A. The pilots. I mean, the rampers pump the floats and

1 throughout the day the pilots will often just grab a pump and just
2 double check that they're not. But the Aerocets are incredible.
3 They rarely --

4 Q. I was going to say, do they ever -- do they have water in
5 them on preflight or -- okay.

6 A. Never.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I mean, you might get a couple of drops out of each
9 compartment of just condensation and a little bit -- if it's been
10 raining a lot, you'll get maybe a half a pump, but it's nothing
11 like the old days in the, you know, float world.

12 Q. Do you remember how much cargo the passenger said she was
13 going to be taking? Was that 600, you said, but we weren't sure,
14 right?

15 A. That -- she didn't say that to me. She said that to Tony.

16 Q. Said that to Tony?

17 A. Who told that to me after the fact.

18 Q. All right. So when pilots depart from, you know, other
19 destinations, they are picking up a load and passengers at some
20 other place, do they call the base and tell them who they have on
21 board and what they have on board weight-wise, fuel-wise,
22 passenger-wise?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. No.

1 Q. According to your OpSpecs, Regal has an actual weight
2 program. How do pilots determine passenger and cargo weights at
3 other locations, including remote lakes and airports?

4 A. Well, you can ask a passenger what their weight is and add 10
5 pounds. So we do that. And then there's a hand scale in the
6 aircraft. If there is -- I mean, yeah, so a hand scale in the
7 aircraft.

8 Q. So the hand scale, is it like a hanging scale?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Like a luggage scale, a baggage scale?

11 A. Correct. Correct.

12 Q. Okay. And how would you weigh a tote full of stuff with a
13 hand scale?

14 A. Like an action packer?

15 Q. Like a tote. Like what everyone in Alaska moves around with
16 totes that are full?

17 A. Right. Just from the edge of it.

18 Q. Can you hang that edge on the --

19 A. Yeah. Oftentimes, yeah.

20 Q. You can pull it up and get a good --

21 A. There's a hole in, you know, one -- you know, like oftentimes
22 they'll have a hole on the edge where you can zip tie them closed.

23 Q. Yeah, I've seen that. Okay. And do you believe that pilots
24 do actually weigh everything at destinations, or what's the most
25 common practice?

1 A. I'd like to believe that they do. I'd like to believe that
2 they do everything that I tell them to do.

3 Q. Um-hum. But they make no record of it, correct? They're
4 required to do a weight and balance --

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. -- and check CG, but they do not have to record that
7 anywhere?

8 A. They don't have to.

9 Q. Okay. If they did have to record that, you would then be
10 able to confirm that your pilots were doing the things that you
11 wanted them to do, correct?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And how were you notified about the accident?

14 A. A phone call.

15 Q. From?

16 A. Emma Anderson.

17 Q. Who is Emma Anderson?

18 A. She is one of our front desk gals.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Tony was on the phone, and so he told her to call me. I was
21 at dinner with my daughter for her birthday.

22 Q. Can you describe what you would expect a pilot to do with the
23 flaps? I just want to run through the flap operation on the
24 airplane.

25 A. Um-hum. Absolutely.

1 Q. So if you could take me from what the pilot is touching in
2 the plane and what the flaps should be doing and what the
3 expectation is, starting from we'll say --

4 A. Well, starting from coming off the beach, it should be flaps
5 are up, handles down, the flap selector is down. Okay?

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And as you're taxiing, if you're going to do -- I mean, doing
8 your pre-takeoff checklist, it's flap selector down, pump the
9 flaps down, flap selector up, pump the flaps all the way up.
10 That's your pre-flight flap check. Right?

11 Q. Okay. Um-hum.

12 A. And then depending on how you're going to takeoff, whether
13 it's going to be a step-turn takeoff or a straight takeoff. If
14 you're doing a straight takeoff, flap selector down, flaps to
15 takeoff, and you take off. And if it's going to be a step-turn
16 takeoff, flaps to climb, step turn, then flaps to takeoff, and
17 take off.

18 Q. Okay. And then after?

19 A. And then after you take off, you know, the moment you take
20 off, lower the nose, build airspeed, retract flaps to climb as you
21 climb out.

22 Q. Okay. And where does the climb flap, angle-wise, how --
23 where is it in the -- from full down to full up, where is climb?
24 Is it just --

25 A. As far as a degree?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. I believe it's --

3 Q. Just roughly.

4 A. -- 20 degrees, 30 degrees.

5 Q. Okay. All right.

6 A. And there's aileron droop involved with the flap droop, pass
7 to climb. You know, as you get the climb flap, the aileron starts
8 to droop.

9 MS. PRICE: Okay. Those are all the questions I have about
10 the accident and flaps, so I'm going to pass it off to you guys to
11 follow up.

12 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: I just have one question on this.

13 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

14 Q. So this was the -- and I realize this is fiction. Okay. We
15 don't really know where anything is.

16 A. Right.

17 Q. But that looks like to be like an aft limit.

18 MS. PRICE: So can I -- I just --

19 MR. HUCKLEBERRY: Sure.

20 MS. PRICE: Before we do this -- we're recording this, so
21 they don't know what we're looking at right now. So I'm just
22 going to say that this is the weight and balance form. It's the
23 preliminary weight and balance form that we figured out for the
24 accident flight. Go ahead.

25 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

1 Q. Okay. And then this is 6.4 and I believe that aft limit is
2 6.1.

3 A. As far as I know, correct.

4 Q. Okay. And then here is the graph. Where is this point
5 plotted?

6 A. Can you repeat that question?

7 Q. Well, here's the aft limit, which is 6.1.

8 A. Right.

9 Q. So what --

10 A. That was a graph from a previous version of this when it was
11 on skis. There was a version of this that was created from a ski
12 plane empty weight, because that was the picture that I got in the
13 text, so I just looked at that empty weight and used that. And
14 then once we realized, we have changed it.

15 MS. PRICE: Yeah. Those numbers are different now.

16 MR. LAUGHLIN: Those numbers are different.

17 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

18 Q. Yeah. But so I just want to make sure I understood. I have
19 never used one of these graphs before. So a 6.4 would actually be
20 plotted about right there?

21 A. It would be plotted at 6.4, correct.

22 Q. Cool. That's what I wanted to clear up.

23 A. Yes.

24 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Thank you. That's all I got.

25 MS. PRICE: Eric, do you have any follow-up questions for

1 Mike? No? All right.

2 We're almost done. You all right?

3 MR. LAUGHLIN: I'm --

4 MS. PRICE: Anybody need a break?

5 MS. LAUGHLIN: I'm doing just fine.

6 MS. PRICE: Okay. So the last section is safety.

7 BY MS. PRICE:

8 Q. Who at Regal Air is responsible for administering the SMS
9 safety program?

10 A. I am.

11 Q. And do you conduct regular safety meetings?

12 A. We do.

13 Q. When was the last one prior to the accident?

14 A. Typically they're the first Tuesday of every month.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. But I can't specifically say.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. It should have been roughly July, let's call it, 5th, and
19 just shooting in the dark.

20 Q. And then who attends the safety meetings?

21 A. The first few safety meetings of the year are all staff. And
22 the -- from that point on it's the pilots, unless we have a desire
23 for the docking and office staff to sit in as well.

24 Q. Okay. And what were some of the primary safety concerns you
25 guys had? Was there any one thing that you really needed to

1 reduce or work on or emphasize?

2 A. You know, the biggest, for me when we created that SMS
3 system, the biggest thing for me was just to create like an open
4 discussion of, okay, everybody, let's get together. Let's all --
5 what's the dumbest thing you've done this month? Like let's all
6 just come out there, like let's talk about what is -- where are we
7 the closest to the edge of a catastrophe? Where are we the
8 closest to the edge of an accident? Let's talk about it and how
9 do be alleviate that. That was my goal for the SMS system.

10 And so that's the general philosophy we go into those
11 meetings with. But of course, there's other things. Like, hey,
12 you know what, this rope on the dock is in a silly place,
13 somebody's going to trip on it; let's move it. You know, so
14 there's things like that too.

15 But the general overarching philosophy behind our safety
16 meetings are just, you know -- if everyone sitting around this
17 room doesn't have anything that's burning at them that they feel
18 is a safety concern, then let's just talk about something that
19 we've all done that -- what's the worst thing that you've done
20 this month?

21 Specifically, hey, without looking at the notes from those
22 meetings, I would -- you know, early season, the things that we
23 talk about a lot are, you know, river conditions. River
24 conditions are changing drastically in the early season as water
25 levels spike and fall with melt off. And so that's a lot of it.

1 Where are the sandbars at the most common locations that we're
2 going to?

3 You know, and we'll often in those meetings do rundowns of
4 different common areas we go to. Lake Creek, of course, we go
5 there a lot, so that's a -- that's always a topic. You know,
6 pilots will get current pictures of what the -- you know, we'll
7 get pictures in the spring when the water levels are really low,
8 and so we'll show everybody the pictures of where the sandbars are
9 and things like that.

10 Q. And you do have minutes of the meetings?

11 A. We do.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. Yeah, we do. I wouldn't call them minutes. I would just
14 call them an overview of who attended, what the discussions were
15 and things like that. But they weren't necessarily minutes.
16 They're not minutes, official minutes.

17 Q. Do the pilots make any safety reports on operational hazards
18 or abnormal events, formal reports?

19 A. They can, but does it happen? No.

20 Q. But it is -- is it part of your SMS?

21 A. Yes, it is. Oh yeah.

22 Q. It is a reporting process?

23 A. There is a reporting process. Yeah.

24 Q. But did you have any reports in 2017?

25 A. Zero.

1 Q. Any in 2018?

2 A. Zero.

3 Q. Why do you think that is?

4 A. I mean, I think -- honestly, I think that the pilots feel
5 that they're voices are heard. They don't feel like they need to
6 make anonymous reports. I mean, if that was my guess, I would say
7 that people feel like they can explain themselves at the safety
8 meeting and they don't need to make a -- I don't know. That would
9 be my guess.

10 Q. Okay. How about the other employees that are not pilots? Do
11 they make safety reports? Do you get anything from anybody?

12 A. I mean, no, we haven't gotten any. So I would say, no.

13 Q. You must be a really safe operation then, I guess.

14 A. We strive to be, but apparently --

15 Q. How about any incidents? Have you had any incidents in 2017
16 or 2018? Damage to an airplane or an event where you needed to do
17 an investigation on an incident, somebody was hurt or a plane was
18 damaged?

19 A. Well, we had an accident in 2017 where we lost a young pilot.

20 Q. Aside from the fatal accidents.

21 A. I mean, honestly, the fatals are such a mark in my brain that
22 I can't think of anything off the top of my head at the moment.

23 Q. It's okay. Has the company made any changes since the
24 accident that occurred last summer, in 2017, the one that you were
25 just referring to?

1 A. Absolutely, yes.

2 Q. What were they?

3 A. That was the creation of our pilot policies that were
4 disseminated at ground school that Bruce and I created.

5 Q. And these were the pilot policies that specifically talked
6 about restrictions for the first season pilots?

7 A. Correct. Restrictions for all pilots.

8 Q. All pilots, okay.

9 A. But more so for first year season pilots, you know,
10 restrictions against VFR on top. You know, and we're not blind to
11 the fact that just because we had X-type of accident, that Y isn't
12 possible in the future. So we try to create the policies and just
13 say, you know, of the type, you know, looking at for an accident,
14 mid-air. Mid-airs are a concern. I mean, we fly in the Su
15 Valley. It's a tremendous concern for us. That's why we have
16 ADSB in every single aircraft. We, you know, we try like crazy to
17 get people to talk on the radio, report in Lake Clark Pass and
18 report in Rainy Pass and all those areas.

19 So low visibility, you know, I can't tell you the number of
20 times that we've clarified the desire to have them turn around if
21 they felt that the weather was bad. Like you will never be, you
22 will never be reprimanded if you turn around. You'll get --

23 Q. Is that in that policy, as well, or is that something
24 different?

25 A. Well, what the minimums are --

1 Q. When we were talking about the --

2 A. -- are in that policy. Yes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And yeah, I don't know what verbiage it takes as far as, you
5 know, telling pilots it's fine to turn around, but yes, it should
6 be in there. Minimum altitudes for flying -- you know, if you're
7 flying to Lake Creek, are you allowed to fly at 500 feet on a
8 blue-sky day? Sure. Is it a good idea? Absolutely not. What if
9 your engine quits, you know? Your minimum altitude should be 1500
10 feet or greater, but why not give yourself the time, you know.
11 The amount of time that we can minimize our riskiest areas of
12 flight, all the better. First-year pilots, no more step turns.
13 If you can't take out --

14 Q. That's your current --

15 A. That's post-Colt.

16 Q. Yeah. I was talking about previous in that, but that's what
17 -- my next question. I know it's a lot.

18 A. Okay. Well, I might have blended a couple of those things.

19 Q. Did you? Okay.

20 A. I may have. I may have.

21 Q. That's fine. So the changes to 2017 accident, you came up
22 with pilot policies regarding limitations on pilots; is that --

23 A. On all pilots and specifically first-year pilots. Correct.

24 Q. Right. Okay.

25 A. Both in the same policy.

1 Q. Okay. And my understanding from this interview is that it is
2 the pilot's responsibilities to adhere to those policies but not
3 the company's responsibility to ensure that they're adhered? Is
4 that --

5 A. Well, I mean, it's our responsibility in the fact that we
6 tell them what we want them to do. I mean, I --

7 Q. I guess what I'm saying is you're saying, as a new pilot you
8 can only do A, B, C, D, but you're going to give them X and Y, and
9 it's their responsibility to go, wait, I can't go to X and Y
10 because I'm a new pilot and this is beyond my limitations? That's
11 what you said. Earlier in this interview you said that nothing --
12 that it was their responsibility and not yours. The duty officer
13 didn't do that, the duty officer didn't check that. There's too
14 many things the pilots do, so you could not do that. The pilot
15 was responsible for adhering to all these policies.

16 MR. WILHELM: A little bit of --

17 MR. LAUGHLIN: I think that's a little bit of --

18 MS. PRICE: Okay.

19 MR. WILHELM: Go ahead. You can answer.

20 MR. LAUGHLIN: I think that might be a little bit of -- I
21 said the final responsibility falls on the pilots.

22 BY MS. PRICE:

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Do other people help the pilot and assist them in checking
25 weather and, you know, helping them with things? Absolutely. But

1 it's ultimately always the PIC's responsibility.

2 Q. Um-hum. Okay. So I'm a duty officer and I'm assigning an
3 airplane to a pilot, to a flight, do I have this policy available
4 to know it, or do I understand it so that I don't assign a first-
5 year pilot to a location that they had not been before, was beyond
6 the limitations of this policy?

7 A. Does the duty officer aware of those? Absolutely. And do
8 they attempt to act as a stopgap? Absolutely. Is it -- are they
9 they first line of defense? Theoretically. But the ultimate line
10 of defense is the PIC to say, no, I've never been there before.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. You know.

13 Q. Do you feel like the dispatch of this accident flight with
14 Colt Richter, that the policies that you disseminated at that time
15 were followed?

16 A. Absolutely. Yeah, a hundred percent. I mean it was a blue-
17 sky day. It was a very large lake. I mean, large enough to get a
18 full aircraft off of. I can't think of any reason why that
19 dispatch would not happen again.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I mean, obviously with retrospect, we can come up with a lot
22 of things that would have happened differently. But at that
23 time --

24 Q. No, I know.

25 A. -- I can't think of anything --

1 Q. We're asking about that time.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Yeah. Right. Okay. And then so since this accident, the
4 Beaver accident at Willow, what changes did you make to the
5 company?

6 A. The restrictions on -- you know, the pilot policies, we came
7 out with no first-year pilots can do step turns.

8 Q. Step turns. Right. Okay.

9 A. If you don't feel like you can get a load off of a lake with
10 a straight takeoff, then it just doesn't happen. You don't say,
11 well, I can do it if I did a step turn. You know what I mean?
12 Like that's -- in response to Colt, that's the most significant
13 direct relation to that, would be that policy. And there was
14 others. Bruce felt that some more restrictions on first-year
15 weather minimums were in order. So again, I can't remember
16 exactly, sitting here without them in front of me.

17 Q. That's okay. But maybe after -- sometime in the next couple
18 of days, if you get me a copy of each one of those --

19 A. Cases?

20 Q. -- policies. Yeah. That would be great.

21 So your SMS manual states that the safety performance of
22 Regal Air will be monitored proactively and reactively to ensure
23 that the key safety goals continue to be achieved. What are the
24 key safety goals of the company?

25 A. Zero accidents.

1 Q. And how do you, as the president, director of operations, and
2 safety officer assess that the operation is safe or that your
3 safety goals are being met? Do you have a formal process or --

4 A. Not outside of, I mean, just -- you know, just the safety
5 meetings and a review of, unfortunately, accidents.

6 Q. So up until the time of this particular accident, you had an
7 accident the year before and you used that as a measure of whether
8 or not your safety goals were being met --

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. -- and made adjustments, like you said, to policies. Okay.

11 MS. PRICE: All right. I don't have any more questions on
12 that.

13 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: I just have a couple.

14 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

15 Q. Dave was Oberg, right?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. And then who's Devon?

18 A. Holmberg?

19 Q. Holmberg?

20 A. Holmberg with an H, H-O-L-M-B-E-R-G.

21 Q. And they're identified as instructor pilots in the company?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Perfect. And --

24 A. Dave is a former director of ops, former chief pilot, and he
25 was actually a check airman as well.

1 Q. Okay. The only -- so a destination across the Alaska range,
2 the short route would be through Rainy Pass.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. An alternate route might be -- what's the big one?

5 A. Ptarmigan Pass, Hell's Gate.

6 Q. Yeah. And then how many options do the pilots get when they
7 leave on a flight with questionable weather?

8 A. How many options do they get?

9 Q. Yeah. Like if you can't get through Rainy, you can have
10 Ptarmigan; if not, come home. Is that kind of language used at
11 all?

12 A. Yes. I would say, yes.

13 MS. PRICE: You don't have any formal guidance though on
14 routing? Is that --

15 MR. LAUGHLIN: Which time period are we talking about?

16 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Prior to the accident?

17 MR. LAUGHLIN: Prior to Colt's accident? No formal guidance
18 on routing.

19 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

20 Q. Because the previous accident probably was related to that,
21 trying to find routes through --

22 MS. PRICE: 2017.

23 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

24 Q. -- bad weather with a young pilot. Sorry.

25 A. Yeah. I don't know if he -- I don't believe that he didn't

1 know where he was. I don't think that was the issue with Joel
2 Black. I don't think he was lost, per se. I don't think that was
3 an issue with him. I think it was an issue of pushing too far
4 into uncertain weather.

5 Q. Since that accident, are they provided any specific
6 instructions on exceeding a weather minimum?

7 A. Absolutely. That was the direct result of Joel's accident,
8 was the policies with weather minimums.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And no VFR on top.

11 Q. Which I think at one point he was --

12 A. Which is already a -- I mean, a pretty clear regulation.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. You know what I mean? Like it's pretty clearly how VFR on
15 top is defined, and when how you can utilize that. But I think
16 it's often pushed. You know, I can descend VFR if I -- you know.
17 But it's just, you know, that was ultimate, do not fly VFR on top,
18 because of the desire to perhaps get back underneath is too great
19 or the desire to need to get back underneath is too great.

20 Q. Yeah. And if the engine quits and you're on top --

21 A. I mean that, you know -- the chances of that happening are
22 not great, but absolutely. The bigger issue is what happens when
23 you get to the destination and its underneath, you know? And then
24 now are you going to, as a pilot, give up on that destination?
25 That's what we're trying to eliminate, is the pilot's -- you know,

1 we're trying to create policies so that we try to take the
2 decision making out of that as much as possible, you know,
3 especially for new guys.

4 Q. Okay. So if we take a young pilot, and just -- I don't have
5 any names, so I'll just use Colt in this case. If Colt was going
6 across the range the first year he worked for you, would he be
7 given specific limits on how many attempts he could find to get
8 across the range?

9 A. Yeah, one.

10 Q. One?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. So if the short destination is Rainy Pass and you can't get
13 through there, you come home?

14 A. I mean, if it was to the point where he had to use a pass, we
15 wouldn't have given him Rainy Pass as an option. It would have
16 just been Hell's Gate.

17 Q. Okay. All right. That's all I have.

18 A. Yeah. But we don't go -- we don't send pilots through Rainy
19 Pass unless they've been through it on blue-sky days multiple
20 times. I mean, that's not an easy pass. So Hell's Gate is just a
21 much simpler route and, so --

22 Q. I see DC-3s in Rainy Pass. You know, they're just -- anyway.

23 A. It can be done.

24 Q. It's a little startling.

25 MR. LAUGHLIN: Lots of things can be done.

1 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: All right. That's all I've got.

2 MS. PRICE: Eric, do you have any questions?

3 BY MS. PRICE:

4 Q. I have a quick. What are your current weather minimums?

5 A. 600 and 2 -- or 600 and -- yeah, 600 and 2 in non-mountainous
6 terrain; 800 and 3 in mountainous terrain, defined as -- and this
7 is evolving over the winter as we're developing a few new
8 strategies -- as either the proximity to a feature over X amount
9 MSL. Because AGL is pretty easy to, oh yeah, but what -- you
10 know, determining what AGL is on that mountain over there. But if
11 it's an MSL property, it's a lot more cut and dry.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. We're trying to create very subjective -- or very objective
14 principles and delineate our procedures more effectively.

15 MS. PRICE: Okay. Well, those are all the questions that we
16 have for you today. Thank you very much. Is there anything else
17 you want to share that you think might help with the accident
18 investigation?

19 MR. LAUGHLIN: No.

20 MS. PRICE: All right. We really appreciate your help today,
21 Mike.

22 MR. LAUGHLIN: Absolutely.

23 MS. PRICE: I know it was a lot. And that concludes the
24 recording.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: REGAL AIR DHC-2 ACCIDENT IN
 WILLOW, ALASKA, JULY 18, 2018
 Interview of Michael Laughlin

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA055

PLACE:

DATE: November 1, 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.


Romona Phillips
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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REGAL AIR DHC-2 ACCIDENT IN
WILLOW, ALASKA, JULY 18, 2018

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Interview of: BRUCE SCHULTE, Chief Pilot
Regal AirTuesday,
August 21, 2018

APPEARANCES:

NOREEN PRICE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

PAULA HUCKLEBERRY, Investigator in Charge
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PAT HEMPEN, Accident Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration

ROBERT RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. Schulte)

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I N T E R V I E W

MS. PRICE: Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Noreen Price. I'm an aviation accident investigator and the IIC of this accident, ANC18FA055.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable causes of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the Department of Transportation or the FAA. It has no regulatory or enforcement powers.

I'd like to take this time to introduce the group. We'll start with Shaun, go to Paula, and then --

MR. HEMPEN: Pat.

MS. PRICE: -- Pat. Thank you. And then yourself, Bruce, and Bob. Go ahead, Shaun.

MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams with the NTSB, based out of Anchorage.

MS. PRICE: Paula?

MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Hi, Paula Huckleberry. I'm on a bush phone and my connection's a little bit sketchy. I'm with the FAA and I'm the IIC.

MS. PRICE: Okay. Matt -- I'm sorry, not Matt. Pat?

MR. HEMPEN: Hi. I'm Pat Hempen. I'm the AVP-100, the FAA accident investigation division here at the headquarters, Washington D.C.

MS. PRICE: Okay. Bruce?

1 MR. SCHULTE: Bruce Schulte, chief pilot, Regal Air.

2 MS. PRICE: And Bob?

3 MR. RICHMOND: So Bob Richmond. I'm here with Bruce.

4 MS. PRICE: Okay. Thank you. Today we're going to be
5 recording, and that recording is going to go to a company that
6 will transcribe it and then the recording will be deleted. So for
7 the purposes of the recording, just speak loudly and try to avoid
8 head nods and things like that.

9 So the purpose of the investigation is safety, to determine
10 probable cause and prevent reoccurrence. Our role is not to
11 assign fault or blame or liability. This is the fact-finding part
12 of the investigation.

13 We cannot however offer any guarantee of confidentiality or
14 immunity. Each group member will have a chance to ask questions.
15 I'll lead off with the questions, and then Shaun will follow up,
16 and then Paula, Pat, and then we'll continue on from there. If
17 anyone needs to take a break, just say so, and we will stop the
18 recording at that time.

19 Please answer all questions to the best of your recollection.
20 If you don't understand a question, have it repeated or have it
21 explained. Okay? This is a relaxed atmosphere, so we can talk
22 things out if you need to. If you realize you misstated or need
23 to modify a previous answer, just go ahead and do so.

24 You're entitled to have one representative of your choosing.
25 Is there someone that you would like to have as your

1 representative?

2 MR. SCHULTE: Yeah, I'd like to have Bob Richmond here.

3 MS. PRICE: Okay. You may direct -- anyway, you may not
4 answer any of the questions. If you need to confer with him,
5 we'll just take a break and you can do that. Okay?

6 MR. RICHMOND: Okay.

7 MS. PRICE: Do you have any questions, Bruce, at this time?

8 MR. SCHULTE: No.

9 MS. PRICE: All right. We will now begin the interview.

10 MR. RICHMOND: I do.

11 MS. PRICE: Yes, Bob?

12 MR. RICHMOND: I wanted to make sure with the FAA people that
13 the same -- I know Shaun and I've had this discussion, that
14 anything the FAA learns in the process of assisting the NTSB is
15 not to be shared with other FAA members for purposes of compliance
16 issues or things of that type. I just want to make sure that the
17 FAA agrees with that and that's why we're allowing them to sit in
18 on this. Is that agreeable to the FAA representatives?

19 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: I understand that.

20 MR. RICHMOND: And I wondered if Paula, are you agreeing with
21 that Paula?

22 MS. PRICE: That's Paula.

23 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: That was me, Pat.

24 MR. RICHMOND: That was Paula? Okay. Paula, and then Pat?

25 MR. HEMPEN: Yes.

1 MR. RICHMOND: All right. Let's go.

2 MS. PRICE: All right.

3 MR. HEMPEN: This is Pat. And certainly that is the
4 standard. We are a partner in this and certainly are here for
5 your client and to help NTSB find the cause of the accident to
6 prevent, just as she stated. And that's our quest.

7 MS. PRICE: Okay. Great. Thank you very much. All right.

8 INTERVIEW OF BRUCE SCHULTE

9 BY MS. PRICE:

10 Q. So for you, Bruce, if you would spell your name for us?

11 A. Last name is Schulte. It's S-C-H-U-L-T-E, first name Bruce,
12 conventional spelling.

13 Q. Okay. And how long have you been with Regal?

14 A. Approximately 14 years.

15 Q. And of those 14 years, how long have you been the chief
16 pilot?

17 A. Just since March of 2018.

18 Q. Can you give us a brief description of your aviation
19 background?

20 A. I was a flight instructor in Southern California for about 3½
21 years. I came to Alaska in 1996. I flew wheel planes, single
22 engine, multi-engine, down in/out of Juno for a couple of years.
23 I flew floatplanes, Beavers and Otters, out of Ketchikan for 2
24 years. One summer flying for Kenmore Air Harbor in Washington.
25 And I've been in -- I've been flying off of Lake Hood now for

1 different air carriers since 2001.

2 Q. Okay. About how many total hours would you estimate you
3 have?

4 A. About 6,000.

5 Q. And have you held the duties of chief pilot at any other
6 companies?

7 A. No.

8 Q. So as the chief pilot here what your duties and
9 responsibilities?

10 A. Training, scheduling, general pilot oversight.

11 Q. Do you feel like you have --

12 A. By scheduling, I mean pilot scheduling, not flight
13 scheduling.

14 Q. Okay. Do you feel like you have adequate resources to
15 fulfill those duties for the company?

16 A. Um-hum. I do. Yeah.

17 Q. And how is your relationship with your POI? Who is your POI
18 for Regal?

19 A. Oh, my gosh, I'm drawing a blank here. I met the fellow. We
20 exchanged emails. I can't recall right off the top of my head.

21 Q. That's all right. You may at some point remember.

22 A. Can we come back to that?

23 Q. It's okay. We can go back and fill that in.

24 MR. HEMPEN: I have that information, Noreen. Am I allowed
25 to butt in?

1 MS. PRICE: Sure. You can help --

2 MR. SCHULTE: If you could throw out a name, I'd be happy to
3 agree to it.

4 MS. PRICE: You can help Bruce out.

5 MR. HEMPEN: All right. The POI is Mark Harrington.

6 MR. SCHULTE: Heritage.

7 MR. HEMPEN: Heritage.

8 MR. SCHULTE: Mark Heritage. Thank you.

9 MR. HEMPEN: Yeah.

10 MR. SCHULTE: Yes. Thank you for the memory jog. Maybe I am
11 senile.

12 MS. PRICE: That happens when you get old. Not that you're
13 old.

14 BY MS. PRICE:

15 Q. So have you met Mark?

16 A. I have, yeah.

17 Q. And how is your relationship with him?

18 A. Good. Very, very cordial

19 Q. When was he here last at the company's base?

20 A. The last time I met him in person or saw him in person was --
21 it's probably been 3 months, I would guess. We exchange emails
22 periodically on procedural stuff. But I think he was last here
23 about 3 months ago.

24 Q. He was here at the base, here?

25 A. Yeah. He's been here several times during the summer.

1 Q. Okay. All right. All right. And are you responsible for
2 the training program --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- here at the company? So who actually does the hiring of
5 new pilots?

6 A. Mike and I. Mike Laughlin and myself.

7 Q. So both of you?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Do you screen the applications and do the interviews
10 together --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- and make that decision? Okay. And what kind of minimum
13 hours and experience for hiring are there, if any?

14 A. We don't have a hard minimum. It's somewhat variable
15 depending on the relevant experience.

16 Q. Okay. So what -- give me an example of what minimum hours
17 would be to have?

18 A. Well, I don't think we have any pilots that have anything
19 less than 1,000 hours.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So that, and then I think personally that's kind of a cut-off
22 for me when I'm looking at somebody's resume. If they have less
23 than 1,000, it would have to be some pretty relevant experience
24 for us to consider hiring them.

25 Q. Um-hum. How about Alaska time? Do you --

1 A. That's certainly beneficial. Alaska time, mountain flying
2 experience, you know, prior experience with that aircraft or the
3 type of mission we do. I mean, those are beneficial.

4 Q. And then how about floats? Does everyone have a seaplane
5 rating when they get here or do you have some --

6 A. I'm not sure if everyone has a seaplane rating. I'd have to
7 look at that. But of course, you know, if they don't, they're not
8 flying floats.

9 Q. Does everybody -- do you have pilots, some that do wheels and
10 some that do floats, or --

11 A. We do, yeah.

12 Q. -- is everybody dual --

13 A. No. We have a couple that are strictly wheels.

14 Q. And do you have a hard time finding pilots to fulfill your
15 openings?

16 A. Lately it's become more challenging. I mean that's the
17 nature of the market these days.

18 Q. Lately, like this year and last year?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Or just this year or -- yeah.

21 A. Yeah, the last few years. It's just been a trend I think
22 throughout the state. I mean, talking with other operators and
23 other pilots.

24 Q. So how are pilots paid here at Regal? Is it on a salary, per
25 hour? Can you describe the --

1 A. Yeah. It's a subject we've wrestled with, but everyone is
2 paid hourly at this time.

3 Q. Hourly based on flight hours or hourly based on duty here,
4 when they show up, or --

5 A. Flight hours.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah. And that varies somewhat with their experience.

8 Q. So a newer pilot would be paid less per hour than an
9 experienced pilot?

10 A. Yeah. Because there's somewhat less utility to be had there,
11 so we, you know, we start them off at a lower pay rate.

12 Q. Are all the pilot's full-time employees or do you have part-
13 time?

14 A. No. We had -- going into the summer we had seven full-time
15 pilots and seven part-time pilots.

16 Q. Seven full-time and seven part-time, is that what you said?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. About how many pilots do you -- have you turned over
19 in the last 2 years, meaning how many do you have to replace each
20 season?

21 A. I think this year we had to replace two that had gone,
22 decided to move on, do different things.

23 Q. Okay. So can you briefly describe the initial training for
24 new pilots?

25 A. We have -- well, it starts with ground school. And we have

1 -- this year we had a sort of a split ground school. We had 3
2 days that was required for all pilots, and that included recurrent
3 training and new hires. And then we had 2 more days which was
4 specific to new hires.

5 Q. And then if a new pilot comes in with experience in an
6 airframe from another operator, explain to me what type of
7 training you give those folks?

8 A. They would still be required to do the same ground school.
9 Well, it would be new hire, since they're new to the company. So
10 they would be required to do that ground school. And then the
11 flight training would vary depending on their experience. I mean,
12 we would fly with them a few times, at least, at least enough to
13 demonstrate proficiency with the airplane.

14 Q. Okay. And that demonstration, the record of that
15 demonstration would be what?

16 A. It's in -- well, we have -- I forget what it's called. I
17 think it's a flight training log. So we have a series of
18 maneuvers and flight regimes that we go through with each pilot on
19 each flight. Not necessarily every maneuver on every flight; some
20 are specific to wheels, some are specific to floats. But we keep
21 a record of that for each training flight.

22 Q. Do you have any -- are you a check airman for the company
23 or --

24 A. I'm not. I'm a company instructor but not a check airman.

25 Q. Do you have any check airmen?

1 A. We do.

2 Q. Oh, you do?

3 A. We do. Yeah.

4 Q. How many?

5 A. Two.

6 Q. Okay. So during initial training is single pilot resource
7 management training provided?

8 A. Um-hum. Yes.

9 Q. Is that documented in the training syllabus at all, or --

10 A. It is addressed. It is addressed in our training manual and
11 we do talk extensively about decision making preflight and during
12 the flight.

13 Q. Is your ground school -- do you have a syllabus for it with
14 everything laid out or is it as instructor desires to fulfill the
15 requirements?

16 A. We go by what is in our training manual. So we basically had
17 a checklist that was derived from our training manual so we ensure
18 that we hit every topic that was -- every topic that's expressed
19 in our training manual, we address in our ground school. Some of
20 them receive greater emphasis, you know, flight in bad weather,
21 flight in mountains, collision avoidance, things like that, things
22 that are known to be particularly treacherous in this area.

23 Q. And who teaches the ground school?

24 A. It's a combination of myself, Dave Oberg, who's the previous
25 chief pilot and now a check airman, he taught some of it. Our

1 former director of maintenance, who's also now one of our part-
2 time pilots, he taught some of the systems. So it's kind of a
3 group effort depending on who has a particular strength in a
4 certain subject area.

5 Q. Okay. How about -- what is a duty day for pilots here?

6 A. Well, it's 14 hours. Typically we start at 7 a.m. and we're
7 usually done by -- well before 9 p.m. But that's roughly our duty
8 day.

9 Q. You said you had seven part-time pilots. Do those pilots
10 also fly for other companies?

11 A. Some of them did.

12 Q. Did? As in they don't now or they --

13 A. Well, obviously Colt was one example. And there was another
14 -- we had another pilot who was a returning pilot this year, who
15 also flew for Ravn. And after Colt's accident, Ravn told him that
16 he couldn't fly for us anymore.

17 Q. Oh, interesting. Okay.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So right now you don't have pilots that are --

20 A. If I may just clarify that?

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. What Ravn told him was he can't fly for anyone other than
23 Ravn.

24 Q. Yeah. Okay. They want one operator. Yeah.

25 A. Right. Yeah.

1 Q. I got you. Okay.

2 A. I'm sorry. Please go ahead.

3 Q. So right now, however, you don't have, to your knowledge,
4 anyone that works -- maybe one. You said they told him he
5 couldn't do it anymore, but --

6 A. Actually, I misspoke. We actually have three -- no four.
7 Two of our current part-time pilots also have another flying job.

8 Q. Okay. All right. How does the company keep track of rest
9 and duty time and flight hour limitations for the pilots that fly
10 with other operators?

11 A. We leave that to the pilot to determine. We assume that they
12 know what their -- the limitations are. Certainly they know what
13 our limitations are, and we rely on them to track that.

14 Q. And did you know that Colt -- and we just kind of discussed
15 it -- was flying with Ravn and Denali Air on Beaver turbine
16 airplanes?

17 A. I knew that he had flown for Denali Air flying the turbine
18 Beaver. I didn't know that he was currently flying for them.

19 Q. According to the logbook, he flew for them within the month
20 prior to the accident. He had some Beaver flights with them.
21 But --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. So do you require pilots to tell you if they're flying with
24 other operators?

25 A. It's not a requirement. We're usually aware that they are.

1 I mean, certainly I knew Colt was flying for Ravn. There was no
2 mystery about that.

3 Q. So how is a pilot's availability to fly communicated to you
4 guys? How do you know when they're available and unavailable for
5 the schedule?

6 A. Typically, in preparing the next month's schedule, I would
7 contact all the pilots and say, you know, what's your availability
8 next month and what are your conflicts; do you need days off? And
9 I would build the schedule from that. With the full-time pilots,
10 it's a typically question of, you know, what days people want off.
11 So we try to give them 2 days off a week. And then for the part-
12 time pilots, it's a question of when are you available to fly?

13 Q. Were you concerned at all that the pilots that flew for other
14 operators might not have any days off when they flew for you, or
15 did you expect them to manage their own fatigue?

16 A. I expected them to manage it. In the case of the part-time
17 pilots, we generally got just a few days a week or in some cases
18 only a few days a month. And my understanding, that they were
19 sort of managing their days off on their own. And certainly, I
20 think in almost every case, I was aware that they were, you know,
21 going on vacation, going on a hunt, going to a wedding. So there
22 was no reason for me to think that they were burning it at both
23 ends, so to speak.

24 Q. Okay. So some specific questions about Colt's training -- or
25 here's a general one. Describe under what circumstance a pilot

1 undergoes transition syllabus training. So as a new pilot, what
2 is transition syllabus training? Give me some circumstances where
3 that would be connected.

4 A. It would be differences training. So typically somebody new
5 to the company, we would get them trained up and they would do
6 their check ride in a 206 on floats, if they were going to be
7 flying that aircraft as well. And then once they -- once they've
8 taken a check ride in that plane and, you know, so now they're
9 qualified single-engine sea, then we would do differences training
10 in a Beaver.

11 Q. I see. Okay.

12 A. So, you know, that would cover systems and operational
13 considerations.

14 Q. Okay. Do you know where Colt got his initial Beaver
15 training?

16 A. I believe it's at Fly Denali.

17 Q. And do you know, was it a turbine airplane or --

18 A. I believe that was a turbine.

19 Q. Okay. On wheels. So he had no float Beaver experience prior
20 to coming to you?

21 A. I believe that's correct.

22 Q. So during training for the seaplane airplane, particularly
23 the Beaver, do you train for maximum load takeoffs and operations
24 at all?

25 A. We do.

1 Q. So how do you go about doing that?

2 A. Different scenarios. We'll hold -- depending on the specific
3 training environment, we could -- we'll sometimes use partial
4 power takeoffs to simulate performance at heavier weights. But
5 then we'll also load up a plane if we -- if they're not flying a
6 plane with passengers and cargo, we will sometimes throw bags of
7 horse feed into a plane just to make the plane heavy. And we've
8 done that a number of times, just to the pilot can experience
9 what, you know, what it's like to fly that aircraft heavy.

10 Q. Is that part of the syllabus or is that just something you do
11 for --

12 A. It's just something we do.

13 Q. Okay. Would you describe for me, for a Beaver on floats, the
14 takeoff evolution, what you're doing with the flaps? It's one of
15 the cruxes of this investigation that we're looking at.

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. You have the Beaver experience.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. So for takeoff at max gross weight, would be an example, how
20 would you expect the flaps to be configured for that throughout
21 the departure operation?

22 A. Okay. So prior to starting the takeoff, the flaps would be
23 at the takeoff position. It's actually noted as takeoff position.
24 There's visual references that one can use looking at the hinges
25 on the flaps themselves, but -- which I use as a back check, and I

1 usually indicate to other pilots, because that indicator can get
2 tweaked. But takeoff -- flaps in the takeoff position, certainly.

3 And then the takeoff progresses up to liftoff. The takeoff
4 is, I would say typical for a floatplane where you apply takeoff
5 power. The Beaver, that's -- you know, red line's not full power
6 because it's supercharged. But takeoff power and a smooth
7 transition from displacement mode to being on step, and that takes
8 a little bit longer with a heavily loaded plane, any floatplane.

9 The liftoff then is just, it's not a rotation at a specific
10 airspeed. It's just, you know, waiting for the plane to lift off.
11 Occasionally it can be hastened, I guess, or accelerated by
12 lifting one float first, and then as soon as they lift off,
13 typically there's a pitch down to gain airspeed, because the
14 Beaver's kind of -- it's not the fastest aircraft. So typically,
15 one would break water and immediately lower the nose to accelerate
16 to VY.

17 Climbing out then would be a gradual reduction of flaps from
18 takeoff to climb setting, and then a reduction of power to max
19 continuous, or climb, which are not the same. So max continuous
20 for that VX for training clearance or climb power for just a
21 normal takeoff without obstacles.

22 Q. Okay. I apologize. I missed the part about what happens to
23 the flaps after departure?

24 A. They would be retracted from takeoff to climb.

25 Q. To climb, which is -- what position is climb?

1 A. Well, it's halfway between takeoff and cruise.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And the Beaver is -- it's an aerodynamic oddity in the sense
4 that it won't readily climb with the flaps fully retracted. And
5 even in a cruise climb, you can, you can have power, you can pitch
6 the nose up. You know, if you're cruising along at 3,000 feet,
7 with the flaps up, you can add power, you can pitch the nose up,
8 the plane won't necessarily climb. You have to extend the flaps
9 to the climb position. So we would go -- typically in every
10 takeoff, we would go from takeoff position to climb position in
11 the initial climb.

12 Q. Okay. So would that be expected above a tree line as you
13 depart or at about tree line? Or what do you think --

14 A. Once they've got a positive rate of climb.

15 Q. A positive rate of climb.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Okay. Thanks. Okay. On a different subject, in initial or
18 recurrent pilot training, are child/infant restraint systems and
19 regulatory seat requirements covered at all?

20 A. Um-hum. Yeah.

21 Q. Does the company put any restrictions on new pilots' flights
22 such as distance, mountains, confined area, off airport, weather
23 requirements? Are there different release designators for new
24 pilots?

25 A. Yeah. Yes, absolutely.

1 Q. So how do you manage that? How does Tony, for instance, in
2 dispatch know that this pilot has a different set of --

3 A. Well, it's understood if they're new to the company there is
4 a different criteria. We had, or we have a spreadsheet of our
5 most typical destinations, and it was basically a destination or
6 route check. So we would -- one of the company pilots would fly
7 to them -- fly with that pilot to a certain destination, get them
8 familiar with that destination, and have them operate in that
9 environment with whatever might be -- you know, a strip, a lake, a
10 river. And then when we were satisfied that they comfortable and
11 competent in operating at that destination or along that route,
12 then we would indicate so on a spreadsheet that Tony has access
13 to.

14 So if there was any question in his mind about, okay, does --
15 is this pilot checked out at that destination, he could look at
16 that spreadsheet. And that was our way of communicating to him
17 that the training had been satisfied. I say Tony. I should say
18 the duty officer.

19 Q. The duty -- yeah.

20 A. Because most days that's Tony, some days that's Mike.

21 Q. Right. Okay. Can I have a -- can I get a copy of that
22 spreadsheet when we're done here?

23 A. Yeah. Absolutely.

24 Q. Thank you. Do you know, was Willow on there anywhere, Willow
25 Lake Airport?

1 A. It was not.

2 Q. So some airports are on there, or lakes, but -- I mean, I'm
3 assuming you operate at some remote lakes that you may not have
4 information on. Was that true? Or is everything pretty
5 standardized?

6 A. No. It's not standardized at all.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah. We do go to a lot of different lakes -- different
9 sizes, different shapes, different elevations. And there's an
10 ongoing conversation -- very often I would review with the duty
11 officer, Mike or Tony, the schedule for the following day and we
12 would have a discussion about who was appropriate for a particular
13 mission. And very often, you know, that we might change the
14 schedule depending on the destination just because myself or Mike
15 had not yet satisfied ourselves that that person was ready to go
16 to a particular destination or a particular route.

17 Q. Okay. And how would you characterize Willow Lake as a
18 destination and route?

19 A. Non-challenging. I mean that was -- yeah.

20 Q. Non-challenging based on what?

21 A. Well, it was -- it's a low elevation. It doesn't -- it does
22 not have unusually high terrain around it. And it's not
23 considered to be an overly small lake. So there was no -- it
24 didn't raise any red flags. I knew that Colt was going there, and
25 there was no reason for me to think that that was an inappropriate

1 choice, the pilot and the plane.

2 Q. Does the company provide any -- you just mentioned this --
3 flight information about destinations that you fly to that, like,
4 would give pilots information that went beyond the supplement?

5 A. Yes. Absolutely. We have a binder that has photographs and
6 notes about some of the places we go. You know, the field length
7 or lake size, you know, recommended approach and departure,
8 patterns, unusual features, you know, rocks in the water,
9 sandbars, things like that.

10 Q. Is Willow Lake in that binder, do you know?

11 A. I don't think so.

12 Q. Is Willow Lake a usual destination? Do you guys fly there?
13 No?

14 A. No. We don't go there very often.

15 Q. Would you -- okay. Have you ever flown to Willow Lake?

16 A. Only on skis in the wintertime.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And then I landed at the airport.

19 Q. Is there pressure on pilots to complete flights on time?

20 A. On time?

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. No.

23 Q. What would happen to a pilot who delayed at a destination due
24 to whatever reason, that came back an hour or 2 later?

25 A. Nothing at all.

1 Q. How much time is devoted to the turnaround here at base
2 usually to load up new passengers and cargo on an airplane?

3 A. Here at Lake Hood the schedule is sort of built to give us
4 about a half an hour between flights. It doesn't always work out
5 that way, but that's sort of the target.

6 Q. So can I assume that you're familiar with Colt as a pilot and
7 person? You --

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. Did you ever fly with him?

10 A. I did.

11 Q. How would you characterize him as a -- his performance as a
12 pilot compared to your other pilots?

13 A. Above average.

14 Q. In what way? What makes him above average?

15 A. He was very professional, very thorough, very attentive. He
16 was a remarkably intelligent person and that was reflected in his
17 flying.

18 Q. Did you see him the day of the accident?

19 A. I did.

20 Q. And how did he appear on that day?

21 A. Great. He appeared enthusiastic, jovial. I complemented him
22 on his shirt, because we were wearing the same one. And we just
23 joked a little bit as we passed in the parking lot.

24 Q. Okay. On to a little different, some questions. Who is
25 responsible for carrying out the safety program in the company?

1 A. Well, Mike and myself.

2 Q. Okay. And describe meetings? Do you have any routine
3 meetings?

4 A. We do. Once a month -- we try to do it on the first Tuesday
5 of each month. Sometimes it becomes a Wednesday. But yeah, at
6 least once a month. This summer I think we've had four or five.
7 I don't think we've missed one.

8 Q. Okay. And during those meetings are they for all company
9 personnel, or pilots, or how does that --

10 A. Usually pilots. We do sometimes ask the ground crew to
11 attend for the first part, if there's some things that we need to
12 talk about that impact them as well. So we've done that on a
13 couple of occasions.

14 Q. And during those meetings are safety hazards or flight
15 occurrences talked about?

16 A. Um-hum. Yeah, absolutely.

17 Q. When was the last one that you can remember having?

18 A. I'd have to check. It was -- well, it was after the
19 accident. It was the beginning of August. I think it was the
20 first Tuesday or Wednesday in August. I could check the exact
21 date.

22 Q. Okay. That's all right. We can --

23 A. Prior to that we had one just, I think 2 weeks before Colt's
24 accident.

25 Q. And do all pilots attend or is it just non-flying pilots on

1 that day?

2 A. No, all pilots.

3 Q. So you actually shut down operations for your safety
4 meetings?

5 A. No. We typically have them either very early in the morning
6 before the first flights of the day or in the evening when
7 everybody's done.

8 Q. Okay. And do you have an anonymous reporting system in the
9 company for pilots to report things outside of meetings and --

10 A. No, it's -- well, yes and no. It's not anonymous. But, I
11 mean, they're free to come to myself or Mike with safety concerns,
12 and they do. Or just concerns in general. I don't think that
13 there's any reticence on the part of the pilots to be open with
14 either or both of us about those things.

15 Q. Do they get documented at all? If someone comes you to with
16 a safety concern or a hazard that they're concerned about, is
17 there --

18 A. Not specifically. If there is a concern raised, we just
19 address it and deal with it.

20 Q. Okay. Do you participate in the A-S-A-P, ASAP program for
21 reporting? Do pilots in this company work with Medallion on --

22 A. Not as a formal process, no.

23 Q. Okay. So if a pilot had a safety concern, you would expect
24 them to address you personally --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- or Mike, either one of you, correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. That's my understanding of how you --

4 A. Absolutely. And I encourage them to do that always. I mean,
5 that encouragement has happened multiple times. I tell them
6 frequently and often, you know, don't do anything that's unsafe.
7 If you feel like you're being asked or expected to do anything
8 unsafe, tell me about it. And that's -- I mean, there's
9 absolutely no question about that.

10 Q. So what's your opinion of how the company airplanes are
11 maintained?

12 A. I think they're maintained well.

13 Q. Do you have any hangar queens, airplanes that have consistent
14 mechanical issues?

15 A. No. They're all just working planes that get --

16 Q. Of course you don't have any hangars, so you can't have any
17 hangar queens.

18 A. We do.

19 Q. Oh, actually you do.

20 A. Yeah. No, the only hangar queen is our 206 on floats. But
21 she just sits inside the warm hangar all winter because she has no
22 mission. Other than that, they fly, you know, to some degree year
23 round.

24 Q. Who's your current director of maintenance?

25 A. A fellow named Kennedy Cannar? I'm not sure about -- I'd

1 have to -- I can spell his name for you. I'm not sure how to
2 pronounce it correctly.

3 Q. Yeah. If you have it there, that'd be great.

4 A. Yeah. Sorry. I'm looking up the name here. Kennedy Cannar.
5 C-A-N-N-A-R, Kennedy Cannar.

6 Q. Okay. How you doing? You all right?

7 A. Great. Yeah.

8 MS. PRICE: Okay. Good. Those are all of the questions I
9 have right now. So we'll go around the table starting with Shaun.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: So I just have one.

11 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

12 Q. Going back to the flaps, discussing the takeoff setting on
13 the flaps and then transition over to climb setting. What would
14 happen or how would the performance alter if they attempted to
15 take off in the climb setting versus the takeoff setting?

16 A. It would be significant. With the flaps up, it's almost
17 impossible to get the Beaver to take off. I mean, that's -- we've
18 all made the mistake at some point in our career of trying to do
19 that, and it's usually embarrassing because the plane just won't
20 leave the water. I've never tried to take off with the flaps in
21 the climb position. I would assume it would be -- the performance
22 would be adversely affected. I don't know if it would take off.
23 It might. I know with the flaps fully up, it's almost impossible
24 to get it airborne.

25 Q. And I'm not advocating for you to try it. I was just

1 curious.

2 A. I might sometime on a really huge lake. But that's been my
3 experience. Like I said, flaps fully up, it's unlikely it will
4 leave the water at any loading, oddly enough. In climb position,
5 I'm just not sure.

6 Q. And then with the flaps fully extended, such as for landing,
7 would you be able to get the doors open to load passengers and
8 cargo or would that impede the --

9 A. Yeah. Well you know, I've never, I've never tried it. In
10 the 206 it's problematic. In the Beaver, I think you can open the
11 doors with the flaps fully extended. But honestly, I guess I'm
12 not sure.

13 Q. Okay. So if you -- what flap setting do you guys typically
14 use for landing with flaps?

15 A. Landing, no, not usually full flaps. And the reason for that
16 is that the ailerons droop with the flaps. So it has, you know,
17 full trailing edge extension. Beyond a certain flap extension you
18 lose aileron authority, so -- you know, full flaps is sometimes
19 used for very short landings, but I use either takeoff flaps or
20 landing flaps depending on the circumstances.

21 Q. Okay. So if landing flaps are selected, complete your
22 mission, at that point, if you forget to retract them while you're
23 sailing in or taxiing up and you left them in that landing
24 position, is it pretty obvious? Versus takeoff, when you're out
25 walking around it?

1 A. Yeah. Yeah. It's -- yeah, it really is. Yeah, full flaps
2 is noticeably extreme, I guess, compared to takeoff flaps.

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

4 MS. PRICE: All right. Thank you.

5 Paula, do you have any questions?

6 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: I have no questions.

7 MS. PRICE: Pat, do you have any? Pat, are you there?

8 MR. HEMPEN: Sorry, this is Pat. Can you hear me?

9 MS. PRICE: Yeah, we can hear you now. Do you have any
10 follow-up questions?

11 MR. HEMPEN: Just real quickly the, on when handling a load.

12 BY MR. HEMPEN:

13 Q. So when you get a newer pilot, who is essentially new to this
14 kind of operation, I assume they do the weight and balance right
15 there on the scene when they're loading passengers and equipment.
16 Is that correct?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And do you go over that in the ground school? Is there any
19 like specific techniques or what have you on what would be
20 acceptable loads, or any kind of guidance on --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. So typically would you expect a pilot that was of Colt's
23 space to be able to accept -- you know, with the training he had
24 and everything, to assess if the load was doable? I mean, would
25 you think?

1 A. To assess that the load was what?

2 MR. RICHMOND: Doable.

3 MR. SCHULTE: Doable. Okay.

4 BY MR. HEMPEN:

5 Q. Would the flight be successful?

6 MR. RICHMOND: Would the flight be successful? I'm going to
7 interpret.

8 BY MR. HEMPEN:

9 Q. Say, if you show up with a certain amount of load, certain
10 amount of freight, a certain amount of people, how are they
11 calculating that and what kind of guidance do they have?

12 A. Okay. So during ground school we actually have each of the
13 pilots do several representative weight and balance calculations
14 based on different loads and different amounts of fuel. And it's
15 to get them in practice with using the tools we have for computing
16 the CG, first of all, and also to give them an idea of what they
17 should expect to be able to carry for a given plane with a
18 specific fuel load. And that -- accounting, of course, for their
19 own weight and the weight of the fuel and the aircraft, because
20 there are some differences amongst the three Beavers.

21 And we do place a lot of emphasis on CG. That's -- I mean,
22 in a floatplane, in particular, a properly loaded plane at gross
23 weight is one thing; an improperly loaded plane at gross weight is
24 another entirely. And we emphasize that a lot during both ground
25 training and flight training.

1 Q. Okay. Thanks. Yeah, thanks for bearing with me on that. So
2 I assume they fill out paperwork, then they make a weight and
3 balance sheet right there. Is it something that Colt put on paper
4 or is it just a calculation they make and it doesn't get recorded
5 anywhere, is what I'm asking?

6 A. For flights leaving Lake Hood, it gets recorded. Everybody
7 is weighed here on a digital scale. When we're out in the field,
8 we don't have the luxury of that scale. So it then becomes
9 incumbent upon the pilot to do it on the spot, asking weights of
10 the passengers or determining their weights, likewise the freight
11 or cargo that's going on, any fish, which is a very common thing
12 to have. So we have to do it, you know, on the spot and determine
13 from what's presented with us what we can carry and how to load
14 it.

15 Q. Okay. And does that get written down?

16 A. Typically it does not.

17 Q. It does not? Okay. So does that information ever get back
18 to home base? Would it be just something that you expect the
19 pilot, the on-scene pilot to make the proper calculation and that
20 wouldn't be transmitted back to base, obviously, since he's out of
21 coordinates? Is that correct?

22 A. The only time it would be relayed back to base would be if a
23 pilot went out and determined that the load was unsuitable, either
24 for that plane or those conditions, in which case we would
25 typically leave behind a portion of the load that we felt we could

1 not take, but we would attempt to determine as best we can, what
2 the weight of that load is so that we can convey it to the next
3 plane or to dispatch what the need was.

4 So, you know, if we went into a lodge, for example, and we
5 couldn't get everything that was there, we would then communicate
6 to the next plane coming in or to dispatch, hey, there's one more
7 person and X-number of -- you know, this much weight in baggage or
8 fish left behind. Then they would know what they're getting into
9 or dispatch would know what plane to dispatch to clean up the rest
10 of that load.

11 Q. Got you. That makes good sense. Yeah, and I'm really sorry.
12 I know this is not fun. But I appreciate that your helping us
13 out. One last question.

14 You know, we all know how the departure aircraft would go to,
15 -- basically, it's been doing a lot of circling getting up to
16 airspeed. Is that something, a technique that you all train to,
17 you know, to build up the airspeed, just taxi in continuous
18 circles as you rev up your speed, or is that a personal technique?

19 A. It's a technique that's fairly common in float flying. But
20 it's -- I think the technique is mischaracterized. The purpose of
21 doing a step-turn takeoff is not -- it is to build up speed, yes,
22 but that's an oversimplification. More importantly, the intent is
23 to get the plane on step and almost to flying speed but in a
24 position where you then have the maximum amount of lake left to
25 execute the rest of the takeoff.

1 So simply, so simply step-taxiing in circles really doesn't
2 accomplish much. The real value in it is getting the plane on
3 step, which itself takes up a certain amount of space, but then
4 reducing the power, step taxiing to a position on the lake where
5 one can then turn into the wind and then complete the takeoff in a
6 position that gives them more room to work with.

7 The way I characterize it to pilots, you are effectively
8 making your lake 500 or 600 feet larger than it really is.

9 MR. HEMPEN: Got you. Well, that makes a lot of sense.
10 Okay. That's a good explanation. So I'm putting that down. So
11 thanks. That's all I've got and thank you very much. Appreciate
12 it.

13 MS. PRICE: All right. Thank you, Pat. I have a couple of
14 quick follow-ups.

15 BY MS. PRICE:

16 Q. Are there any mobile scales on the planes when they go out?

17 A. There are. Yeah, we have little like mechanical fish scales
18 hanging in the back of each plane.

19 Q. Okay. Do you know what their maximum weight is? Can they
20 handle 50 pounds, 100 pounds?

21 A. Yeah. I think they'll go up over 100 pounds.

22 Q. So is there an expectation that pilots will weigh?

23 A. If they don't have a, if they don't have a pretty good idea
24 of what they're loading, then yes. Usually we have a pretty good
25 idea.

1 A lot of the lodges that we fly for, they do weigh the stuff
2 before they bring it to us. And then, you know, other types'
3 loads, for example, if we're picking up, you know, a rafting
4 party, you know, we know how much a raft weighs. We know how much
5 the frame weighs because we flew it out there. And that's often
6 part of the conversation. If we are picking up a group that we
7 dropped off the day before or the week before, very often we will
8 know what that load weighed when it left Lake Hood so we have a
9 reasonable expectation of what it's going to weigh coming back,
10 minus whatever food and beer they've consumed.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. So, I mean, it's --

13 Q. And it would be the duty officer who would have that
14 information and communicate it to the pilot?

15 A. Yeah. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. And then I believe this accident airplane was outfitted with
19 Aerocet floats for the season?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Right? This year?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Is there any performance difference between the Aerocets
24 and --

25 A. Yeah, over the EDOs, yeah. It's a definite improvement.

1 Q. So easier to take off on the Aerocets than the EDOs?

2 A. Yes. Yes, definitely.

3 Q. Okay. But no difference in the technique for takeoff or
4 anything along those lines?

5 A. Not really, no.

6 MS. PRICE: Okay. Does anyone else have follow-ups? Shaun?

7 MR. WILLIAMS: No.

8 MS. PRICE: Paula, any follow-ups?

9 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Just one question.

10 BY MS. HUCKLEBERRY:

11 Q. Are the aircraft equipped with tie-down equipment, nets, tie-
12 down rigs in the floor? And is it company policy to secure loads?

13 A. Yes. Absolutely. We have attach points all over the plane,
14 on the floor, on the bulkheads. We have these quick-release cargo
15 rings that we can position very quickly. And we have cargo nets
16 in all the planes, and it is the expectation that we use them.

17 We also carry cargo straps so if it's an unusual load that
18 somehow cannot be confined behind a cargo net or underneath a
19 cargo net, very often we'll strap it to the floor using either
20 those cargo straps or a seatbelt. So a propane canister, for
21 example, big propane canister, I will usually throw a seatbelt
22 over them to hold them into position so they can't slide fore and
23 aft, because they're quite heavy.

24 Q. Okay. And that's covered in the training program? And how
25 is it communicated to the pilot that they're required to tie loads

1 down?

2 A. That's -- for new hires that's part of what we cover in the
3 extra 2 days of ground school. Much of that time was spent on
4 seat removal training and just, you know, loading and -- well,
5 basically loading, properly loading the aircraft. So that's the
6 kind of thing that we would talk about during the last 2 days of
7 ground school.

8 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: All right. Thank you, Bruce.

9 MS. PRICE: All right, Bruce. Is there anything else you
10 think we should know about that will help the investigation?

11 MR. SCHULTE: The only thing that comes to mind, and I
12 suspect you guys know this already, that the accident aircraft did
13 have an Upgross kit. So it had a legal maximum, you know, gross
14 weight that was higher than our other two Beavers. So the same
15 engine, slightly different airfoil because there was some
16 modifications to the wing. So, I mean, I think that's probably
17 pertinent.

18 MS. PRICE: It is. Yeah. Anything else?

19 MR. SCHULTE: No.

20 MS. PRICE: If anything comes up, feel free to give me a
21 shout and let me in on it and we can chat about it. Thank you
22 very much. I really appreciate your time.

23 MR. SCHULTE: You bet.

24 MS. PRICE: All right. That concludes --

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

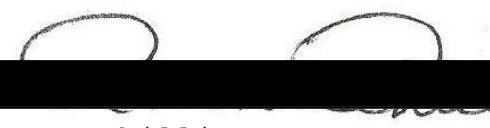
IN THE MATTER OF: REGAL AIR DHC-2 ACCIDENT IN
 WILLOW, ALASKA, JULY 18, 2018
 Interview of Bruce Schulte

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA055

PLACE:

DATE: August 21, 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.



Romona Phillips
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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REGAL AIR DHC-2 ACCIDENT IN
WILLOW, ALASKA, JULY 18, 2018

* Accident No.: ANC18FA055

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Interview of: TONY BANNOCK, Vice President
Alaska SkywaysTuesday,
August 21, 2018

APPEARANCES:

NOREEN PRICE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

PAT HEMPEN, Accident Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

ROBERT RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Mr. Bannock)

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I N T E R V I E W

MS. PRICE: Okay. I'm Noreen Price, aviation accident investigator for the NTSB, the IIC of this particular accident ANC18FA055.

The NTSB is an independent, federal agency charged with determining the probable causes of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the DOT or the FAA. It has no regulatory enforcement powers.

I'd like to introduce all the group members. We'll start with Shaun.

MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams with the NTSB up here in Anchorage.

MS. PRICE: Pat?

MR. HEMPEN: Anyway, so you wanted me to introduce myself? I'm sorry. I missed that part.

MS. PRICE: Yeah, that's okay. If you could just say your name and your title, please?

MR. HEMPEN: Yes. So Patrick Hempen, AVP-100; that's the Accident Investigation Division at FAA headquarters.

MS. PRICE: Great. Thank you. And Bob?

MR. RICHMOND: So my name is Bob Richmond. I'm here representing Tony.

MS. PRICE: Okay. We'll be recording this, and the file will be transcribed, as we discussed previously, and that transcription will be part of the public docket.

1 The purpose of the investigation is safety, to determine
2 probable cause and prevent reoccurrence. Our role is not to
3 assign fault, blame or liability. This interview is part of the
4 fact-finding phase of the investigation. We cannot, however,
5 offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity.

6 Everybody -- I will lead the questions. Everybody will have
7 their chance to ask questions afterwards. Please answer all
8 questions to the best of your recollection. If you don't
9 understand a question, you can ask to have it repeated or
10 explained. If you realize you misstated or you need to modify a
11 previous answer, please go ahead and do so.

12 You're entitled to have one representative of your choosing.
13 Is there someone you'd like to have represent you today?

14 MR. BANNOCK: Me?

15 MS. PRICE: Yeah.

16 MR. BANNOCK: Bob.

17 MS. PRICE: Okay. Bob cannot answer any questions for you,
18 but if you need to confer with him, we'll stop the recording and
19 you can go ahead and do so.

20 Before we get started, do you have any questions?

21 MR. BANNOCK: No.

22 INTERVIEW OF ANTHONY BANNOCK

23 BY MS. PRICE:

24 Q. For the record, can you please state your name, spell it, and
25 then your job title?

1 A. Anthony Bannock, A-N-T-H-O-N-Y, B-A-N-N-O-C-K. It'd be vice
2 president for Alaska Skyways.

3 Q. How long have you been with the company, Tony?

4 A. Nine years full-time.

5 Q. And your title is VP. What are some of the duties and
6 positions that you hold other than that?

7 A. Day-to-day operations, running the day-to-day operations.

8 Q. Can you give me a brief description of your aviation
9 background?

10 A. I've got a private pilot, single engine sea, single engine
11 land. I've worked at Peninsula Airways for 3 years, and I've been
12 at Lake Head for the last -- since I was 16, so for 14 years.

13 Q. Did you ever work as a dispatch person in any of those --

14 A. No. I mean, just here but not like a certified dispatcher.

15 Q. Yeah, other than here. Right. So you are responsible
16 primarily for the day-to-day scheduling of flights? Is that --

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. -- a good description?

19 A. Yep.

20 Q. Do you need to take that? You're good?

21 A. No. Yeah, it's fine.

22 Q. Do you have enough resources to fulfill those duties?

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. How many airplanes do you guys currently have on this
25 certificate?

1 A. Well, six.

2 Q. Three -- what types of airplanes?

3 A. Three 206s, two Beavers and a Navajo.

4 Q. Okay. Are you on a salary or some other comp method?

5 A. Salary.

6 Q. So if you could describe how you go about scheduling flights,
7 assigning pilots in an airplane and provide information to the
8 pilots to conduct a safe flight?

9 A. Like how we decide? Well, I mean, first of all, we've some
10 guys that are only checked out in a wheeled plane, some guys that
11 are only checked out in float planes. So it just -- I mean, that
12 has a lot to do with it, who's checked out in what, who's --

13 Q. But how do you know -- where do you get that information?
14 Like --

15 A. It's -- I just know. I mean --

16 Q. Is it on a computer?

17 A. Well, we've got it figured out from when we do -- who's got
18 what check ride and whatnot, and that's -- I just -- you know,
19 Bruce will let me know that. So, I mean, it's pretty -- it just
20 depends on the trip and it depends on the day and whatnot. I
21 mean, because I've got some guys that are really good at doing
22 flightseeing tours and other guys that I hate sending them on
23 flightseeing tours because they never see anything. So there's a
24 million -- I mean, there's lots of different variables for each
25 different flight.

1 Q. So you have nothing -- you have no like written thing, like
2 these are the new pilots, these are the only airports they can go
3 to, so therefore I know I need to only assign this pilot to this
4 plane or --

5 A. No. I mean, that doesn't -- we don't go to airports really
6 hardly ever.

7 Q. Lakes.

8 A. So as far as destinations --

9 Q. It sounds to me that the way you describe it, you just know
10 all the pilots and you just assign them as necessary?

11 A. Right.

12 Q. Okay. But -- and you have all the restrictions on pilots
13 memorized?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. You know who can't go where? Is that what you're saying to
16 me?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. There's no like --

19 A. Well, there is a spreadsheet that has who's checked out in
20 our most common spots that we have.

21 Q. Okay. You have that available to you?

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. But, I mean, after one day of looking at it, like it's -- we
25 don't have that many. Yeah, so it's -- yes, there is a checklist

1 or a thing that we do every spring, this -- okay, these guys are
2 checked out in these spots in this airplane, these guys are
3 checked out in these spots, and we go from there.

4 Q. Okay. And then the airplane status every morning, who's
5 responsible for giving you the status of the airplanes themselves
6 to assign?

7 A. As far as, like if they're --

8 Q. Airworthiness, if the plane is down for inspection or
9 whatever, how do you know?

10 A. We communicate that with our mechanic, Kennedy.

11 Q. Okay. So Kennedy --

12 A. So he would let me know if there's an airplane down for
13 maintenance.

14 Q. He just calls you and says --

15 A. And every night we --

16 Q. -- this plane is not available?

17 A. Well, and every night we do a maintenance slip that has how
18 much time's left on it for a 100-hour oil change, things like
19 that. So that way we can forecast when its going to be down, and
20 then him and I talk and say when do we want the airplane to be
21 done for an inspection.

22 (Phone interruption.)

23 MR. BANNOCK: I do have to take this one.

24 MS. PRICE: Yeah. Go ahead. We're going to pause for a
25 moment.

1 (Off the record.)

2 (On the record.)

3 BY MS. PRICE:

4 Q. All right. We're describing how you put flights together.
5 You know about the airplanes that are assigned, the airworthiness
6 status. You have a -- you have all the pilots and you assign them
7 flights as you see necessary. Do you have any discussions with
8 pilots about weather, NOTAMS, things like that, or is that on the
9 pilots to do?

10 A. Before every flight.

11 Q. Okay. NOTAMS and weather or just weather or --

12 A. Mostly just weather, because we hardly ever have NOTAMS
13 because we don't go to airports that often.

14 Q. Okay. And who is responsible for releasing the flight? Do
15 you have release authority or does the pilot, the one that says
16 yes and no on a flight?

17 A. It's the pilot in command, yeah.

18 Q. Okay. So a pilot can say no to scheduled flight that you
19 provide to them?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. And the fuel load information is -- who figures that out?

22 A. The pilot.

23 Q. And how do you know what fuel load the pilot has on the plane
24 when you release it?

25 A. After their call up, once they're -- usually it's about over

1 Point McKenzie.

2 Q. Okay. And your release process, just so I understand, is a
3 yellow sticky, right?

4 A. That's the flight route. Yeah.

5 Q. That's the flight route and who's assigned to it and what
6 airplane is assigned to it, that's your way of --

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. -- releasing a flight to somebody or scheduling a flight? Do
9 you have operational control authority for Regal?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do you have any training in operational control?

12 A. Just OJT.

13 Q. And who provides you the OJT?

14 A. Mike did.

15 Q. Okay. Do you have any dispatch training?

16 A. No. Not on paper.

17 Q. So you don't have a certificate, but have you ever been
18 through any dispatch courses or anything like that? Okay.

19 So who decides what baggage and cargo is loaded on the
20 airplane?

21 A. As far as like what is going to be on there?

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. When it's out of here, it's me, usually. Me or a ramp -- or
24 a dock lead.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And the pilot. It's a group effort. You know, like, hey,
2 this is the bags we've got to move. You get a dock boy to get
3 them together. The pilot says, all right, I want to load it this
4 way; I want to put this much in the floats, this -- so we all
5 three work together on it. It's not just really one person.

6 Q. Okay. And how are the weights obtained for passengers?

7 A. With a scale.

8 Q. And the baggage?

9 A. With a scale.

10 Q. Do you know, is the scale calibrated at all?

11 A. Um-hum. They come by every spring.

12 Q. And do you keep a copy of weight and balance or manifest
13 information?

14 A. No. I don't.

15 Q. Um-hum. So what --

16 A. Well, I mean as far -- what do you mean manifest? Like who
17 is on the airplane and whatnot?

18 Q. Who's on the airplane --

19 A. I've got it on --

20 Q. -- what's on the airplane --

21 A. It's all on our, on our scheduling -- on our scheduling
22 program there's a spot for each appointment. There's a note that
23 you put on who was on the airplane, how many people, any sort of
24 note you want to add to it.

25 Q. Okay. How about hazardous, any hazardous cargo that you need

1 to move? How does that work?

2 A. We just do that with a -- with our hazmat forms.

3 Q. Okay. Because you're a will carry, right? That's what your
4 -- will carry operator?

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. So how do you -- what do you do with the forms, if you could
7 explain that to me?

8 A. So the, --we'll fill out the form, have the customer sign it,
9 make a copy of it. One goes with the pilot, the other one gets
10 filed into our hazmat filing form.

11 Q. So when the -- what about when a passenger -- when a pilot
12 picks up a load of cargo at in another place, how do you know --

13 A. Then he's just got it with him and then he'll bring it back.
14 I mean, there's not a fax machine at First Lake or anything, you
15 know. That's just how we have to do it. He's just got a copy of
16 it.

17 Q. Okay. He doesn't take a photograph or anything of it?

18 A. Again, there's no cell service or anything. Like what --
19 it's not going to do you any -- he may as well just hang on to it
20 and then we'll put it in the file when he gets back.

21 Q. Okay. So you wouldn't necessarily know if there was
22 hazardous cargo on board until it --

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. -- arrives back here with him?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Okay. How do you keep track of crew rest and flight hour
2 limitations?

3 A. Everyone's on a 7 to 9 duty day.

4 Q. And how many days a week?

5 A. Two days off a week.

6 Q. Is that pretty consistent or are there times when there
7 are --

8 A. Very consistent. Sometimes even more than that.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. A lot of times more than that.

11 Q. And for pilots who work in other companies, how do you know
12 what they're up to?

13 A. That's their job to tell me what their hours are over there.

14 Q. Okay. And how do you know when they're available to fly for
15 you?

16 A. I just shoot them a text message and say, what's your
17 schedule; can you do a trip?

18 Q. Does the company put any restrictions on new pilots' flights?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What type of restrictions and how do you manage that?

21 A. Well, mostly it's weather restrictions and then where they
22 can go. I mean, there's some trickier river locations that, you
23 know, need to be more of a seasoned guy versus -- as opposed to
24 somebody with lower float time, or airstrips or something like
25 that. So we just talk about it between the chief pilot, the

1 owner, the pilot.

2 Q. Okay. It's nothing -- is there any written guidance, or is
3 it just --

4 A. Well, for the weather there is. And I'd have to pull it up
5 to see exactly what it is. But for first-year guys, there is a
6 set of rules that they have to abide by, which is -- it's written
7 down somewhere. I don't know where the policy is.

8 Q. Is it like an SOP or is it GOM? Do you know where that
9 policy is?

10 A. Yeah. It would be -- I'd have to ask Bruce where he kept it
11 but --

12 Q. Okay. All right.

13 A. It's pretty restrictive.

14 Q. And was that in effect prior to this accident or is it
15 something that's new since the accident?

16 A. A little of both.

17 Q. Okay. So it's been -- you had a policy before but since the
18 accident you've modified it?

19 A. We tightened it up a little bit.

20 Q. Okay. So what is the current policy?

21 A. That's what I -- I'd have to ask Bruce.

22 Q. Oh, you don't know. That's all right. We can look at that
23 up. Let's just make that an action point when we're done.

24 So does the company provide flight information about
25 destination lakes or remote airports, airstrips, whatever you want

1 to call them, to pilots? Information?

2 A. Yeah. We've got a book that's got all the -- it's basically
3 like an Alaska supplement, but for the places that we go to that
4 has a lot of -- you know, this has been stretched out on Google
5 Earth. And then nobody ever goes anywhere that they haven't been
6 before without talking to somebody else or doing a ride-along or
7 something to that specific location.

8 Q. So Willow Lake, is that in there?

9 A. I doubt Willow Lake is because it's on the road system. But
10 again, that's not one that should take a whole lot of -- yeah.

11 Q. Why is that? Can you explain that?

12 A. Because it's big and round and --

13 Q. Okay. Is there pressure for pilots to -- (phone buzzing) Is
14 that you?

15 Is there pressure on pilots to complete flights on time?

16 A. Well, I mean, as far as being -- as opposed to being safe?
17 Absolutely not. But I don't like -- I mean, we are trying to keep
18 a schedule and there are -- you know, we can't just lollygag all
19 day, but -- so, I mean, there's a little bit of, hey, we've got to
20 get going a little bit, but not like anyone's holding a gun to
21 anyone's head. So to answer your question, absolutely not.

22 Q. Um-hum. So explain to me the com system with the airplane,
23 the airplanes. You are not in communication with them the whole
24 time or you do have satellite communications with an airplane,
25 or --

1 A. It depends on where they're at.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And I can talk to them with -- on the radio is the most
4 common, easy one. Or we do have texting capabilities through our
5 Spidertracks.

6 Q. Okay. From Willow Lake, do you have cell phone service?

7 A. I'm sure, yeah. I've never tried to -- actually, I have.
8 Yeah, the cell phones do -- because at least Verizon does
9 Willow --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- when I was there for Iditarod.

12 Q. And how much time do you schedule for turnarounds here at
13 base to -- for pilots to get their information, their fuel load,
14 their weight and balance, so on and so forth, the routing?

15 A. They usually have -- I mean, depending on the day. Some days
16 it's 20 minutes; some days it's 4 hours. I mean, it just depends
17 on what's going on in the schedule.

18 Q. Okay. So you don't have a routine -- it's different every
19 day, is what you're saying, or --

20 A. Yeah. I mean, it's not like we have like a 3 o'clock flight,
21 a 4 o'clock flight. Like, you know, it's an on-demand charter
22 service, so --

23 Q. Right. What do you consider minimum? When you throw
24 together the schedule, you're the one making those decisions.
25 What's the minimum time you would provide for a turnaround time

1 here at the base?

2 A. Ten minutes probably. I mean, it depends on the trip, too.
3 I mean, if it's going all the way across the mountains and they
4 need to -- I don't know, there's a lot of different variables.
5 It's not just a cut and dry question like that. So I don't know.

6 Q. That's okay. How about maintenance? In your opinion, how
7 are the company airplanes maintained?

8 A. Fantastic.

9 Q. Okay. And who is the current DOM?

10 A. That would be -- I think it's still Matthew Green, but you'd
11 have to check with Mike on that one because I think he was waiting
12 on a signature to make Kennedy the DOM.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But Kennedy, between Kennedy -- Kennedy does all the -- he's
15 the main guy that we talk to. And then we've also got Star Farmer
16 with White Wings that helps out quite a bit, as well.

17 Q. Okay. So on the day of the accident, can you describe the
18 disposition of Colt Richter before his flight? Did he -- how did
19 he seem?

20 A. Normal.

21 Q. Give me a couple of descriptors for normal for Colt because
22 unfortunately I never got to --

23 A. Smiley, tall, handsome, good looking, ready to fly.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. A girl on each arm.

1 Q. He looked well rested?

2 A. Indeed.

3 Q. Did he have any earlier flights the day of the accident?

4 A. Not that I know of.

5 Q. How would we find that out?

6 A. Well, he didn't have any flights with us that day.

7 Q. Oh, I should say with Regal. Yeah.

8 A. No, he didn't.

9 Q. So this was his only scheduled flight for Regal?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. All right. Was he told how many passengers to expect before

12 heading over to Willow and was he told there was a 2½-year-old

13 child there as well?

14 A. He was told a child and her baby.

15 Q. A passenger and her baby?

16 A. Or, I'm sorry, a passenger and her baby. A mom and baby.

17 Q. Okay. And why was a Beaver assigned to a flight for just two

18 passengers, as opposed to a 206?

19 A. A 206 wasn't available.

20 Q. Okay. How often do you guys do Medicaid flights?

21 A. That was our second trip, I think. Second or third.

22 Q. And how did you know what the expected load was supposed to

23 be at Willow Lake? Or do you -- just tell me how on the day of

24 the accident, how you knew what the load --

25 A. I called the gal, Mrs. Stone, and asked her how much stuff

1 she had. And she told me, me and my baby and 600 pounds of
2 groceries.

3 Q. And was the pilot told how much to expect?

4 A. He was standing right next to me.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And then I -- I mean, I was on the phone with her and just
7 told him that.

8 Q. Okay. And what was the fuel load for the accident plane?

9 A. He had 70 gallons, front and center tank full.

10 Q. And that information came off the fuel board that he filled
11 in prior to going? Does --

12 A. And I remember fueling him that day.

13 Q. Okay. Did the pilot call you or any other company personnel
14 from Willow Lake that day? Okay.

15 A. No.

16 Q. How did you find out about the accident?

17 A. We got a call -- I was across the parking lot and we got a
18 call from the RCC saying the ELT was going off.

19 MS. PRICE: Okay. I don't have any questions. Shaun?

20 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

21 Q. So discussing weather with the pilot, how does that
22 conversation go? Where do you get your weather information?

23 A. Cameras mostly, a lot of times people on the ground. Mostly
24 weather cameras.

25 Q. The people on the ground, are they trained in any way?

1 A. Absolutely not. But, I mean, it's just from, hey, how up can
2 you see the mountain? You know, again, that's when you -- we just
3 don't get a lot of airport stuff where we can get terminal area
4 forecasts or anything. Like a lot of it's just how high up the
5 mountain can you see and is the lake white-capping? That's most
6 of the -- a lot of the info we can get.

7 Q. You mentioned dispatch training not on paper. What'd you
8 mean by that?

9 A. I mean, training as far as like I'm working at an airline for
10 a while, and then just working here for so long.

11 Q. So what is your position at --

12 A. I started off as a ramper and then I was the ramp -- I don't
13 -- ramp -- I don't even remember what the title was. But I
14 trained all the rampers that came through there, through the whole
15 system.

16 Q. Operational control. You said you have operational control?

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Where is that delegated to you?

19 A. It's in the -- our company -- it's in one of our books back
20 here. It says that it's operational control.

21 Q. Is it in the GOM?

22 A. Yes. There you go.

23 Q. Do you know if it's in the OpSpecs?

24 A. I'd have to look. I'm sure.

25 Q. What does operational control mean to you?

1 A. There's a definition from it in there, but just being able to
2 oversee the flights, make sure -- know where the airplanes are at,
3 where they're going, where they're supposed to be, where they
4 should be, where they shouldn't be.

5 Q. Is it terminating flights with operational control? Can you
6 terminate a flight?

7 A. When they come back here?

8 Q. Just in general. Can you say you're done right where you
9 are? Can you terminate a flight?

10 A. I could. I don't know what that means.

11 Q. Stopping a flight. Can you tell them turn around, if you've
12 got radio coms, to turn around, come back?

13 A. Oh, absolutely.

14 Q. Can you initiate a flight? Some passengers come up and say,
15 we want to schedule?

16 A. Absolutely.

17 Q. So can you, in that case, schedule pilots and aircraft?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. So there was the list that Noreen was talking about as far as
20 where pilots can go and that sort of thing, and you said you'd
21 have to look. So do you know, do you have memorized where every
22 pilot can go, or do you pull that up every single day before you
23 schedule them?

24 A. For the most part, we've got it memorized or it's a -- if
25 it's any sort of -- it's basically for where they're checked out

1 at, like for our most common spots that we go to. So like Willow
2 Lake isn't a most common spot, but it's not -- it wasn't -- it's
3 not a real -- can you guys give us two seconds here? Can I talk
4 to him for a minute? Didn't you say I can talk to him?

5 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah.

6 MS. PRICE: Yep. Absolutely. Okay. We're taking a break.

7 (Off the record.)

8 (On the record.)

9 MS. PRICE: Okay. We are recording again.

10 MR. BANNOCK: So as far as the list of places we go, it's a
11 list of our most common destinations that somebody would be
12 dispatched to. For a spot like Willow Lake, there wasn't really
13 much to -- I mean, we talked about it ahead of time. But it's not
14 like -- I mean, if we -- there just wasn't much to know. It was a
15 pretty straightforward lake.

16 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

17 Q. So do pilots have to review anything different, then -- so if
18 it's not in the book or the binder and they're going somewhere
19 new, like Willow Lake, in this instance, is there something where
20 he should go to look up information about it? Should he have gone
21 with somebody beforehand?

22 A. We use Google Earth quite a bit.

23 Q. How does that work?

24 A. We use Google Earth quite a bit and talked about the
25 different things for that specific location.

1 Q. Does he talk about -- are the pilots expected to talk about
2 that with Mike or Bruce?

3 A. Mike or Bruce or somebody that has been there before, that
4 knows what they're -- like not another first-year guy, but like
5 Devon, our assistant chief pilot, or Dave, who used to be our
6 chief pilot, somebody -- a senior pilot.

7 Q. Okay. And when talking about the pressure that's put on
8 pilots, you know, you mentioned that, yeah, there is pressure; you
9 don't want to go lollygagging or whatever.

10 A. I think pressure, I think pressure is the wrong word. I
11 think what we try to do is we try -- it's just like if you work at
12 McDonald's. Like, okay, this guy ordered a burger, like we're not
13 going to sit here and take our smoke break after this guy orders a
14 burger. But at the same time, though, we want to make sure the
15 burger's done right, and before we send it out there.

16 So yes, we do have a schedule to keep, but I don't really
17 like the word pressure because that's not what we're doing. But
18 at the same time, there are days when we're on weather days and
19 the weather clears, we've got to go get these guys out of here;
20 what can I do to make your life easier so we can turn the planes
21 as fast as we can safely.

22 Q. So on those weather days, are the pilots compensated at all
23 or do they lose pay?

24 A. They're paid by the hour.

25 Q. So if they don't fly due to weather or something like that,

1 then they don't get paid?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And so then at that point, do you guys try to squeeze
4 everything you can for the rest of the day to whatever time is
5 remaining?

6 A. It depends on where the weather gets good and when, and how
7 much time we have. Every day is different.

8 Q. So if the weather is getting good, do you try to squeeze
9 everything you can into that day, into what's remaining?

10 A. With what's remaining and what we have time to do. Like I
11 said, they've got to be -- we shoot for we're back on the dock by
12 8:30 at the latest, so that way they can wrap up and be out of
13 here before 9.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: That's all I have for right now.

15 MS. PRICE: Pat, do you have any questions for Tony?

16 MR. HEMPEN: Just a couple.

17 BY MR. HEMPEN:

18 Q. Thanks, Tony. I know you're real busy and you're handling
19 the operations. It's a tough time to be talking to us and I'm
20 sorry for what you've been through. But when you need to contact
21 your people out in the field, I mean, are you able to with -- you
22 say, VHF or sat phones or regular cell phone, are you always in
23 contact?

24 A. Are you talking about our pilots or like the --

25 Q. Yes, the pilots. Yes.

1 A. No. But -- well, yes. Via Spider text, you should always be
2 able to get them, but that's -- that can be kind of spotty
3 sometimes. But a lot of times what we can do is, if we have
4 another airplane that's closer, they can relay a message, and go
5 back and forth and we can communicate that way. Or, you know,
6 what I just did, you know, I can call -- as somebody's flying over
7 a spot that I know has a landline that they have a VHF radio, I
8 can call them and they can pass on a message. So we've got a
9 bunch of different ways to try to pass along messages and
10 communicate with each other.

11 Q. Okay. Well, I guess, basically what I'm looking for is, you
12 know, the pilots need some kind of support if they're trying to
13 make a go/no-go decision, they can bring you in the loop to talk
14 about it usually pretty well, then?

15 A. Most of the time. Yeah.

16 Q. Right. Okay. Good. On the day of the accident, like when
17 you said -- when the lady said, me, my baby and 600 pounds, and
18 you had 7 gallons of fuel -- or 70 gallons of fuel, is that normal
19 operations?

20 A. Very.

21 Q. It is. Yeah. So that wouldn't raise any red flags?

22 A. Not one bit.

23 Q. And you're saying that Willow Lake is not a confined lake?

24 A. I'm sorry. It's not a what?

25 Q. A confined?

1 A. Correct. Yeah. Well, it's a big, round lake. Pretty
2 straightforward.

3 Q. So it's not one that would have raised a red flag where you
4 would have been maybe taking some extra precautions or anything?
5 It was a routine operation, then, in your mind?

6 A. Correct.

7 MR. HEMPEN: Okay. Good. That's all I have for that. I
8 sure appreciate it and thanks a lot.

9 MR. BANNOCK: Okay.

10 MS. PRICE: All right, Tony. Real quick, I have two more.

11 BY MS. PRICE:

12 Q. Were there any changes made to the way you operate since last
13 year's accident, the one that occurred last summer?

14 A. Definitely keeping new guys on a tighter leash, you know, but
15 -- yeah, there -- yeah, that's probably the big one, is being very
16 -- I mean, that's just, yeah, being very thorough and making sure
17 that everybody gets a solid rundown for each spot they go to. And
18 you know, making sure it's an easy spot, so to speak, and keeping
19 them on a pretty short weather leash, destination leash, things
20 like that.

21 Q. Okay. How about after this accident, same --

22 A. Tightened it up even more.

23 Q. Just -- same things, just tighter?

24 A. Um-hum.

25 MS. PRICE: Great. Okay.

1 All right. I don't have anything else. Anybody?

2 All right. Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

3 (Whereupon, 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: REGAL AIR DHC-2 ACCIDENT IN
 WILLOW, ALASKA, JULY 18, 2018
 Interview of Tony Bannock

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA055

PLACE:

DATE: August 21, 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.


Romona Phillips
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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REGAL AIR DHC-2 ACCIDENT IN
WILLOW, ALASKA, JULY 18, 2018

* Accident No.: ANC18FA055

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Interview of: RHYAN McMILLAN, Pilot
Regal AirTuesday,
August 21, 2018

APPEARANCES:

NOREEN PRICE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

PAULA HUCKLEBERRY, Investigator in Charge
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

PAT HEMPEN, Accident Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration

BOB RICHMOND, Esq.
(On behalf of Ms. McMillan)

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By Mr. Williams		25
By Mr. Hempen		26

I N T E R V I E W

MS. PRICE: Okay. The recording is on. Come on in Bob. I'm Noreen Price, NTSB aviation accident investigator. I'm the IIC for this investigation, ANC18FA055.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the Department of Transportation or the FAA. It has no regulatory enforcement powers.

First, I'd like to introduce everybody who's here. We'll start with Shaun, then Paula, then Pat, Bob, and we'll be done.

Go ahead, Shaun.

MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams, the NTSB out of Anchorage, Alaska.

MS. PRICE: Okay. Paula?

MS. HUCKLEBERRY: Paula Huckleberry. I'm the FAA investigator in charge for this accident.

MS. PRICE: Pat?

MR. HEMPEN: Pat Hempen. I'm with AVP-100. That's the FAA's Accident Investigation Division out here in Washington D.C.

MS. PRICE: Bob?

MR. RICHMOND: So my name is Bob Richmond. I'm here representing the witness.

MS. PRICE: Okay. I'd like to repeat, too, our FAA investigators that are participating are not enforcement. This is

1 for a safety investigation. So nothing we talk about today here
2 will be used in an enforcement activities.

3 Today we'll be using -- we'll be recording everything, and
4 then I'll be sending off that file to a company that will
5 transcribe it and then the recording will be deleted. But the
6 transcription will be part of the investigative docket when the
7 investigation is published.

8 The purpose of the investigation is safety, to determine
9 probable cause and prevent reoccurrence. Our role is not to
10 assign fault, blame or liability. This interview is part of a
11 fact-finding phase of the investigation.

12 You work here, you fly the airplanes, you know a lot more
13 about the operation than we are, so that's why we asked you to be
14 here today. Thank you.

15 Each of the group members will have a chance to ask
16 questions. We'll ask questions one at a time, and everyone has
17 been instructed not to interrupt the person asking the questions.
18 Please answer all questions to the best of your recollection.

19 If you don't understand a question, just say, you don't
20 understand it, or ask us to explain it. If you realize you've
21 misstated, or you need to modify a previous answer, please do so.

22 You're entitled to have one representative of your choosing.
23 Is there someone that you would like to have as your
24 representative?

25 MS. McMILLAN: Yeah, Bob.

1 MS. PRICE: What's your last name, Bob?

2 MR. RICHMOND: R-I-C-H-M-O-N-D.

3 MS. PRICE: Okay. Thank you. Bob cannot answer any
4 questions for you. If you need to consult with him, we'll just
5 take a break and you can go ahead and do that. Do you have any
6 questions about --

7 MS. McMILLAN: No. No questions.

8 MS. PRICE: -- the interview? Thank you very much.

9 INTERVIEW OF RHYAN McMILLAN

10 BY MS. PRICE:

11 Q. Okay. So for the record, please state your name and job
12 title?

13 A. Rhyan McMillan, pilot at Regal.

14 Q. Can you spell your name, please?

15 A. R-H-Y-A-N, M-c-M-I-L-L-A-N.

16 Q. Great. Thank you. How long have you worked for Regal?

17 A. This is my first year.

18 Q. And what is your position here?

19 A. Pilot.

20 Q. As what? What type of -- PIC for what air --

21 A. The de Havilland or -- so the Beaver on floats and then the
22 206 on wheels.

23 Q. Okay. Can you give me a brief description of your aviation
24 background, when you started, about how many total hours, who
25 you've worked for before, if anyone?

1 A. Yeah. So I started all my flying in New Zealand and worked
2 there for 4 years. I'm an American citizen and came over here 6
3 years ago, flew for Penn Air for 4½ years. And then I started
4 with -- on floats last summer with Emerald Air down in Homer, and
5 moved up to Regal this year. And I've got about 6500 hours or so.

6 Q. And did you have Beaver float time prior to coming to Regal?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. How much Beaver float time?

9 A. About 300 hours.

10 Q. But you don't fly the 206 on floats?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Just on wheels?

13 A. Just on wheels, yeah.

14 Q. Okay. So are you paid by the hour or are you on any type of
15 salary?

16 A. Paid by the flight hour.

17 Q. Flight hour?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay. Do you fly for any other companies at this time?

20 A. I fly part-time for Hilcorp.

21 Q. And what do you fly for them?

22 A. A Twin Otter.

23 Q. When did you go through initial training here?

24 A. I believe it's April 9th was ground school.

25 Q. All right. Can you describe the initial training, just a

1 brief description of what initial training --

2 A. Yeah. So we had a week of training, from about 8 to 5, with
3 the first 3 days with all employees, and the last 2 days were with
4 the first-year employees, to go through the OpSpecs and everything
5 that a second year or, you know, the people that have come back
6 from -- already knowing all this stuff. So the different runways
7 and airports and going through different things like that. So --
8 yeah.

9 Q. And then after initial training, what other training did you
10 participate in before you were able to fly as a PIC?

11 A. We did ride-alongs. So I would go with Bruce or Mike or some
12 of the senior pilots and fly -- or sit in the right seat and look
13 at some of the places they were going. And then they put us
14 through flight training for different areas and different things.

15 Q. So did you have any Beaver training when you got here with
16 them? Did you do ride-alongs in the Beaver on floats with them?

17 A. Yes. Yeah.

18 Q. And was that training or was it a ride-along on a flight, or
19 both?

20 A. A bit of both. Like we had a couple where the legs were
21 empty going one way, so we're sitting there talking about stuff
22 and places, some of the places that we go. And then sometimes
23 without passengers, where it was me going to look at the area.

24 Q. Okay. Do you know if that was documented in your training
25 record? Like do you have a document --

1 A. I think those ones where they have passengers and stuff like
2 that, I wasn't putting down. The ones that we're actually going
3 out and training in the plane and doing the -- all that was.

4 Q. Did you actually have then separate training flights?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Sorry, I -- oh, you do?

7 A. Yes. And that was all documented. Yeah. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. Do you remember about how many or --

9 A. No. I don't, no.

10 Q. Okay. Do you remember doing any maximum gross weight
11 takeoffs or heavy takeoffs?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. As part of the training?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And how was that simulated? Do you remember?

16 A. Yeah. We had horse feed put -- one of our Conex containers
17 has 50-pound horse feed bags, and we would use them for weight.

18 Q. Okay. Did you feel like the training they gave you was
19 adequate before you were asked to sign as a PIC?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Can you describe for me a typical summer flight here in the
22 float-equipped Beaver? So you arrive at the base, what occurs
23 prior to takeoff and how does it occur? Like how do you know what
24 airplane you have, what your load's going to be, kind of top to
25 bottom, how do you depart?

1 A. So we get told the night prior of what our client is to show
2 and what our airplane and first flight will be. That's from Mike
3 or Tony. And so we have say at -- let's just say 7 o'clock show.
4 So we'll show up at 7 and we'll do -- I'll walk into the office
5 and Tony or Mike, who is dispatching that day, has a yellow sticky
6 note and it has the airplane, the destination, if we have the
7 people's names, what -- usually the last name of the group and how
8 many. It's got the time of departure and then it will have -- on
9 a separate line there'll be a -- if we're picking up or -- picking
10 up other people and the details they have on it.

11 So we'll have that. We'll talk to the dispatcher. They'll
12 run it by us if there's anything that needs to be said or done on
13 the flight. I'll go out and I'll preflight the whole plane, go
14 through it. And then get our flight plan, make sure everything's
15 signed off, everything good. And then usually before I take off,
16 I go back in and double check that we're good to go, nothing's
17 changed, and take off and do the flight.

18 Q. Are the weights on the yellow sticky, or how do you know the
19 weight of the passengers and the weight of the cargo that's going
20 on?

21 A. Nope. They're not -- it's not on the yellow sticky. It is
22 -- the dockhand, dock boys have a set of scales that are right by
23 the planes, and everything's weighed. They have a sheet in front
24 of them and they have what airplane and what the weight it for
25 that airplane. And then they'll talk to us, and if it happens to

1 be overweight, like too much, we'll discuss it and then we just
2 talk with the clients and take whatever we need off or --

3 Q. How often does that happen?

4 A. Depending on what the season is, you know, like if you're
5 doing a fishing, it's not very often because people are just going
6 out with their day bags and going fishing. Right now, with some
7 of the hunting and stuff, it's happening on pretty much every day.
8 And then it's -- they're told when they call up what weight
9 they're allowed for the planes. It's part of the thing and -- so
10 they're not coming in blindsided. And so -- but you go to the
11 grocery store and you think you've got enough room for a little
12 bit more and you don't realize that you're a little heavier than
13 you thought.

14 Q. So how about when you're -- when you go out to pick somebody
15 like that up in the field, how do you determine what their load is
16 or --

17 A. We have scales that are in the back of the Beaver so we can
18 weigh them. Again, for most of them, you had the weight of what
19 they were going out. All that's kept. And so, again, if you're
20 going out to the day fishermen and you know that they were 1200
21 pounds going out, they're 1200 pounds coming back, unless they've
22 caught a whole bunch of fish. And they have scales at a lot of
23 the lodges that are telling you exactly how much the stuff weighs
24 as well.

25 Q. What if it's a really big moose?

1 A. That's what the scale is in the back. And you have to use
2 your best judgment, to be honest. I use a scale and I use -- I
3 mean I pick up everything. Everything's -- I make sure I touch
4 everything. I don't let them help me load until I've picked it
5 up.

6 Q. And have you run across any events where clients have too
7 much out in the field, where you're not here and you don't want to
8 take everything they have because you will be over?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And how do you handle that with the clients?

11 A. Everyone's pretty understanding. Though I've had to -- I've
12 done it quite a bit this summer, because sometimes you'll take
13 them out at again, let's just say 1200 pounds from here and it's
14 completely legal and fine. And where you're dropping them off
15 it's just a smaller destination and you don't feel comfortable
16 taking that weight again, and even though you know it's the exact
17 same. That's usually what the clients get a little frustrated
18 with. It's like, well, you got us out here on one load, why can't
19 you take us back? And it's like, well, the lake's too short and
20 -- something of the sort.

21 And there has been some -- Tony and Mike are really good at
22 -- we have a text message system on the airplanes, and you can
23 tell them, or we can get ahold of them and tell them that we
24 haven't taken it all. And there's always options to either
25 shuttle to a bigger lake, if that's the case, or if it's just too

1 much, it just gets left and it will get picked up. It then goes
2 on to the dispatcher's hands in my mind. And when another plane
3 comes by, they just grab it.

4 Q. And when you come back to base, do you get any flack from
5 anybody for not taking up the load?

6 A. No. No.

7 Q. During your training did the company provide restraint
8 methods, training in restraint methods for infants and children?

9 A. What do you mean, restraint?

10 Q. Meaning seating and harness systems, or how you're going to
11 restrain a 3-year-old in the airplane? What kind of seat is
12 required for a 3-year-old in the airplane by regulation and how
13 are you going to meet that regulation?

14 A. It was something we went over of, I guess, lap children and
15 -- as the FAR. Apart from that, we didn't go through too much
16 more with it. No.

17 Q. So if someone showed up with a car seat and a 1-year-old,
18 would you have any training in how to secure that to one of the
19 seats? Have you ever seen that or talked about it?

20 A. No. But I can't say I've ever had it either. I haven't had
21 any of that. Again, if I had that, it would be a conversation.

22 Q. Have you ever flown with a lap child before?

23 A. Yes. With someone on their lap, yes.

24 Q. Do you remember how old they were or --

25 A. It was a, you know, a 1-year-old or something. It was a

1 small, a small --

2 Q. Yeah. An infant?

3 A. An infant. Yeah. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay. So you fly with Hilcorp. How does the company know

5 you're available to fly for them?

6 A. How does Regal?

7 Q. Yeah. Regal, I should say. How does Regal know you're

8 available to fly today?

9 A. I'm purely with Regal for this summer and Hilcorp --

10 Q. Oh, I thought I have you --

11 A. You're -- Hilcorp, I'm a contract for Hilcorp. So they will

12 call me, and if it's a day off or something I can go over. But

13 for the summer I've just given myself to Regal.

14 Q. Oh, okay. All right. And what's your duty day at Regal?

15 What do you normally -- your maximum duty day, or normal?

16 A. The maximum is 14 hours.

17 Q. So when you were a new pilot here at Regal, did the company

18 put any restrictions on your flights, destinations, so on and so

19 forth?

20 A. They have, yeah. We've got policies that have -- it's --

21 we've got our own policies, and then they're pretty good if it's

22 somewhere that we're not familiar with, they don't usually send us

23 there. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay. Have you ever been to Willow Lake?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Do you remember about when you were there?

2 A. I guess I should specify that. Yeah, I've been to Willow
3 Lake. I haven't flown for Regal off Willow Lake, I guess. Yeah.

4 Q. All right. And who did you fly at Willow Lake?

5 A. Just a private.

6 Q. Private?

7 A. Yes, just private.

8 Q. Recreational flying?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. I got you. Did you feel like you were well prepared and
11 trained for your flights at Regal? Did you feel like all the
12 training and information that was provided you before flying the
13 lines was sufficient?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Does the company provide any flight information about
16 destination lakes and remote airports to you?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Other than what's in the supplement?

19 A. Yes. Yeah, we have a binder in the office there that's of
20 every -- well, I shouldn't say of every lake. But it's a pretty
21 thick binder of most lakes and airports we go to. And we're not
22 asked to go somewhere that like a chief pilot, Bruce or Mike or
23 someone, hasn't been to. So I'm not going to go to a lake that no
24 one's ever been to before, as a new person.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And we'll sit down and have pretty thorough briefings, either
2 the night before or the morning of if it's somewhere new to me.
3 And we'll go, that's -- they got a TV with Google Earth and
4 pictures and everything else for us.

5 Q. Good. Is there any pressure on pilots to complete flights on
6 schedule?

7 A. No.

8 Q. What would happen if you were delayed at a destination for
9 having to redo a load or something of that --

10 A. That happens pretty much on daily. It's not -- it's just
11 you're delayed for the rest of the day, nothing -- you know, no
12 problems with it.

13 Q. Do you feel any pressure to take a flight for financial
14 reasons, being that you only get paid by the hour?

15 A. No. No pressure with that.

16 Q. Is there sufficient time for turnarounds at the base here
17 when you're done with the flight and you're getting another one?
18 Do you feel like you have enough time to do all your preflight
19 planning and fuel load and weight and balance --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. -- in order to depart on time?

22 A. Yes. Yeah. Again, if it's somewhere that I'm coming in, in
23 the morning for a brief, it's a conversation that's actually in a
24 text the night prior, that I'll be coming in to get a brief.
25 So --

1 Q. So, but you have multiple flights a day, right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Generally. But you only get the -- you get the whole day's
4 worth the night before so you know --

5 A. No, just the first flight. But if it's somewhere that I'm
6 having to get a rundown, where I haven't been before, it's
7 actually in the text message to say, Rhyan, talk to Bruce or Mike
8 before you launch. So I'm coming in knowing that I'm probably not
9 going to be departing, you know, maybe at that right time,
10 depending on the brief or something like that.

11 Q. So you're saying you have advance notice --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- while you're out on a flight that may be the next one is
14 going to be --

15 A. Yes. Told that --

16 Q. -- an unusual one, right?

17 A. Yeah. Yeah.

18 Q. Something like that?

19 A. Yeah, Tony and Mike are really good at sort of -- they can't
20 tell you a day because weather happens or something happens; you
21 know, it can change. But you get a rough layout of what you're
22 going to be doing. They usually at the bottom of the sticky have
23 our next departure time and destination.

24 Q. How about weather for your first flight? How do you go about
25 checking the weather?

1 A. I get up in the morning, personally, and I do all the
2 checking at home, right before I even come to work. If it's a day
3 like today where it's not very nice weather, I will call flight
4 service on my drive in, down in Kenai. And then, again, if it's a
5 day like today where it's not nice, it's a sit-down conversation
6 with -- again, it's a briefing with Mike or Bruce or Dave, one of
7 the senior pilots.

8 Q. And how about on the second and third and fourth flights of
9 the day, is there -- how do you check the weather?

10 A. In the pilot's lounge.

11 Q. In here on the computer?

12 A. Yes. Yeah, that computer's set up with all the FAA websites
13 for us.

14 Q. Okay. Good.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. And if weather changes out on your route, what -- how do you
17 manage that? Say the weather starts deteriorating, do you call
18 back home and say, what do I do; do you divert yourself? How do
19 you manage that?

20 A. It's usually a conversation before we leave if it's got the
21 potential to go bad.

22 Q. It's Alaska.

23 A. It's Alaska.

24 Q. It always has the potential --

25 A. It's a conversation that we have with the dispatcher of the

1 day and sort of say, okay, so if we can't make it here, what's the
2 plan? And they usually will say just come back home. Or it might
3 be, if it looks like it's just a rain shower and it's going to
4 clear, just land at wherever I am, you know, in a sufficient place
5 and wait it out. Or again, we've got the text message system in
6 the airplanes that we can relay back to dispatch what it looks --

7 Q. So does that work all the time? You're able -- because its
8 satellite, right? It's satellite --

9 A. It is, yeah. I mean, it's like anything, again, in Alaska;
10 it works 90 percent of the time.

11 Q. Yeah. Okay.

12 A. Yeah. Yeah.

13 Q. All right. Who actually fuels the plane?

14 A. The dock boys usually. Now that it's getting a little
15 brighter, we are. I've been fueling my plane probably for the
16 last month.

17 Q. And you tell them what the fuel load should be and then they
18 load it?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And do you check it then, or do you --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- rely on them to say, okay --

23 A. No. No. I check it. Yeah.

24 Q. And then does the company know how much fuel you're loading
25 on the plane; do you know?

1 A. Yes. We've got a -- there's a white board in our -- I guess
2 the dispatch office, is what we're going to call it, at the door,
3 and it's written. And then as we depart, we have a call out that
4 we tell them how much fuel we have as well. So --

5 Q. Oh, okay. So there's a radio call?

6 A. Yeah. There's a radio call with our fuel and passengers and
7 where we're going.

8 Q. And do the ramp personnel also load the plane with the
9 baggage and seat the passengers, or do you do that?

10 A. No. They help us with the loading, but I mean it's -- I'm
11 watching and help. I'm with them. And they -- and then I load, I
12 load the passengers all the time.

13 Q. How about the floats? Are they pumped out on each flight or
14 just in the morning, or who does that?

15 A. Just in the mornings usually. They're good floats that --

16 Q. Your floats are good?

17 A. Yeah. It doesn't -- if they know of a leak or something like
18 that, they would do it again, but -- no, it's just usually the
19 morning's fine.

20 Q. Did you ever fly the accident airplane?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And were there any issues with it that you can remember,
23 mechanical-wise or --

24 A. No.

25 Q. Did you fly it since it had the Aerocet floats?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Did you notice -- what are the differences that you observed
3 with the new floats? Any?

4 A. I loved them.

5 Q. They're great, right?

6 A. No. In my opinion, I'm still pretty new to the float plane
7 world in the industry, and we've got one that are not on Aerocets
8 and one that are on -- and then two that were on Aerocets. And I
9 personally like the Aerocets better. They're wider. They're easy
10 to work with. They always felt better on the water. But if you
11 ask me if it got off faster, I couldn't really -- and that's hard
12 to tell.

13 Q. Yeah. Okay. And what is your opinion on how the company
14 airplanes are maintained?

15 A. I think they're maintained very well.

16 Q. If you discovered a discrepancy on a flight, how do you
17 manage it in the airplane? So if you discover something's wrong,
18 a gauge or a flap issue, or how do you manage that?

19 A. So if you're out in the field or --

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. I mean --

22 Q. Do you call back or --

23 A. Oh, yeah. Yeah. No, it's -- again, it's a text message or
24 it's the radio call if you're in coverage. And usually we're all
25 up in the air together at some point, so you can always talk to

1 company -- you know, Bruce or Mike or someone could be flying at
2 that time, there's always someone to talk to. And if it's a
3 problem that you have to land there, I mean, well, that's just the
4 way it goes, nature of the beast. And our mechanic's really good
5 about coming out.

6 Q. Okay. So these are some questions about the accident flight,
7 a little more specific. Not much. But did you know Colt Richter?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Did he go through training with you at all this year?

10 A. Yeah. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay. Can you describe his personality?

12 A. Just a bubbly, smart kid. Man, he was amazing.

13 Q. Do you know if, did he like flying for Regal? Did he ever
14 complain about the company?

15 A. Never complained. No. I don't think that kid would complain
16 about anything. He was just a -- one of those people.

17 Q. Did you see him the day of the accident?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And did he seem normal, his normal bubbly self --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. -- as you said?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Did you see him about the time he departed for this flight to
24 Willow?

25 A. Yeah. I was in the plane before him. So I handed him the

1 flight plan and debriefed --

2 Q. Okay. And did he talk at all about the intended flight, what
3 he was going to do?

4 A. I mean, I know -- I knew where he was going, but that's --
5 yeah.

6 Q. I think we actually covered a lot of these. Yeah, we covered
7 those. Were you aware of the accident that Regal had last summer?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And did the company talk about that in your initial training?

10 A. Yes. Yeah.

11 Q. Are there any changes made to the way the company operates
12 after this accident?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. What was changed?

15 A. The first-year pilots were put on quite a stricter --
16 restricted, I guess, destinations and weather procedures.

17 Q. How many new pilots, like first-year --

18 A. There would be -- full-time, there's three first-year, full-
19 time.

20 Q. Okay. Do you feel like Regal is a safe company to work for?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Can you explain why you feel Regal is safe?

23 A. They have a pretty good open-door policy. I mean, I feel for
24 Bruce being the chief pilot, if you have any questions, I mean, it
25 doesn't really matter if he's on his day off or not, Bruce is here

1 at 7 in the morning on his day off just to make sure everyone's
2 okay and doesn't have any questions before he goes and enjoys his
3 time off. And Mike's the same. Mike -- any questions or comments
4 or concerns. I've turned down flights myself just with my
5 personal, you know, level of experience and comfort. And they
6 just, don't even -- no question. There's no bullying or meanness
7 or anything about it.

8 Q. That's good.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Have you been to any of the safety meetings?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Do you feel like -- is flight safety discussed, occurrences,
13 incidents, hazards, anything that helps flight safety?

14 A. Yeah. It's anything that -- they have their topics that have
15 been brought up throughout the month or whatever they've written
16 down. And then we have a lot of discussions about whatever's
17 going -- you know, if there's something going on. Yeah.

18 Q. So how do you -- I think you kind of addressed it, but we'll
19 make it a little plainer. How do you address a safety concern at
20 Regal? What would you do if there was something you were very
21 concerned with that didn't seem right to you, how would you
22 address it?

23 A. Probably the first person, depending on what the safety issue
24 was -- to be honest, the first person I'd go to is probably Bruce,
25 being the chief pilot. And he's got an office next door, and go

1 and talk to him if it's something like that. And if Bruce or Mike
2 are not available -- which isn't the case, one of them is always
3 available, it would be a discussion with the dispatch, which is
4 either Tony or Mike.

5 Q. Is there any written reporting process that you guys use or
6 have for writing up occurrence or hazards or just general safety
7 concerns?

8 A. For mechanically or just for --

9 Q. For anything?

10 A. Anything? We have a group chat with pilots that we can, if
11 there's something that feels like it needs to be brought up, it
12 can be brought up on that. It's just pilots only, you know,
13 including Mike and Bruce and everyone.

14 Q. Oh, okay.

15 A. So that can be brought up.

16 MS. PRICE: Those are all the questions I have right now.
17 How you doing? You okay?

18 MS. McMILLAN: Good. Yeah.

19 MS. PRICE: Thank you very much. And grab a sip of water if
20 you're -- I'm going to pass it around the room now.

21 MS. McMILLAN: Okay.

22 MS. PRICE: So Shaun?

23 BY MR. WILLIAMS;

24 Q. The Hilcorp flying, is it part 91 or 135?

25 A. 91.

1 Q. Have you gotten into an airplane -- I want to talk about
2 flaps and things a little bit. Have you gotten into an airplane
3 and found the flaps still down from the previous flight?

4 A. No.

5 Q. What is your procedure for landing and retracting the flaps?
6 Is it during the deceleration? Is it done once you're pulled up?

7 A. For me personally? It would be -- I would land, slow it
8 right down, have it all sorted, and then clean the whole plane up
9 and retract the flaps and inspect the trim.

10 Q. Is there any sort of a company policy or procedure?

11 A. No.

12 MS. PRICE: Paula, do you have any questions?

13 MS. HUCKLEBERRY: No, I have no questions.

14 MS. PRICE: Pat?

15 BY MR. HEMPEN:

16 Q. We really appreciate this. I know this is a hard, so
17 appreciate it. So -- but you have a great perspective. So a new
18 pilot, the flat landers, we say, that come to Alaska, new to the
19 environment, is there something you would sit down and you would
20 pull them aside and -- is there certain things that you would
21 focus on that maybe you didn't know as part of the season,
22 something that you could pass on?

23 A. Well, we have one of those pilots here that's actually pretty
24 new to the Alaska environment and -- I mean, I don't think so.
25 Something that always got told to me is, you know -- and I think

1 it actually got talked about here, was weather changes on a dime,
2 you know, and it's something that we have to be really careful of.
3 And I think the industry itself is actually changing for the
4 better. I grew up in an aviation family, with family around
5 Beavers and everything, and I've heard some pretty interesting
6 stories from the '80s, that it's definitely changing for the
7 better. And I think, you know, Regal's on that progression, you
8 know, progressing side, too. You know, I think in the '80s if you
9 said you weren't comfortable to do a flight, you were probably a
10 little bit of a wuss, almost, especially more for males. I think
11 now -- I know I've turned down flights and I know other pilots
12 here that have turned down flights, and there is -- it's one of
13 the things definitely with Regal is it's something that -- it's
14 just part of the industry now, you know.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. It's all starting to change.

17 Q. So one other thing. So going back to the weight issues and
18 things. So when you land in a remote area, you know, and people
19 show up with equipment and things that you weren't really prepared
20 for, are you able to contact your company? Would you have been
21 able to contact your company from Willow Lake and ask for help or
22 support or guidance? Are you able to get back to your people?

23 A. At Willow Lake, yes, there's cell phone coverage. Ninety
24 percent of the lakes we go to, no, there's not cell phone
25 coverage. We do have sat phones. Not all planes have the sat

1 phones, but someone throughout the day has had -- you know, has a
2 sat phone and usually where you're going, if it -- it's never
3 became that problem before. But if it was, again, the people
4 you're picking up usually has a sat phone, if it's going to be
5 something like that. Or we do have that text with the airplane.

6 We've also been told as a company that if it does turn into
7 an issue where they get grumpy -- and I haven't had this, but get
8 grumpy about not taking the load, Mike and Bruce are happy for us
9 to just leave and leave everything there and come back -- you
10 know, let someone else deal with -- maybe send the big boss back,
11 sort of thing.

12 Q. Yeah. Yeah. Did you ever do anything like take cell phone
13 photos and send them back to the company? Or have you had to do
14 that, to kind of support --

15 A. I've never had to do that, no.

16 Q. I've heard people do that in the past. But so when you --
17 you're -- you're not expecting items, you're picking up a load, do
18 you have -- when you said you do weight and balance, do you pull
19 out a sheet of paper; do you have a formatted weight and balance
20 sheet that you fill out or do you just do that in your training?
21 Or how do you calculate that?

22 A. We have in our flight cans that are in the airplane, we have
23 a sheet, an actual weight and balance envelop. And then we have a
24 weight and balance with every seat configuration that the airplane
25 can have and the useful payload with the plane at that time.

1 Q. Okay. Okay. And then so you just would leave that in the
2 can and would just throw it away when you're done or --

3 A. Actually it's a laminated sheet. So it's just a whiteboard
4 marker, so we can --

5 Q. I see.

6 A. It just gets reused. Yeah, just so it stays in the flight
7 can at all times for everyone.

8 Q. All right. And when you fuel up, do you always top off? I
9 mean, or you all actually defer fueling for weight and balance
10 purposes?

11 A. No. The fuel for me comes first. So I take whatever fuel I
12 need for the mission, not necessarily a top-off. I mean some of
13 these flights are only an hour. So I'll take the fuel that I need
14 for my reserve to come home and then the fuel -- or the load will
15 depend on the fuel.

16 Q. Okay. Is your company able to observe where you're at, you
17 know, Spidertracks or whatever system you're going to use, are you
18 always under observation or do you go into blind spots, which I
19 assume you do for periods of times?

20 A. No. Spidertracks actually has us at all times. I don't
21 think we've ever gone offline to them. So we can go -- it's
22 satellite. So we can go anywhere and it has where -- don't quote
23 me, but I'm pretty sure we're green when we move. And then when
24 we shut down, we just go kind of black, like we're not moving. So
25 if we're on a lake and we've shut down, they can see exactly where

1 we're -- you know, what lake we're on.

2 Q. Okay. So my last question. So -- and I really appreciate
3 it. When you're departing, when you're taking off, you've got a
4 full load, you're right at gross and you're on a lake, if you all
5 train like the the go/no-go criteria, at what point will you
6 decide you haven't developed enough airspeed? Do you -- is there
7 a way you can measure the distance, you know, the shoreline that
8 you're headed towards? Have you've gotten certain kinds of cues
9 that your company's trained you to?

10 A. Yeah. I mean, there's a lot of lakes in all the destinations
11 we go to. Again, if it's somewhere that I'm not familiar with --
12 we use Google Earth quite a bit before we leave the base here, and
13 it's got a ruler device that you can see exactly how long the lake
14 is. And obviously every no-go/go decision is dependent on
15 everything -- you know, the weather, the weight, the lake, the
16 trees at the end, sort of deal.

17 Usually its kind of comes with a little bit of experience, as
18 well. If you get to a point and you haven't -- don't feel
19 comfortable, then, I mean, you pull the power and kick off
20 whatever you need to kick off.

21 Q. Okay. And oh, boy, it's the 21st Century. It's got Google
22 Earth and --

23 A. Oh, yeah. It's definitely a different world. It makes it,
24 it makes it pretty amazing actually, that Google Earth.

25 Q. Yeah. And that's great. I'm out of questions, but -- where

1 are you from?

2 A. I actually was born in Willow, and lived there until I was 7,
3 and then moved to New Zealand and grew up over there.

4 Q. Isn't that -- well, isn't that something.

5 A. Yeah.

6 MR. HEMPEN: Okay. Well, you've been super. Thanks a lot.
7 I know it's tough and really appreciate it.

8 MS. McMILLAN: Yeah.

9 MR. HEMPEN: No more questions. Thanks.

10 MS. McMILLAN: All right. No worries.

11 MS. PRICE: Does anyone else have anything?

12 All right. Is there anything we're missing? Any things you
13 might help us with the investigation?

14 MS. McMILLAN: I don't think so.

15 MS. PRICE: So you know Colt, you know the airplane, you know
16 the operation, you know Willow.

17 MS. McMILLAN: Yeah.

18 MS. PRICE: Do you have any ideas as to what may have caused
19 this accident?

20 MS. McMILLAN: No. No. It's just -- it was a bit of a shock
21 for everyone, I think, on that one.

22 MS. PRICE: Yeah.

23 MS. McMILLAN: Yeah.

24 MS. PRICE: Thank you again. We really appreciate your time
25 and --

1 MS. McMILLAN: Yeah, no worries.

2 MS. PRICE: -- good luck with your aviation career and all
3 that.

4 MS. McMILLAN: Thank you.

5 MS. PRICE: Yeah. Okay. That concludes --
6 (Whereupon, 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: REGAL AIR DHC-2 ACCIDENT IN
 WILLOW, ALASKA, JULY 18, 2018
 Interview of Rhyan McMillan

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC18FA055

PLACE:

DATE: August 21, 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.


Romona Phillips
Transcriber