

ANC23FA008

OPERATIONAL FACTORS/HUMAN PERFORMANCE

Attachment 3

FAA Interview Transcripts

May 4, 2023

CONTENTS

INTERVIEW OF: LYND SAY CARLSON, PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS INSPECTOR.....	3
INTERVIEW OF: MATTHEW BLAD, FRONTLINE MANAGER.....	109

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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GUARDIAN FLIGHT PLANE CRASH *

FAA INTERVIEWS *

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Accident No.:

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Interview of: LYNDSEY CARLSON, Principal Operations
Inspector

Federal Aviation Administration

Thursday,
March 23, 2023

APPEARANCES:

SHAWN ETCHER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DR. SABRINA WOODS, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MILLICENT HILL, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MITCH A. MITCHELL, Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration

CRISTINA ZAMBRANA, Counsel
FAA Office of the Chief Counsel

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Lyndsay Carlson:		
By Mr. Etcher		9
By Dr. Woods		58
By Ms. Hill		73
By Mr. Mitchell		77
By Mr. Etcher		86
By Dr. Woods		98
By Mr. Mitchell		103

I N T E R V I E W

(12:06 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. ETCHER: All right. Good afternoon. My name is
4 Shawn Etcher. I'm an operational factors investigator with the
5 NTSB. The current time is 12:06. Operational factors is, all
6 that means is, I look at everything forward of the cockpit door,
7 if you will, and how they interact with pilots and everything,
8 procedures. And you're here because you're the FAA subject matter
9 expert to us, so I want to learn kind of what your job is, and
10 kind of helping me understand that, as well.

11 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

12 MR. ETCHER: I'm going to go around the table here, have
13 everybody introduce themselves that'll be asking you questions, as
14 well, and we will start with Ms. Sabrina.

15 DR. WOODS: Hi. Dr. Sabrina Woods, also NTSB. I'm actually
16 the human performance investigator associated with this case. And
17 typically, my job is, of course, determining, you know, what -- do
18 people have what they need to do their jobs, and, you know, what
19 maybe we could do better to ensure that they can do their jobs.
20 At this point, I'm more of an observation level, because I usually
21 kind of deal, you know, more with the operator directly. But, you
22 know, that's my role here.

23 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

24 MR. ETCHER: Thank you. Millicent?

25 MS. HILL: Millicent Hill. I'm the investigator in charge.

1 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

2 MR. ETCHER: And Mitch?

3 MR. MITCHELL: Mitch Mitchell. I'm with AVP 100 Office of
4 Accident Investigation and Prevention.

5 MR. ETCHER: That is absolutely everybody who'll be
6 interviewing you today --

7 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

8 MR. ETCHER: -- that you can educate us on. So, now that you
9 know all of us, I just want to make sure you're aware, as well,
10 that you can see we have a recorder going.

11 MS. CARLSON: Yep.

12 MR. ETCHER: We will be recording and transcribing this
13 interview. That transcript itself will be sent up -- will be part
14 of the public docket. The audio portion will not.

15 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

16 MR. ETCHER: So, you don't have to worry about hearing your
17 voice pop up on the 6 o'clock news.

18 MS. CARLSON: Yeah, my voice.

19 MR. ETCHER: Lucky for you, the regulations allow that
20 anytime you have to be interviewed by NTSB folks, you're entitled
21 to have one representative with you. Do you wish to have one of
22 those?

23 MS. CARLSON: I, of course, have my legal counsel.

24 MR. ETCHER: All right. And would your legal counsel be so
25 kind as to introduce herself?

1 MS. ZAMBRANA: Cristina Zambrana, Z-A-M-B-R-A-N-A, FAA Office
2 of the Chief Counsel.

3 MR. ETCHER: Excellent. So, that is everybody that's in the
4 room, so we don't have to worry about people popping in,
5 hopefully. If we do, we'll take care of that.

6 MS. CARLSON: Right.

7 MR. ETCHER: Before we get started, there's always just a few
8 ground rules I like to go over with.

9 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

10 MR. ETCHER: This is not -- don't consider this like an
11 interview, or deposition, or anything like that. It's just, I
12 want to be educated, and you know your interactions, you know your
13 job better than I do, so I want to understand what you do so it
14 kind of help me see everything that you guys have to go through,
15 as well. So, we appreciate the time you're giving us to educate
16 me. But we love facts.

17 MS. CARLSON: Right.

18 MR. ETCHER: Sometimes, we'll ask questions, though, that, we
19 might ask for an opinion. Sometimes, you might have an opinion.
20 That's okay. Just let us know it's an opinion, not a fact, so
21 when I'm reading this transcript later on, we can make sure we can
22 differentiate if there is such a thing.

23 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

24 MR. ETCHER: If you need a break, if you need to confer with
25 your legal counsel or anything like that, just say so. We'll hit

1 pause. We'll even leave the room if you need. Whatever. If you
2 need water, bathroom, anything, we'll take breaks anytime you
3 need, or we'll also try and remind ourselves to ask if you need a
4 break or if anybody does.

5 MS. CARLSON: Right.

6 MR. ETCHER: Sometimes, I'll ask questions. They sound
7 awesome in my brain, but my brain's not always connected to my
8 mouth, so it doesn't come out the same. If you don't understand a
9 question, it's okay. Ask for clarification. Because I assure
10 you, if you give me an answer that I don't understand, I'm going
11 to be asking for --

12 MS. CARLSON: Right.

13 MR. ETCHER: -- clarification, so it's kind of a two-way
14 street.

15 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

16 MR. ETCHER: Most importantly, if you don't know an answer, I
17 don't know is perfect. You can say whatever you want, but I don't
18 know works just fine. It's not a check ride.

19 MS. CARLSON: Right.

20 MR. ETCHER: So, I don't know works, all rightie?

21 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

22 MR. ETCHER: Any questions before we get started?

23 MS. CARLSON: No, not that I can think of.

24 INTERVIEW OF LYND SAY CARLSON

25 BY MR. ETCHER:

1 Q. All rightie. I always start with the toughest questions
2 first, get those out of the way. So, if you could give me your
3 full legal name and spell your last, that'd be helpful.

4 A. I knew you were going to ask me my name.

5 Q. I told you, these are --

6 A. Right?

7 Q. -- tough questions.

8 A. So, it's Lyndsay, spelled L-Y-N-D-S-A-Y. Usually, people
9 that spell that one wrong. And then, Carlson, C-A-R-L-S-O-N.

10 Q. Excellent. And what is your job title?

11 A. I'm the principle operations inspector for general aviation
12 operations.

13 Q. For --

14 A. The FAA.

15 Q. FAA.

16 A. Sorry.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 A. Thank you.

19 Q. And how long have you been in that role?

20 A. In July, it'll be 17 years.

21 Q. All rightie. And do you have any airman certificates, or
22 type ratings, or anything like that?

23 A. Yep. I hold an ATP multiengine, commercial single engine,
24 then I also hold hot air balloon commercial. I also hold CFI
25 double I MEI flight instructor instrument and multiengine,

1 aircraft dispatcher, remote pilot, ground instructor. Trying to
2 think if I'm forgetting anything. I think that's the majority of
3 them.

4 Q. Would it have been easier if I said what certificates you
5 don't you hold?

6 A. Might be. I think -- yeah, it might be. But no, those are
7 it.

8 Q. Okay. Perfect. Thank you. And when's the last time -- do
9 you have to maintain currency? Let me ask that.

10 A. Correct. I do have to maintain currency.

11 Q. For 90 days, six months, what?

12 A. Once a quarter, we have to flight currency.

13 Q. Okay. Excellent. So, kind of give us a nice broad
14 CliffsNotes version of your aviation history. With all those
15 certificates, it might take a little bit, but it's okay. Just
16 kind of a nice CliffsNotes version.

17 A. So, before FAA, I taught at both -- a couple of different
18 places. I've taught at like a fixed base operator type school,
19 type school. Then, I also taught at 141. Was an assistant chief
20 at a flight school locally. Then, I also taught a lot of the
21 educational courses. So, I also taught at the Embry-Riddle at the
22 Hill Air Force Base. I taught masters and undergraduate courses
23 up there, too. So, did a little bit of -- a lot of education as
24 my background. Then, about 2007, came over to the FAA, and I've
25 been here ever since.

1 Q. Excellent. And based out of the Salt Lake FSDO, or --

2 A. Out of Salt Lake FSDO. I've done a couple of other small
3 details, but -- within the FAA, but mostly at the Salt Lake FSDO.

4 Q. Okay. So, help me understand just a little bit, do you work
5 with the Salt Lake FSDO, or are you under the Certificate
6 Management Office? Is there a difference here?

7 A. There is no Certificate Management --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Now, there's one for SkyWest in this building, but no, I work
10 for the Salt Lake FSDO.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And the Guardian does not have a Certificate Management
13 Office itself.

14 Q. Okay. Thank you. Thanks for that clarification. That took
15 off a couple of questions later, so I --

16 A. Kind of figured.

17 Q. -- appreciate that. Let's kind of dig in a little bit here
18 to the FAA and the structure that you --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- you report to. Who do you actually report to? Who's in
21 your chain, if you will?

22 A. My direct supervisor is Matt Blad, Matthew Bladd. He's my
23 frontline manager. And then, after that, it would be the office
24 manager, and his name is Mathew Green (ph.) with one T. So,
25 there's those two that I mainly report to within this office.

1 Q. Okay. And I guess there's no really easy way to say it, but
2 since COVID, everybody seems to be remote working and things like
3 that. Do you actually interact with them in the office, or is it
4 more of a remote situation?

5 A. We're required at least once a week to try to be in the
6 office, so there is that.

7 Q. And are they in the office at the same time you are, or does
8 that vary?

9 A. It varies.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So, sometimes, I might be in the office like, how do you say
12 it? This week, I might be in different days, you know, so
13 sometimes, I'll be in when they are. So, I do see them.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. It's not like I never see them.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But yeah.

18 Q. Great. So, you -- and please don't ever let me use words
19 that are incorrect.

20 A. You're fine. I'll try.

21 Q. Don't hesitate to correct me at all. So, do you provide
22 oversight to Guardian itself from here?

23 A. From here or, you know, if I'm working from home remotely --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- or, you know, it depends on if I'm doing inspections or

1 things like that.

2 Q. Are they the only operator you provide oversight?

3 A. No.

4 Q. How many operators do you provide oversight to?

5 A. 135, I have eight. Two -- you know, then, I've got two part
6 141s. And then, I have two agriculture, part 137 operators; and I
7 have nine designees.

8 Q. So, I've got to ask, how many hours in a week do you get to
9 work?

10 A. Forty, just like everybody.

11 Q. And can you get it all done in that amount of time?

12 A. That's kind of a -- I guess I'd ask for clarification.

13 Q. Good point. How do you manage all of those that you have
14 oversight for? I mean, it sounds like that's a lot --

15 A. It's a lot.

16 Q. -- but maybe it's not.

17 A. So, I work as a team with my management. You know, if -- you
18 know, whatever happens to be, you know, needed for that particular
19 time frame, usually within a week or whatever is needed. I look
20 at what all my operators need, try to place -- you know, I meet
21 with my operators regularly to determine like, hey, what's needed
22 soon, right? So, that way, we can determine best as to what needs
23 to be worked, you know, maybe in a week or, you know, whatever
24 time frame happens to be.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I mean, yeah, that's the best way to explain it.

2 Q. So, in round ballpark numbers, if you will, whatever's
3 easiest for you, how many times a year do you get to go to each
4 operation that you oversee, each designee you oversee, or is there
5 any way that you can gage that?

6 A. Well, I mean, each entity has a different set of inspection
7 requirements, so, you know, there's definitely, I have
8 requirements where I have to go out and see them. So, you know,
9 at a minimum, for every single operator, once a year, at a
10 minimum, whether it's, you know, 135, 137 -- 137 has a little
11 different schedule, but 141, 135, you know, those are all
12 basically (indiscernible) designees. May be a little bit
13 different now. They've changed that format. But generally, at
14 least a minimum of once a year, at a minimum.

15 Q. Okay. Do you have an assistant that helps with that?

16 A. That would be nice, but no.

17 Q. How many are in the office that do what you do, in this
18 office specifically?

19 A. Are you talking general aviation on the ops side, operations?

20 Q. Yeah, on operations. How many inspectors within this office
21 have that many operators they're overseeing and everything?

22 A. That would probably be a better question for management.

23 Q. Okay. We can do that, as well. Thank you. Do you know if
24 your operators that you oversee, is that kind of a normal number?
25 Does that seem like a normal number from what you're hearing, or

1 is that unknown?

2 A. Again, that'd probably be the best question or management to
3 know specifically, you know, what everybody's given.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I know, you know, generally on the fixed wing side, we have
6 more than the helicopter side, but that's just the nature of how
7 many operators there are.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So, again, to give you an exact, it would be a better
10 question for management.

11 Q. Okay. Perfect. Great answer. How big of a footprint
12 geographically do you have that you cover with all these different
13 operators?

14 A. So, again, everybody's different, right? I mean, if you look
15 at -- if you're answering just the office, or --

16 Q. I'm asking for you personally.

17 A. Me. Okay. Me, myself, so, I mean, I've got -- let's see.
18 I'm just trying to mentally map it out in my head. Generally,
19 like my bigger 135s are both here in Salt Lake. Of course, they
20 have, you know, operations in other places, but -- and then,
21 there's -- like, I have my 141 school, my balloon school's up in
22 Park City, then I have another school in south, like Utah County.
23 Then, a lot of my single pilot 135s are generally out in Colorado,
24 so --

25 Q. I'm sorry, did you say, in Colorado?

1 A. Colorado, yeah.

2 Q. Okay. So, you guys go all the way over to Colorado?

3 A. Right. So, again, that, kind of describing our Salt Lake
4 geographic area, is usually about the first two counties in the
5 western side of Colorado, and also up into Idaho, but I don't
6 personally have any operators in Idaho.

7 Q. Okay. All rightie. So, considering the large footprint and
8 the number of operators you have, do you -- is it easy, and I know
9 that easy's such a relative term, but is it easy to get overtime
10 or comp time? Because obviously, that's a long ways you've got to
11 travel, it's a lot of stuff you've probably got to do, and we'll
12 into that here in a little bit. But is it easy to get OT and/or
13 comp time?

14 A. Generally, that's a discussion with management. Again, you
15 know, for the most part, they allow for overtime or comp time if I
16 need it, you know, to make it so that like if I need to stretch
17 out, especially if I'm doing some flight functions, right,
18 sometimes, you don't anticipate weather, maintenance, or whatever,
19 so you need extra time. So, sometimes, you need it.

20 Q. All rightie. So, let's kind of start getting a little bit,
21 kind of like, give me a day in the life of you at the FAA. Kind
22 of walk me through. And I know every day's probably different --

23 A. It's --

24 Q. -- with the amount of certificates and everything, but
25 generally speaking, how's your days work? What kind of a day in

1 the life for you, week in the life, whatever?

2 A. Yeah, I was going to say, it's really hard, because it just,
3 again, it's that whole template of what's on the list of what
4 needs to be worked, what priority, right? So, I mean, I could be
5 doing anything from, you know, doing reviewing of manuals; I could
6 be doing reviewing of training programs for the 141, 135; I could
7 be out doing inspections; I could be, you know, doing accidents; I
8 could be doing enforcements, I could be doing -- you know, so
9 there's just a variant of what I could be working on. Generally,
10 probably the majority of my work is part 135 right now. You know,
11 so, generally, it could be anything from, you know, like I said,
12 reviewing manuals; it could be doing approving special approaches
13 for Guardian, you know? It could be lots of different things.
14 So, to like capsulize that in a day is really difficult.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I don't know how to better answer it than that.

17 Q. No, that draws me a picture, so I appreciate that. But you
18 kind of brought up something that gives me a question. So, you
19 have these operators, you have designees, and then you said
20 something -- you do enforcement, you do accident investigation,
21 you do all that on top of --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- all this?

24 A. Correct. That's on-demand work.

25 Q. Okay. How often do you have to do -- in a year, how often do

1 you do accident duty?

2 A. So, accident duty's another piece, right? So, that's --
3 typically, the way accident duty works is, that's -- we bid for
4 whoever wants to do it. So, a weekly basis, you go on accident
5 duty. And, you know, it probably comes out to maybe three,
6 four times a year. Just, it's a rotational basis, because it's an
7 on-call thing after hours. Management takes the accident calls
8 during the daytime. We go on for overtime on after hours, so --

9 Q. Okay. All rightie. So, considering all you do -- I want
10 your opinion here. I know we can ask management a more factual
11 question, but in --

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. -- your opinion, how would you classify staffing here for you
14 guys?

15 A. I think it's an FAA-wide problem in the aspect that -- and
16 again, an opinion, right?

17 Q. I'm asking for your opinion.

18 A. And I'm just stating that so we know it's opinion. Just
19 that, I mean, I would love to have more help around, right? I
20 can't think of almost anyplace you go anymore that most people
21 wouldn't love extra help. But definitely, I'd love to have extra
22 help, and I'd love to be able to have other inspectors to fall
23 back on, and things like that, so --

24 Q. And just for my little understanding in my little brain,
25 here, is this a recent wish to have more help? Like, I don't want

1 to say short staffing. That's probably not the right word. But
2 is that a recent thing, or has that been something you've
3 experienced in your 16 years with the FAA?

4 A. Again, opinion, right?

5 Q. Please.

6 A. But I would say ebbs and flows. For the most part, I would
7 say we've always needed help. Again, that's the observation from,
8 again, being here 16 years, also do -- I'm a trainer for new
9 inspectors, right? So, I mean, I've trained quite a few people.
10 But at the same time, it's -- yeah, we definitely could use more
11 people. I think I've only seen one time where we've had like
12 really good staffing. And, of course, people move on, so, you
13 know. But that was kind of like a short-lived piece.

14 Q. Okay. Sounds like pretty much what I would expect, because
15 that's the way I feel sometimes in my work, so --

16 A. Right. Like I said, it doesn't matter whether you go to
17 McDonald's or wherever, right? It's just kind of that way.

18 Q. Okay. So, let's start getting just a little bit into the
19 oversight on Guardian Flight. Is it okay if we call them
20 Guardian, just --

21 A. Yeah. That's fine.

22 Q. I wasn't sure how you knew them, so I just wanted to make
23 sure --

24 A. No. Guardian Flight is what's on their certificate, LLC, if
25 you want to get -- but --

1 Q. Okay. So, we'll start with the big questions first. How
2 long have you been on their certificate?

3 A. So, I started -- it's kind of an interesting piece, but I
4 started -- so, on October 1 is when I had my last job, and I went
5 on maternity leave. And I believe somewhere right in there is
6 when they notified Guardian that I was going to be their POI, but
7 obviously, that I would be back, you know, sometime about the
8 first of the year of 2021. So, that was 2020. (Indiscernible)
9 was 2020.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And then, I came on around -- I don't remember exactly when,
12 but somewhere in January of 2021. I don't know the exact date,
13 but somewhere right in there is when I came back from maternity
14 leave.

15 Q. Okay. So, I'm terrible at math, especially --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- when I've only had three cups of coffee. But two,
18 two and a half, years, give or take?

19 A. Yeah, just a little over, just barely over two years.

20 Q. Okay. Perfect. So, when you took over the certificate, why
21 did they assign that to you? Did the previous POI get moved on
22 somewhere? Did -- was it a change-up just with an inspector?
23 Kind of --

24 A. Right.

25 Q. You can make it your opinion. That's fine, too. But why did

1 they assign you --

2 A. Again -- yeah, right, because I don't know 100 percent their
3 reasonings, right? I do know that we have people leave. Matt
4 went to being the frontline manager. You know, so I do know that,
5 you know, that they needed people. So, here I was, and probably
6 being the most senior in the office, as well. I don't think we
7 had -- we had a lot of trainees at that point, too, so it was kind
8 of a matter of splitting up complexity and being able to do it
9 with what we had in the office at the time. Again, my
10 understanding.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. And you said Matt went to be a frontline manager, your
14 frontline manager.

15 A. My current frontline.

16 Q. Was he the previous --

17 A. I believe there might have been one other one, Andy, for a
18 short time, Andy.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. When I say Andy, his name is actually Steven (ph.), but we
21 call him Andy. That's his middle name.

22 Q. Oh.

23 A. Right. So, if you look at things, Steven -- I have a hard
24 time calling him Steven. But Steven would have been the previous
25 one, and then -- but for the majority of it, it would have been

1 Matt Blad right before me.

2 Q. Okay. So, when you took over Guardian, did you have other
3 certificates you were managing? Was that just one that they just
4 added to you, or did they take away?

5 A. They switched me up a little bit, you know, so I had a whole
6 bunch of other 135 -- well, a lot of 141s, but some 135s, as well.
7 And I got both them and Keystone, were probably my -- Keystone
8 Aviation is my other main 135 that I got at the same time. So, I
9 got two -- the rest of my complexity was pretty well the same, but
10 those two were mainly added. They did take some away.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So, that way, they could make room for these guys.

13 Q. So, it wasn't just an add-to; it was --

14 A. Right.

15 Q. -- maybe net adding, but --

16 A. Right. Overall adding, yes, but not beyond what they can
17 assign me.

18 Q. Okay. All right. Is there a limit that they can assign you?

19 A. Right. It's either 24 or -- there's a complexity point
20 system, and -- that you can assign to a 13, and I believe it's --
21 and again, Matt would be able to correct that, but it's either 24
22 or 25 hundred points.

23 (Crosstalk)

24 A. I always forget if it's 2,499 or 25, you know what I mean?

25 So --

- 1 Q. Right.
- 2 A. -- it's somewhere right in that realm.
- 3 Q. So, for a 13, is that your grade scale? I'm sorry?
- 4 A. That's my grade scale, yes.
- 5 Q. Okay. And Guardian, what is their complexity points; do you
- 6 know?
- 7 A. It's roughly around 900 to 1,000, somewhere right in there.
- 8 So, they're --
- 9 Q. So, would they be one of your more complex operators, then?
- 10 A. They're pretty close. Yeah, they're probably more complex
- 11 next to my other 135, Keystone. They're probably my two complex.
- 12 Q. Is Guardian, and please don't let me put words in your mouth,
- 13 one of your bigger ones, the biggest one you deal with --
- 14 A. I believe they're one of the biggest ones in the office.
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. So --
- 17 Q. Okay.
- 18 A. Again, I believe.
- 19 Q. Okay. No --
- 20 A. Take that for what it is.
- 21 Q. Yep. Thank you for that. So, since you have been on
- 22 Guardian certificate, how has your interaction been with the
- 23 director of ops there or anybody at Guardian? Has it been good, a
- 24 challenging relationship --
- 25 A. Honestly --

1 Q. -- either one of those?

2 A. -- they've been very, like they've been very good about being
3 proactive. You know, I've always been able to call them up, talk
4 to them, had questions. It's, you know, we get right -- we have
5 the clear communication between us. I feel like I've got pretty
6 good, clear communication. If I need to talk to somebody, you
7 know, they're always available to be able to talk to, so --

8 Q. I assume you review their manuals?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. How often do you have to review their manuals?

11 A. Generally, it's when they submit them --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- which, you know, they do submit changes here and there, so
14 I've reviewed them probably -- I couldn't, you know, put a number
15 to it, but I've definitely reviewed their manuals. You know,
16 sometimes, it's for specific things, you know, versus like the
17 whole manual at a time, but --

18 Q. So, again, I'm more of a number visual type person --

19 A. Right.

20 Q. -- so apologies.

21 A. No, that's okay.

22 Q. Let's say, the last six months. Just pick any time that's
23 easy for you to remember back to. If it's a month, that's okay,
24 too. And you had to review their manuals during that time?

25 A. Yeah, at least -- I know I've at least looked at the GOM and

- 1 a little bit of the training program, too.
- 2 Q. Okay. When they send you those manuals for your review, is
3 it review, approval? What's the right term?
- 4 A. So, GOMs are accepted; training programs are approved.
- 5 Q. Okay. I knew there was always some --
- 6 A. Yeah.
- 7 Q. -- little caveat there I never can remember, so --
- 8 A. Right. For a lot of people, it's hard to even train them
9 sometimes, so --
- 10 Q. Yeah.
- 11 A. -- get people to remember that.
- 12 Q. Okay. Well, thank you. So, how often -- when they send you
13 a manual, how long do you have until you have to give it back to
14 them, or is there a time frame for you?
- 15 A. I believe that guidance has a time frame to it. And when I
16 say guidance, I say policy's really what I should say, is the
17 8900.1. I believe there's a time frame in there. I don't
18 100 percent remember that time frame.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. But I know it's probably something along like 90 days or
21 something along that. Again, I wouldn't -- you'd have to refer
22 back to policy.
- 23 Q. Nope. At least, now, I know where to go looking for it,
24 so --
- 25 A. Right.

1 Q. -- it's perfect. So, when you get a revision request, do you
2 go through it, and proof it, and make suggestions, corrections --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- all the above?

5 A. A lot of times, I will sit down and actually have a meeting
6 with whoever is doing the edits on that document, and we'll go
7 through each one of the changes that they are suggesting that
8 they're changing. So, that way, I know in detail like, okay,
9 what's the reasoning behind those changes?

10 Q. Okay. How is that being received from them? Is it a good
11 thing? Is it --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- like, oh, here's one more thing we have to deal with?

14 A. I don't get that kind of feeling from them. I usually get
15 the, okay. You know, and usually, I'll say, okay, here is what my
16 requirement is. Here's -- where do you see that? You know, and
17 we go through it --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- you know, as best as we can.

20 Q. And who do you normally do that with?

21 A. So, the GOM's generally with the director of operations.
22 That's generally Jeremy (ph.). And the training program has
23 generally been with Randy Ostman, their director of training.

24 Q. Okay. All rightie. And do they have your -- I hate after-
25 work hours, but do they have a way to get in touch with you after

1 hours?

2 A. Yes. They have my --

3 Q. Have they ever had to do that?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Does it happen often?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Okay. We'll leave it right there. When you were
8 given a certificate, when they added to this to you, or modified
9 who you held, however you want to call it --

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. -- did the previous POI sit down with you and kind of brief
12 you on Guardian, give you like a, hey, here's a binder of things
13 about this operator, or --

14 A. Right.

15 Q. -- was there any transition like that?

16 A. And again, I think, not so much from Mr. Grover (ph.). It
17 was more from maybe Matt Blad. You know, and the thing is, is, I
18 also trained Matt, so a lot of times, you know, we were in the
19 office, at least before COVID, right?

20 Q. Right.

21 A. So, a lot of times, I would, I'd hear the interaction, too.
22 And, you know, being a trainer, sometimes, you just get in and try
23 to help them, too. So, it's not that I had full-blown knowledge
24 of every day-to-day operation of Guardian even back then, but, of
25 course, it's not like I, you know, didn't know a little bit of

1 what's going on. But, you know, I can't recall if there was a
2 specific meeting or not, you know. It was probably little tidbits
3 at times, you know, whenever we had, it's like, okay, there's this
4 issue, tell me what you did, you know. So, we probably did it in
5 maybe not so much like a full-blown one set meeting as different
6 times when things would come up, if, like, okay, how did you --
7 who did you contact? You know, those kind of things. And, you
8 know, so it probably happened maybe over time, not so much like a
9 specific sit-down, if that makes sense.

10 Q. All rightie. So, when you came on, did you have to approve
11 the DO? Was he already in place?

12 A. He was already in place.

13 Q. All right.

14 A. And there was no management change the whole time I've been
15 assigned.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I take that back. No, there was one. One of the chiefs, and
18 it happened on one of the chiefs, the chief up in Alaska. That's
19 the only one I had to approve. So, there was one.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And that happened pretty soon right after I took over them, I
22 believe. Again, the time frame, I'm not 100 percent sure on, but
23 somewhere --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- fairly right after I got the --

1 Q. So, what do you do to approve a chief? A chief pilot, I
2 assume, correct?

3 A. Yeah, chief pilot, correct. So, in that case, they're going
4 to submit their paperwork, they're going to submit all of his
5 qualifications, and I'll look it over and compare it to what the
6 regulation says and what guidance says, and make sure that he
7 meets qualifications. If that works out, then we usually do an
8 interview, as per the policy. You go through, and I just
9 generally make sure to understand, what do they know about
10 Guardian? And kind of just go through their operations and make
11 sure that they have a clear understanding of what their duties are
12 really going to be. So -- and especially up in Alaska, you know,
13 there's some other things that -- you know, like the special
14 approaches that, you know, may be a little bit more unique, too.
15 You know, so, just, again, trying to figure out what they
16 understand about the operation.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And then, if that goes well, everything looks good, you know,
19 they meet all the requirements as per the policy, then we approve
20 them through their operation specifications.

21 Q. Okay. And so, take that chief pilot in Alaska, for instance.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. Did you have to go to Alaska to interview him? Did he come
24 here? Was it Zoom?

25 A. Remote.

1 Q. Remote.

2 A. Because again, that was probably, well, right after COVID had
3 hit, so --

4 Q. Yeah. We'll call it, early stages of COVID. How's that?

5 A. Right. There you go.

6 Q. Okay. Everything's always based around COVID, isn't it? It
7 seems like, anymore.

8 A. Anymore.

9 Q. Yeah. All rightie So, we've been to Guardian these past few
10 days interviewing those, and we have found out that there was
11 going to be changes.

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. The director of ops --

14 A. Right.

15 Q. -- for one.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. I assume you have to approve the current one -- or, the new
18 one, I should say.

19 A. Right. We're in the process.

20 Q. Okay. So, what is that process?

21 A. So, it's the same, almost the same thing as what I just
22 explained for the chief. It's similar for the director of
23 operations. You know, so, we've gotten to the interview process
24 with him, and that's when I discovered that he is still currently
25 the director of operations of another 135 operator, and his intent

1 was not to leave that operation as the director of operations.
2 So, at that point, I said, we have to stop. I have to look at
3 policy and make sure, because I'm -- and I have -- this is
4 probably like within the last couple of weeks. So, you know,
5 like, well, we need to stop and make sure that -- I believe
6 there's something in policy, and I haven't had a chance, but I
7 don't believe that policy allows for -- again, I have to --

8 Q. Right.

9 A. Right. I haven't verified this part yet. But that we have
10 to go to headquarters' approval to get approval for being director
11 of operations of two carriers. And obviously, the concern I had
12 discussed, okay, with, you know, obviously, everything going on at
13 the moment, how are you able to maintain operational control over
14 both carriers? So, that's -- again, we're in the process of doing
15 that. We have not approved him. And I'm assuming we're also
16 talking about Nick Cusimano?

17 Q. That was the name we were told, yes.

18 A. Okay. I'm just making sure we're talking about the same
19 person, right.

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. So, that's the part that's in process. He has not been
22 approved at this point, because we still have to go through our
23 policy to even see if that's even a valid thing. And then,
24 obviously, the other piece of it would be to talk to the other POI
25 of the other carrier to see if that POI even knows, you know. And

1 I haven't had that communication yet to see if that POI knows
2 what's going on, as well.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. But that's also, like I said, in progress.

5 Q. Typically, how long has this taken, or how long do you expect
6 an approval process like for a DO go take?

7 A. If -- again, if it's, you know, straight clear that the
8 person meets the qualifications and, you know, meets policy
9 requirements, it can be fairly quick. But where we might have to
10 go for headquarters' approval, that can take longer, right?
11 Because we have to send it up, put a memo to -- construct a memo,
12 but all the, you know, the data in it, and send it up to
13 headquarters. And then, we wait for the yea or nay from them, as
14 well.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So --

17 Q. And I apologize if I asked this already. I didn't work --

18 A. No. That's okay.

19 Q. -- it out on my list, here. But how often do you interact
20 with the director of ops?

21 A. The director of ops, at least once a month.

22 Q. At least? Okay.

23 A. At least, because we hold -- I hold monthly meetings with the
24 operator. Then, we discuss everything from, you know, what's
25 going on; what's currently, what needs to be done; what needs to

1 be worked on; do I have any issues; do I have any inspections;
2 what -- you know. We hold monthly meetings. So, at least once a
3 month.

4 Q. Okay. Do you -- how often do you do on-site visits with
5 Guardian, like go down to their headquarters, or go fly around
6 with them, or whatever?

7 A. So, that's kind of -- again, for clarification, I'm just
8 trying to think how to best organize this. That's all.

9 Q. Well, let's do one at a time.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. How often do you go to headquarters, Guardian's headquarters,
12 or do you?

13 A. Oh, yeah. I definitely go down there. I've gone down there
14 are recently as back in -- well, even more. A couple of times
15 recently. But, you know, back in September, I was down there
16 doing inspections. You know, again, I'd have to go through my
17 calendar to look at like how many times, but I definitely go down
18 there at least a couple of times a year.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But then, again, I'm also sometimes there virtually, so it's
21 not like -- even though I may not be physically there, sometimes,
22 like if I, you know, if I need to look at a record, I can have
23 them show me on screen, and show me records that way, too. So,
24 just because I'm not always necessarily physically in person
25 there, I'm, you know, sometimes there in a different manner.

1 Q. Now, we'll add on to that a little bit with my second
2 question, then. How often do you get to, you know, go on a jump
3 seat ride with them, or a training event, or a flight -- a line
4 check, if you will?

5 A. I do a lot -- I do quite a few line checks with them, you
6 know, and I -- again, a number, it'd be hard to come up with that
7 without looking, but at least six times a year, maybe, doing at
8 least a line check or -- well, checker, my observation. Excuse
9 me.

10 Q. Okay. And for check airmen?

11 A. Check airmen, yeah.

12 Q. Do you ever go out and go fly, you know, kind of like, hi,
13 I'm here to fly with you?

14 A. It's -- I'd say it's probably a little bit different on air
15 medicals. You know, you're not going to be jump seating,
16 necessarily, on an air medical flight, you know, but you could.
17 It's allowable. You know, I would have to, again, I'd have to
18 research that a little bit more. But, you know, I haven't done
19 just a line flight myself personally, no.

20 Q. And may I assume -- and I hate assuming, because that
21 always -- you know what that spells. But may I assume that it's
22 because there's no schedule for them? It's --

23 A. Right.

24 Q. -- air medicals on demand right now?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. You've got to go?

2 A. I mean, yeah, you never know when they're going to be
3 operating, right. I mean, they could be -- I could sit there all
4 day, and they may not even have a flight, right?

5 Q. Right.

6 A. So, I mean, yeah. And also, the nature of the beast, too.
7 If you look at, you know, air ambulance operations, even in our
8 policy, it tells you not to impede the air ambulance operation,
9 so -- you know, because there's obviously potentially a life-
10 critical situation there, too. So, it's just a little bit
11 different of a nature versus if, you know, if I had been going on
12 Delta, right? It's a little bit easier for that. Okay, yeah. I
13 know when Delta's going. I know, you know, I could ask for the
14 jump seat. Not -- again, I know, allowable, yes, by regulation,
15 but --

16 Q. Right. Makes it more of a challenge in that role --

17 A. Right.

18 Q. -- I can only imagine.

19 A. Right.

20 Q. Okay. How often do you get out -- we understand time with
21 them, they have 45, 50, 60, I mean, seems like a lot of bases.
22 How often do you go over to their other bases to just -- a random
23 check, if you will?

24 A. Right. So, again, that's a little bit of a complicated
25 situation in the aspect of, you know, obviously, they're out in

1 different areas. We utilize other inspectors to go out and do,
2 you know, not necessarily line checks, but at least doing some
3 other surveillance items, mostly a lot of the check airmen
4 observations, because those times are times where they can gather
5 data, too, when they're out there. Again, it's kind of like, when
6 are they going to be there? Right. But, so, we utilize that
7 aspect. I'm trying to make sure I'm circling back
8 to -- will you ask you question again just to make sure I'm
9 answering what you asked?

10 Q. No, and that's okay.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. I always ask for different -- asking

13 A. Right.

14 Q. -- for clarification. How often do you get out to their
15 other bases and --

16 A. Like I said, and -- oh, that's why I was going there. Okay,
17 thank you.

18 Q. Yep.

19 A. Just had to refresh my memory. So, the other piece, too, is,
20 obviously, when I took over, COVID was -- hit hard, right? So, we
21 weren't traveling as much. Obviously, if there was a need, I'm
22 sure we could have found something if we needed, really needed to
23 get out somewhere. But obviously, a lot of the stuff that we were
24 doing, we were finding various ways, even virtually getting out to
25 places if we had to, right? I mean, I know it wasn't -- it's what

1 we needed at the time, right? So, I haven't personally been to
2 some of the other bases, but we've utilized other sources.

3 Q. Okay. Now, I realize -- we were given a mental picture, if
4 you will, of their geographical --

5 A. Right.

6 Q. -- location and -- you know, as far west -- or, as far east
7 as, you know, Michigan or --

8 A. Right.

9 Q. -- someplace like that, or --

10 A. Idabel, or like if you're going down --

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. -- towards Oklahoma.

13 Q. And then, as far north as Alaska and as --

14 A. Right.

15 Q. -- far west as Hawaii. I mean, that's a big space. Is
16 there --

17 A. Right.

18 Q. -- certain FSDOs you use in those -- I won't call them
19 outlying spaces, but those --

20 A. Right.

21 Q. -- fringes?

22 A. So, we definitely use -- and I'm -- because like the Alaska
23 office is kind of -- they -- where their bases are versus where
24 the Alaska area, the lines are kind of funky. But I know we've
25 used -- it's either. I think we've used all three Alaska offices,

1 Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And then, I know we've used Honolulu. I know we use Fargo a
4 lot, I know, to -- up in that area. I think -- and again, I'd
5 have to -- this is going based off what I recall, right?

6 Q. Right.

7 A. So, take it for what it is. I know we've tried to reach out
8 to Reno at some point, too. I know they're staff-limited, as
9 well. So, sometimes, we've really based upon where we have our
10 resources internally.

11 Q. Okay. And that's a great lead-in to my next question. I
12 know hearing how busy you are and your duties and
13 responsibilities, I'm only going to imagine that every SFDO in
14 that similar position -- how easy is it for you to pick up the
15 phone, and call Juneau, and say, hey, I need you to do this, or
16 Honolulu, or --

17 A. Right.

18 Q. -- Fargo, or whomever.

19 A. So, I always reach out through my manager, and he --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- reaches out to whoever else's frontline managers, how we
22 do it in our office.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Not to say that, you know, I can't -- you know, generally, I
25 know who's probably going to be utilized, right, at those offices.

1 If I know I have a resource somewhere, I try to utilize that same
2 person as much as I can. You know, if we know we have a resource,
3 right?

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So, I may suggest to them, and say, hey, you know, I know
6 this inspector's been utilized before, right? You know, as much
7 as we can. But -- just so, that way, we can streamline things a
8 little bit. But generally, I always go through my frontline, and
9 my frontline is the one who's reaching out. So, to answer what
10 the resources are at another office, that's a question for him.

11 Q. Right. No, I just was --

12 A. No, I get it.

13 Q. I'm just trying to figure out how --

14 A. The lay of the land.

15 Q. -- much of a challenge you would have getting somebody
16 that --

17 A. And generally, you know, my frontline's really good about
18 reaching out --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- so I don't feel like my challenge is necessarily like the
21 reach-out. I know like there's been one time we've reached out to
22 Reno and had a little bit harder time actually getting, you know,
23 somebody. But again, I know they were very resource-limited, too.
24 So, you know.

25 Q. So, let's say they give you somebody in Juneau. We'll use

- 1 Alaska, just because that just seems cold and really far north.
- 2 A. It's getting warmer.
- 3 Q. Well, although Hawaii's further west, maybe. I don't know.
- 4 A. It's --
- 5 Q. But we'll go with Juneau, because that'll keep it simply in
- 6 my mind. You call and say you need them to provide oversight for
- 7 whatever. I mean, could that be check rides, or could that just
- 8 be to give them a spot check, or --
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. -- just be check out the base --
- 11 A. Yep.
- 12 Q. -- all of the above?
- 13 A. Yeah. It could be anything.
- 14 Q. Okay. When they do that, do they reach out to you and give
- 15 you feedback, or does it go up through their supervisor --
- 16 A. So --
- 17 Q. -- and over?
- 18 A. -- it kind of does the whole chain back through, right? But
- 19 a lot of times, they'll -- like, when they complete their task,
- 20 they'll email the whole chain, so that way, everybody's kind of
- 21 involved and we see everything.
- 22 Q. Have you ever had an inspector from one of these other FSDOs
- 23 reach out to you and say, well, I did it, and, yeah, we've got to
- 24 talk? There are some problems, or I've noticed a few things?
- 25 A. In the two years that I've been here, no.

1 Q. Okay. Great. So, let's go back to Guardian and their
2 training --

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. -- since we're talking about check rides, and line checks,
5 and all that. Have you ever sat through one of their training
6 sessions with numeric classes or recurrent classes?

7 A. I have not at this point.

8 Q. Okay. Did you review their training material?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And how long ago was it you reviewed that, if you can recall?

11 A. I've done a couple of reviews throughout the year of their
12 training materials, so --

13 Q. And when you're reviewing their training materials, because
14 it's in the training department, do you interact directly with the
15 director of training, then?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Okay. And how's that relationship?

18 A. Good.

19 Q. Good?

20 A. Yeah. Same thing. It's like, if I need something or if I'm
21 not understanding something, I usually can ask him, and usually, I
22 always talk to my operators about, okay, if you understand my
23 policy and understand the requirements there. So, usually, I'm, I
24 don't want to say trained. That's not the right word. But at
25 least, when I request my operators, it's like, hey, if you can

1 understand what I have to -- need, then it makes it easier. Or
2 like, hey, if we've got a question, we research it. You know,
3 we've done research on various different parts of the training
4 program and things like, hey, could we utilize this piece of, you
5 know, like a training device, or something like that. You know,
6 we go down the rabbit hole, and if I have to, I pull up to, you
7 know, another division, and say, hey, help me understand what we
8 can and can't do here.

9 Q. Okay. So, you have other resources within the FAA --

10 A. Oh, yeah.

11 Q. -- that can -- are, I don't want to say, quick to help, but
12 can help?

13 A. Generally, I do get a good response from most places within
14 the FAA if I need help.

15 Q. Okay. Great. So, we understand we've got to see their AATDs
16 down there. Is that part of their training curriculum, or is that
17 just kind of, it's a procedure trainer type --

18 A. Procedure trainer.

19 Q. -- add-on?

20 A. Because you cannot use AATDs in 135 training.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. That was one of the pieces that we went through with them, is
23 to see how we could potentially maybe utilize those. But we went
24 through the policy, and that's where we went to headquarters. And
25 they're like, yeah, right here is where it says you cannot use

1 AATDs for flight training, right. You can use them for
2 supplementary ground training and things like that, like set
3 procedures.

4 Q. Okay. Have you ever used their AATDs?

5 A. I've been in there, and I, you know, I haven't personally
6 played with it, but I have been in there.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. How did it seem to you? Did it seem like it was a good
10 procedure trainer? Is there things that you pointed out that
11 maybe they could do different?

12 A. I talked to them and asked them kind of those similar
13 questions of like, how does it work for you? I do know that they
14 wish they had more resources in that area that -- you know. But
15 again, where it's something that's a little bit more supplemental
16 to them, that's, you know, it's above and beyond what they even
17 have to have, you know. But they said they would love to have --
18 I know they're talking about using more simulators, you know, in
19 the future. That's kind of one of their big plans. But, you
20 know, they're just the same thing, resource-limited, as to what
21 they can utilize them for. So, like I said, I know that's their
22 wish list, but that's about the best way I can answer your
23 question.

24 Q. Oh, and that helps a lot. I get that. So --

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. -- thank you. Do you have to approve the director of
2 training?

3 A. Not that I can recall.

4 Q. Okay. So, you don't -- there's no requirement for you to
5 approve their director of training, then? It just --

6 A. Not that I can recall.

7 Q. I just want to make sure.

8 A. Right.

9 Q. Other than the director of ops, is there anybody you have to
10 approve --

11 A. The chief pilots and the agent for service.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Those are the ones that are in their operation
14 specifications.

15 Q. Thank you. So, you reviewed their training material. I'm
16 asking for your opinion, your expert opinion, here.

17 A. Okay.

18 Q. How is that training material to you? Did it look robust?
19 Did it look like there are some areas that could be enhanced? And
20 maybe I should narrow it down a little bit more specific.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. Auto pilot use, single pilot operations, CRM, you know, those
23 kind of -- I'm going to call those big nuggets.

24 A. Right. Again, nothing previously stood out to me, right?

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I mean, that I can think of. You know, I mean, every
2 operator probably has something. Again, I can't think of anything
3 directly that I'm like, oh, yeah, that's -- you know. But of
4 course, now, it's a little bit more of a microscope now, so it's
5 kind of hard to say, compare -- you know what I mean?

6 Q. Right.

7 A. It's a little hard to compare previous to now, because
8 obviously, you're going, wait a minute, what are we missing,
9 right? So, it's a little bit harder to say, you know, yeah, I
10 didn't see anything glaring that I, you know, said, oh, you know,
11 in fact, we'd better -- you know, the only thing I can think of,
12 again, opinion, right? Okay, we'll start with that. Is, you
13 know, they're going through some avionics changes, so, you know,
14 they -- there's that piece of how are we training that? How is
15 that going? And that's part of what we're looking at, of course,
16 right now, is making sure, because they're adding another piece
17 into, a piece of avionics, into some of the equipment that they're
18 utilizing in Alaska.

19 So, we're trying to look at specifically, like, that piece,
20 and that piece might help us derive down whether or not maybe the
21 rest of the avionics training, you know, differences, is robust
22 enough. So, that would be a piece where -- again, opinion, you
23 know what I mean? But we are looking at that piece. But again,
24 that's after the fact a little bit more so. But at the same time,
25 you know, when I watch -- you know, especially like when I'm

1 watching those observations, or those checks, again, there was
2 nothing that -- and I was looking at them, you know, because
3 avionics is a big piece of where a lot of people, when they're
4 flying, it's an easy place to, you know, get lost in the avionics,
5 and didn't see anything specific. But again, you know, hindsight.

6 Q. Okay. How about auto pilot training? Was it good, sort of;
7 just fine? Nothing stands out, so that's --

8 A. Nothing --

9 (Crosstalk)

10 Q. -- too.

11 A. -- nothing stands out, right. Again, that's all I can say,
12 is, nothing stands out.

13 Q. That says a lot, so --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. If something stood out, then that says a lot more, so --

16 A. Right. It's not like -- again, it was usually one of those
17 things that you pick up, checking events, right? When you're
18 watching the check airmen, whether, you know, the check airman's
19 understanding the system to be able to test it, or whether, you
20 know, the pilots are actually flying it. Again, I never saw, in
21 any of the checks that I observed or heard back feedback from any
22 of the other inspectors that said, oh, yeah, you know, here's
23 where this issue is, so --

24 Q. So, you've conducted their line check observations?

25 A. I've done all check airmen observations.

- 1 Q. My apologies. I --
- 2 A. That's okay.
- 3 Q. -- I always do the wrong term.
- 4 A. That's okay.
- 5 Q. Sorry. Yes, check airmen observations, just a ballpark, in
- 6 the last two years, how many? Again, ballpark. No don't have to
- 7 give me an exact.
- 8 A. At least 10, 12.
- 9 Q. Have you ever had any of those not be a successful event?
- 10 A. And I'm trying to recall whether like -- because again, where
- 11 they, you know, they can unsat; and then, they can retrain, and
- 12 I'm trying to remember whether there was one of those or not. It
- 13 doesn't stand out.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. I just don't remember somebody having some big event that was
- 16 like, oh, that's memorable. That's unsatisfactory. So --
- 17 Q. I know pilots --
- 18 A. Okay.
- 19 Q. -- every flight, you know, you might make little mistakes or,
- 20 you know --
- 21 A. Right.
- 22 (Crosstalk)
- 23 Q. -- maybe. But I assume you've had to unsat an area and
- 24 retrain or redo, or did you even get that option? Is it --
- 25 A. Are you talking me personally, or --

1 Q. You personally. When you're given an observation, a check
2 airman observation, do you have the ability to say, you know --

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. -- no, that, he didn't do right, but let's do it again, or --

5 A. Right. Like if the check airman's performance is
6 unsatisfactory, we're like, okay, let's talk about that. Okay, do
7 we need to -- there could be -- you know, if it's bad enough, or
8 it's like, okay, maybe we need to talk to your -- we'll talk to
9 your director of training and our DO at that point, and let's talk
10 about this check airman.

11 Q. Have you had to do that?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. Excellent. We learned this week that Guardian, just
14 like everybody else, is kind of hard pressed to get pilots flying
15 and --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- everything like that. But do they provide you with, I
18 used to always call it the (indiscernible), but that's so
19 negative. So, a pass rate of new hires that are coming through
20 and those that pass (indiscernible)?

21 A. So, not necessarily like categorically like that.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But with check airmen, they have a report that they can fill
24 out, and it will -- by check airmen, so they get the pass/fail
25 rate of each check airman.

- 1 Q. Okay. And do they provide that to you?
- 2 A. I haven't seen that recently, so it's something that we do
3 need to explore.
- 4 Q. Okay. Can you recall the last time you saw one?
- 5 A. Not off the top of my head, no.
- 6 Q. Okay. Was there -- I'll ask for an opinion, I guess. Was
7 there anything that stood out to you that was like, oh, this
8 one's, this check airman's going to have a high pass rate, or --
- 9 A. Again, I'm not --
- 10 Q. -- is this too long ago?
- 11 A. It's, again, too long ago to recall.
- 12 Q. And I don't, know, I can't --
- 13 A. Right.
- 14 Q. -- recall that, that's --
- 15 A. Right.
- 16 Q. -- perfectly fine. But I figure, if I don't ask, I'll never
17 know --
- 18 A. Right.
- 19 Q. -- so --
- 20 A. Right. No, I get it.
- 21 Q. All rightie. If Guardian has a pilot that does not have a
22 successful pass on a recurrent training, they don't successfully
23 pass it, do they notify you at all of unsats, or (indiscernible),
24 or anything like that --
- 25 A. Unless there's --

1 Q. -- or just that one spreadsheet?

2 A. Just the spreadsheet.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And is that -- are there check airmen based all around their
6 system, do you know, or is it --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- geographically located?

9 A. No, it's all around.

10 Q. Okay. All rightie. Do -- my last little round of questions,
11 then we can take a break if you would --

12 A. Yeah, you're fine.

13 Q. -- like to do that. Do they ever notify you when they
14 terminate pilots due to their performance?

15 A. I guess, if like, if there's maybe a pilot that I'm
16 investigating for like an occurrence or something like that,
17 right? You know, usually, I'll ask for the follow-up action of
18 what the carrier's doing, right?

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. To see what they're doing. Do, sometimes, in that case, yes.
21 If there's, you know, something specifically. Now, of course,
22 post-accident, yes, there has been some more talk about, you know,
23 hey, what are you doing about anybody? But yeah, not necessarily,
24 unless it was like a specific issue that was brought up to my
25 attention, or something that I have gone and talked to them about,

1 or unless they have had questions, right? But again, nothing that
2 I can recall that they're like, oh, yeah. But like I said, I do
3 know that there's been a case where we've talked about a pilot,
4 you know, and maybe on an occurrence, or something like that,
5 so --

6 Q. Okay. Do you know, do they have an ASAP program?

7 A. They do.

8 Q. Are you part of that?

9 A. Yes, I'm on the ERC.

10 Q. You are?

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. Is it just -- are you from the FAA on there, or do you have a
13 backup in case?

14 A. There's a maintenance person, as well.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. They -- actually, the avionics inspector's also on the ERC.

17 Q. So, is there ERC -- their ASAP program, is it a pilot ASAP
18 and a mechanic ASAP, or is it all just one ASAP?

19 A. And a mechanic.

20 Q. Okay. So, are you --

21 A. I only do --

22 Q. -- are you only on the pilot side?

23 A. Only on the pilot side. The avionics inspector takes care of
24 the maintenance side.

25 Q. Okay. How often do you guys meet?

1 A. It's been usually at least once a quarter. For a while
2 there, we were even doing some monthlies, you know, just even if
3 we needed to. It's just, it's kind of dependent upon how many
4 reports there are.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. But generally, at least once a quarter.

7 Q. Ballpark number on the number of reports they get a month, a
8 quarter, or whatever's easiest for you?

9 A. I can't off the top of my head. There's actually quite a
10 few.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I -- but to put a number to it, I couldn't give you a number.
13 That'd be a question, probably, more for Guardian.

14 Q. Okay. All rightie. I know you mentioned that there was a,
15 forgive me, I think you said a pilot deviation, or --

16 A. Occurrence.

17 Q. -- occurrence, or whatever. How do you get notified of
18 those?

19 A. That mostly depends.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So, like, pilot deviations come through just, you know,
22 whatever ATC system they reported to the FSDO; and then, it
23 depends on if it's a 135 flight, if it comes to our office, and
24 things like that. So, generally, if they -- they look at the
25 number, and they figure out whether it's on their carrier

1 certificate; and then, they send it to the POI. Same thing with
2 an occurrence. You know, if something is reported, you know,
3 through ATC. A lot of times, occurrences are reported through
4 ATC, so that usually, again, filters down. And then, they weed it
5 out, and they bring it either to the POI, or even sometimes the
6 PMI, or the PAI sometimes takes those occurrences, as well. So,
7 it's not just me.

8 Q. Okay. And again, just generally, what kind of occurrences do
9 you -- I don't want to say, typically get, but what kind of raises
10 this up like, oh, yeah, altitude deviation again, or, oh, runway
11 crew, you know?

12 A. Right. You know, on a lot of -- I'd say, honestly, they
13 probably -- and again, I don't know how much I can divulge between
14 ASAP or not.

15 Q. Do not -- if it's dealing with --

16 A. No, just --

17 Q. -- ASAP, please --

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. -- do not even go there --

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. -- because like that's a --

22 A. Is --

23 Q. In my humble opinion, that is an --

24 A. Right.

25 Q. -- awesome program, and I don't want to ever hurt it.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. And if you can't --

3 A. I'm trying to think.

4 Q. -- if you can't --

5 A. I'm trying to figure out --

6 Q. -- do that, then --

7 A. -- answer that question, because there's a piece of that.

8 But let's just talk about the ones that are reported, right? So,

9 let me ask you to ask the question one more time just so I make

10 sure I'm answering one more time.

11 Q. That was 30 seconds ago.

12 A. I know.

13 Q. (Indiscernible). No --

14 A. That's fine. I forgot it.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are you asking about trends, maybe,

16 versus any specific --

17 MS. CARLSON: Right.

18 MR. ETCHER: Right.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- event?

20 MS. CARLSON: And that's --

21 (Crosstalk)

22 MS. CARLSON: Yeah. I mean, because some of that trend comes

23 from another source, right? So, that's why I'm trying to --

24 BY MR. ETCHER:

25 Q. And that's okay. If it's going to put you in a weird spot,

1 we'll -- let me --

2 A. Right.

3 Q. -- roll on down a little bit. Maybe there's a better way I
4 can ask that.

5 A. There's -- you know, so, we're trying to track trends. Like,
6 so, within -- I'm trying to think. So, one thing we recognize as
7 a CMT, I mean, we do get reports of NSCOT, meaning certificate
8 management team, okay? So, that's the avionics maintenance, I
9 mean, as a team. We meet regularly, too, just -- they're usually
10 on monthly meetings, and we meet regularly, too, just so that way,
11 we can discuss whether it's risk or whatever. You know, and,
12 yeah, we recognize that you can pull in all these occurrences, and
13 pilot deviations, and stuff like that, and there's not really --
14 you can go and search data, right? You know. But the -- and
15 within some of our systems, there's like -- you know, I can see,
16 okay, we had accidents, right? I can see that. I can see
17 incidents. But the occurrences and pilot deviations don't kind of
18 line up in a reporting process that's easy to data mine for us as
19 inspectors, so we actually put that in as a part of our risk
20 assessment, is that we recognize that we don't have like a good
21 catch-all, per se.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Again, that's opinion-based, okay? So, we're recognizing
24 that piece, not that we don't track them, right? We just
25 recognize that we don't have like, oh, there's like this category,

1 right, of this happening, right, other than if we talk as a team.
2 And we try to vet that out as much as we can ourselves, but we
3 recognize that there's not like a perfect system for that, per se.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So, we're working on that piece. I don't know of, again, I
6 don't know of anything that's like literally going, oh, there was
7 this particular issue, right? You know. There's your reported
8 takeoffs. You get your, like I said, your pilot deviations,
9 which, they haven't had a ton of pilot deviations, actually --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- that have been reported through the official process.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So --

14 Q. Cool. That says a lot there, too, so --

15 A. Right.

16 Q. -- I appreciate that little bit.

17 A. I would say the occurrences are probably the -- may be the
18 thing that we see a little bit more of, and that's usually like
19 even if a pilot aborts a takeoff. That gets reported to ATC. ATC
20 sends it to us. It could be multiple reasons why they'd report
21 that takeoff, right? You know. So, it could be something simple
22 as -- you know, I don't know. I could give -- I can't give an
23 example off the top of my head. But the point is, is, those all
24 get reported, too, but --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 MR. ETCHER: Perfect. I know we've been going for about an
3 hour. I'm confident you're tired of looking at me, because I
4 don't blame you at that point. But I want to pass it around and
5 let my other colleagues have --

6 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

7 MR. ETCHER: -- a chance. But before we do, do you need a
8 break?

9 MS. CARLSON: I'm okay right now, actually.

10 MR. ETCHER: Does anybody need a break?

11 MS. CARLSON: I was going to say, or if anybody else wants
12 one.

13 MR. ETCHER: I see nothing, so all right, then. I guess --

14 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

15 MR. ETCHER: -- we can continue. I will pass it off to Ms.
16 Sabrina.

17 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

18 DR. WOODS: I actually don't have very many questions at all.

19 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

20 BY DR. WOODS:

21 Q. But I was curious. We talked a little bit about, at this
22 point, Guardian's putting forth a new DO --

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. -- for you to approve, and that person's working their way
25 through the process. Have you actually been like formally

1 introduced? Have you had any interactions with the would-be DO?

2 A. The new DO?

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. Yes, I've been formally introduced. So, we had a meeting
5 back in January to kind of talk about all the new processed and
6 stuff, and -- not processes. New personnel. And I'm thinking,
7 I'm pretty sure that you were made aware that they are also
8 planning on moving their operation. So, they came, and they
9 formally introduced that back in January to our office.

10 Q. Okay. And then, since that point, in these monthly plus
11 interactions that you've had, has it primarily been with the old
12 DO, or has the --

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. -- new DO been there, as well, or just the new DO?

15 A. Actually, mostly, the old DO.

16 Q. At this point?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Have you had any interactions with the new DO in regards to
19 potential policy changes, or training changes, or operational
20 changes?

21 A. Yes. So, he's been a part of that part. Yeah. So, he has
22 been a part of the -- they have submitted some new procedural
23 changes that they're trying to incorporate. And so, that piece,
24 yes, he's been involved in some of that part.

25 Q. So -- and you will forgive me, because I do not know how this

1 works.

2 A. Yep, I -- no, you're fine.

3 Q. So, those changes that they're submitting when that new DO
4 has not been formally recognized as the DO for this part 135
5 operation, how do you navigate that? How does that work?

6 A. So -- and actually, I've made that very clear in one of their
7 meetings that we've had, is that that was a big piece, is like --
8 because there was that piece of like, who am I talking to, right?
9 So, I made it very clear in one meeting, and I made sure my
10 management was there, and their management, and everybody was
11 there, and I made it very clear that we have not approved him on
12 any of our documentation. He's not been approved. My onus is to
13 the director of operations, and the director of operations is
14 Jeremy. That doesn't mean he can't, the other person can't --
15 people can't have input to, you know, processes and procedures,
16 but anything that has to come, it has to come from Jeremy's if
17 it's formal. So, that is very clear from us that it has to come
18 from him.

19 Q. Okay. In the two years that you've been the oversight for
20 Guardian, how would you -- I'm going to break this question down
21 to say to you. So --

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. -- how would you, in your opinion, quantify the changes in
24 the company? From that two-year point to last week, has there
25 been a lot, or has it been a steady state, or --

1 A. So, other than like -- good question. So, other than that
2 one initial change with the one chief pilot that I explained back
3 in, I think -- or --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- 2020, the beginning of -- or, 2021. Excuse me. Other
6 than that change, everybody's, all the, we call them 119'ers, are
7 the approved positions, all of those have remained steady up until
8 that January meeting. That's when we found out about the changes
9 that they were trying to implement. They're wanting to implement,
10 I should say.

11 Q. Okay. What about changes in operations, or policies, or
12 SOPs, or training? Has that been pretty steady the last
13 two years, or --

14 A. Pretty steady, other than maybe adding check airmen, you
15 know, things like that. Yeah, there really haven't been like any
16 big overarching changes. They've been more like the minor day-to-
17 day things of, you know, like I said, check airmen approval.
18 That's probably been everything. Or dealing with their special
19 approaches up in Alaska, you know, and that's more or less keeping
20 up to date with what changes are occurring externally to them with
21 special approaches.

22 So, I really don't feel like there's been a lot of change up
23 until, like I said -- you know, they notified us somewhere -- and
24 time frame gets fuzzy a little bit, but off the top of my head,
25 somewhere, I think it was right around that December time frame,

1 actually, it was probably the end of November, I think we set a
2 meeting up for the end of December, because they were telling us
3 that there were going to be some big changes coming up. Didn't
4 say what. So, we have the meeting set. And then, obviously,
5 there was the events that happened in December that they kind of
6 took over; and then, we rescheduled for January, and that's when
7 we were notified of any of these changes that were coming up.

8 Q. Okay. Is there a rule for when they have to notify you in
9 advance prior to seeking the approval for like, for instance, a
10 change in DO?

11 A. Um-hum. And I get it's in a 119 regulation. I'd have to
12 look it up to tell you the specifics. But yeah, they're in there.

13 Q. Maybe you can help me with the timeline.

14 A. Sure.

15 Q. The move -- because they are moving, literally. Gee.
16 Definitely moving.

17 A. Right. That hasn't happened yet.

18 Q. Correct. Did notification of the move come first, then the
19 notification about the changes in 119 positions?

20 A. It was just the director of operations, but yes. So, both of
21 those occurred at the exact same time --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- in the January meeting.

24 Q. So, it's essentially like --

25 A. We're moving and we're changing.

1 Q. -- well, by the way --

2 A. Right.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. And that all happened this --

6 A. In January. That notification to us happened in January.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And then, somewhere -- so, the way we kind of work things in

9 our office, too, is like, okay, we'll take that as a meeting, but

10 then, anything that you're going to officially do, you need to

11 submit to our office in writing, and they do it through a central

12 email box. Everything that an operator -- so, it just goes

13 through our central email box, so that way, management can then

14 assign it out to us as like a task to work on.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, they've -- I believe that has all been submitted. I know

17 the DO, I was working on that specific piece of it, because that

18 piece was going to happen sooner. The move, from my

19 understanding -- and again, I'd have to go back and look at what

20 they've submitted. I haven't been working on that piece yet. But

21 that piece is going to be happening throughout, and not until the

22 end of the year, is my understanding, is when the full move, is

23 what they proposed to us. There may be pieces, but I -- from my

24 understanding, that's what's been proposed. Again, I'd have to go

25 back and look at notes to 100 percent recall that.

1 Q. Okay. And I know that the director of training is not a
2 position that you have to approve, but you do work closely with
3 that individual.

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. And correct me if I'm wrong, but you are aware that that
6 position is changing, as well.

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. And what time were you notified that? Was that the same time
9 in January, or --

10 A. No, I believe that -- I think his plan was different. You
11 know, I don't think it was related to necessarily specifically
12 that. I think that was his own individual plan, you know, that he
13 was going to move on to a different career.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. So, that wasn't necessarily associated with those changes,
16 per se. I mean, now, it could be, right? I mean, there could be
17 a link. But that's not for me to say.

18 Q. Okay. So, when were you notified that the director of
19 training position would also be --

20 A. I'd have --

21 Q. -- changing out?

22 A. -- to -- I know it's been after that --

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. -- but I don't recall the exact time frame, but it would have
25 been after that.

1 Q. After the January surprise?

2 A. Somewhere right around there. I just, I can't recall if it
3 was like right before or right after. I knew he was seeking other
4 positions, but I just, you know, I don't -- I didn't know like
5 when he officially was like, oh, here's when I'm putting in my
6 official notice.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So, I don't recall that off the top of my head.

9 Q. And at this point, do you have any awareness as to who they
10 intend for to take the position?

11 A. I asked that, I think, about last week, I'd asked, but I, you
12 know, I know they were doing interviews, so I know that that was
13 happening, but I haven't seen a like this is who it's going to be
14 yet.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, I do not know the person's name that's replacing yet at
17 this point.

18 Q. I'd like to ask a completely experience-based, opinion-based
19 question --

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. -- more because I'm learning --

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. -- about the side. In your experience in, you know, what you
24 see like your coworkers work on, what you've worked on in the
25 past, this kind of movement within a certificate, what would be

1 some things, from your experience again, that you would advise
2 like, these are things you need to be aware of going forward as a
3 certificate? Like --

4 A. Right.

5 Q. -- these are some concerns I might have in moving to a new
6 location, to the new DO. There's going to be a new director of
7 training.

8 A. Right.

9 Q. From your experience, what would be some, hey, these are some
10 things you might want to consider in order to ensure that --
11 ensure the integrity of the certificate in moving forward?

12 A. Right. Right, and that's part of what we're in the process
13 of right now. But whether it's a merger, whether it's a location
14 change, whatever, there's a lot of things that go into that,
15 right? So, it's kind of dependent upon -- but like a location
16 change, that's a big one, especially where they're talking about
17 moving their training location, you know, their base of their
18 training location, and things like that. Obviously, it's making
19 sure that the continuity of training stays, right? Making sure
20 that we're not increasing risk into that. Making sure that, you
21 know, obviously, when you're moving, is everybody even going with
22 you? Are you hiring new people? Is there -- you know, do you
23 have to train those new people? I mean, the list, it's enormous
24 at that point, you know.

25 But what we've done as a CMT, like in this specific case, is,

1 we set up -- there's a thing called a chat within one of our
2 systems, and we go, okay, we're identifying those risks of saying,
3 okay, hey, you know, we're trying to methodically think it through
4 and identifying risks so that -- from our perspective, right?
5 And, of course, then, that ensues down to, okay, then, that leads
6 to, okay, we're going to do some extra surveillance on that. And
7 then, that leads to, okay, are we watching all those items of --
8 you know, again, we'd have to kind of detail out. I mean, there's
9 multiple things from operational control, to training, to
10 checking, to, I mean, like -- I'm trying to think -- like I said,
11 I could go on, but there's lots of different things, depending a
12 lot upon the operator, and just making sure that the communication
13 even within the management is good, or making sure even just down
14 to the pilot level, you know, is the pilot, you know, do they feel
15 comfortable with what's going on? Is that influencing the pilot?
16 You know, down to that level, right? So, it's from top down,
17 there's -- you know, it's -- that's where we put together a plan,
18 and we try to mitigate it from ourselves.

19 And, of course, we communicate that to the carrier, as well.
20 So, that way, we're like, okay, so, these are where we think we're
21 going to see problems, but what are you doing? And that's where,
22 if -- you know, I mean, obviously, the SMS process is coming into
23 play eventually where all the carriers are going to need SMS.
24 Guardian's working on that. Another thing I -- you know, even if
25 they don't have that, it's something you can ask. Is it for an

1 SRM? Which is safety -- oh, goodness. How they said that. It's
2 going to fly from my head.

3 Q. Risk management?

4 A. Risk management, yeah. Thank you. You know, we ask from
5 those from the carrier to say, hey, where do you identify the
6 risk? Where do you think your risks are going to come? So, it's
7 a twofold approach, right? We want to see what they identify,
8 what we identify, and it -- I don't know. I don't know if I'm
9 answering your question --

10 Q. No, that's really --

11 A. -- or if I'm just mumbling at this point.

12 Q. No, I'm -- no, it's actually really enlightening, because
13 again, I mean, you have a wealth of experience, and I just, I
14 have -- I can identify things from my subject matter point of
15 view --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- with all these things, but I want to know what, you
18 know --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- someone in an oversight position identifies. What are the
21 things you're looking for?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. So, I mean, it's very helpful.

24 A. Like I said, there's -- I mean, and that's just, that's
25 probably the tip of the iceberg, right? That's not -- there's a

1 lot more that would go into that. I mean, and just going out and
2 looking at the other, you know, maybe it's, you know, it's going
3 to change, yeah, it's going to change more high-level stuff, but
4 eventually, that probably also filters down to the base level
5 stuff. So, you know, taking that look down, and also taking from
6 the look up, you know, just making sure we're not -- you try not
7 to miss as much as you can, but, you know, you do your best.

8 Q. When an operator geographically moves location, am I to
9 presume that oversight of the certificate will also move?

10 A. That's going to be slightly a better question for management,
11 to a certain extent, right? Generally, that's the assumption --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- is that they would move to another office. But there's
14 probably other variables that are going to go into that, whether
15 or not that office can take them, or what resources -- so, you
16 know, again --

17 Q. You're --

18 A. -- I can't answer that 100 percent.

19 Q. Let me rephrase. Have you been notified that the certificate
20 will be moving to another individual in the --

21 A. Right. That's --

22 Q. -- new locale?

23 A. -- the plan, is that they would go to the North Texas FSDO.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Right.

1 Q. In their --

2 A. But --

3 Q. Okay. Go ahead.

4 A. -- I don't know if that communication has been done between
5 management, so that's why I said that question might be better for
6 management, to determine whether or not they've actually had that
7 conversation of whether the resources are there in North Texas --

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. -- to take that burn-off.

10 Q. Let's presume that will happen at some point in the future,
11 or that it has happened in the past between other certificates
12 that have moved, geographically moved, locations. Is there
13 something set up for a handoff between --

14 A. Oh, yeah.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Can you give me a quick explanation of, in a perfect world,
18 how would that happen?

19 A. I think of it more of like as if it were like if you had
20 paper boxes, right? And if you had all their files, you would --
21 you, as the CMT, would go through the files and make sure, you
22 know, as best as you can, that things are -- you know, you're not
23 handing over things left undone, right? The ideology is that
24 you're handing off things either trying to be completed or, hey,
25 here's this next project, like, for example, their SMS, right? We

1 may or may not get to that. That'd be one that we'd probably hand
2 off to the next office if we can't get to it.

3 There would definitely be briefings between whoever the new
4 POI and whoever, you know, the rest of the CMTs, between the CMTs,
5 going, okay, this is where they're at. This is what's going on.
6 This is what we have in their risk profile. This is what's here.
7 And try to, you know, as best as you can, brief that through.
8 And, of course, there would always be communication even after the
9 fact, even just kind of like I said with that transfer of the POI,
10 when I was explaining that earlier, right? Doesn't -- obviously,
11 you try to explain that, right, as best as you can, in detail; but
12 then, you know, operationally-wise, there's probably going to be
13 questions as they go along. So, it's not -- it's never like a
14 one-day --

15 Q. Here you go.

16 A. Right, right. Here you go. It's -- I'm done. Enjoy. No,
17 it's not, it's definitely not. Again, I haven't really
18 transferred a big certificate like that before, so, you know, I
19 can't 100 percent answer to all the details. It's something that
20 we'd have to work through.

21 Q. Okay. And kind of the last group of questions I have is, has
22 Guardian made you aware that, at this time, they have suspended
23 training operations?

24 A. Yeah. So -- but they're also doing some of their training to
25 do single pilot at night. But that's in addition to regular

1 training.

2 Q. I'm referring to -- I guess I don't know what I'm referring
3 to. I guess I had assumed, when they said they were suspending
4 training, they were talking about new applicants, right? Yeah.

5 A. And I may or may not have been aware of that. I don't
6 know --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- if they did any new hiring or not. You know, I don't know
9 that one.

10 Q. Yeah. I believe there's supposed to be a class that starts
11 April 3.

12 A. Got you.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Now that you say that. But again, I'd have to go back
15 through my --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- communications --

18 Q. I was just --

19 A. -- and see. It's not off the top of my head.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. But again, I'm just trying to remember.

22 DR. WOODS: Understood. You've --

23 MS. CARLSON: So --

24 DR. WOODS: -- got a lot going on. I --

25 MS. CARLSON: Right.

1 DR. WOODS: -- completely understand. Okay. I think that is
2 it for me. Thank you so much. It's --

3 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

4 DR. WOODS: -- educational.

5 MR. ETCHER: Do you need a break? Are you doing all right?

6 MS. CARLSON: Still okay.

7 MR. ETCHER: Okay.

8 MS. CARLSON: I've been drinking water, so --

9 MR. ETCHER: Well, I'm talking to you.

10 MS. CARLSON: -- it probably helps.

11 MR. ETCHER: Tell us when you need your break.

12 MS. CARLSON: Okay. No, I'm good, unless anybody else needs
13 a break.

14 DR. WOODS: We're good.

15 MR. ETCHER: All right. Ms. Millicent?

16 BY MS. HILL:

17 Q. When you pull accident duty, the rotations, how often do you
18 get an accident or maybe a fatal accident that might entail more
19 long-term work?

20 A. I don't know at what -- at one point, like, it just kind of
21 depends on if you kind of -- I'm sure it's just like you in a way.
22 It's like, sometimes, you pull the lucky draw, and you get nothing
23 on that week; and then, sometimes, you get multiple, right? I
24 mean, I just recently worked a fatal back in -- oh, goodness.
25 Now, I can't remember. Like, I could refer you. But it's -- you

1 know, so, every -- you know, you do get fatals, you know,
2 occasionally. Again, to quantify that's kind of difficult.

3 Q. Guardian has bases in some unique operating environments,
4 like Alaska and Hawaii. If they're wanting to, you know, get an
5 approached approved, can you or do you use the local FSDOs for
6 their local area expertise in doing that?

7 A. Or I also use -- so, that, but another resource that we do,
8 especially if we have special procedures, is AFS, I want to say
9 it's 420. It's in the 400 series. But there are -- there's a
10 branch that deals specifically with those procedures, and
11 generally, one of those inspectors who is over that oversees a
12 specific area.

13 And generally, like if I have questions about that, which
14 there's been, you know, like, we dig into the documentation of
15 that procedure, we dig into that, and we talk to them and go, hey,
16 what's the got-yous? What's, you know, what's anything in here
17 that might. you know, do we need to do specifically for training?
18 I've had multiple conversations with them about approaches,
19 because -- just for that reason. It's like, I may not know that
20 approach, right? But I have my resource available. So,
21 sometimes, like -- and I've even gotten a really good background
22 history of some of that, the navigational stuff up there from that
23 office. So, it's a great resources, and I've used multiple times
24 for specials.

25 Q. How close are you that for your pay grade, you're allowed a

1 maximum amount of points, you know, for the operator. How close
2 are you to maxing out for your pay grade?

3 A. I believe I'm currently at about 22, 23 hundred points, and
4 my pay grade, again, I think it's at either 2499, or 25, or
5 somewhere right there. So, pretty close.

6 Q. Would you say that's typical for the inspectors in this
7 office?

8 A. On the fixed wing side, I would say. Again, a verification
9 through Matt would be better, but yeah, I mean, I believe, on the
10 fixed wing side, it's more typical, again, because there's more
11 fixed wing operators.

12 Q. Have any pilots or any of the 119ers ever reached out to you
13 outside of your typically-scheduled meetings with Guardian to talk
14 about a concern or --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- issue they may have? Anything specific?

17 A. I mean, I've had everything to like, oh, we've got this --
18 you know, we've got an aircraft with an item that we need to get,
19 you know, to a certain place. We need a ferry permit. Or, you
20 know, things like that in reaching out. Or, you know, they've had
21 maybe, I don't know, a pilot that had a medical that got issued
22 incorrectly or something like that, you know, and it was like, oh,
23 well, what do we do here? You know, how do we take care of this?
24 There's -- you know, they try to mainly do inside normal hours,
25 but, you know, every once in a while, there's like, oh, we need

1 something to continue. We need to operate and continue. So, I
2 very make sure they have my contact information and are able to
3 get a hold of me.

4 Q. Okay. And the regular monthly meetings you have with them,
5 does anybody reach out to voice concerns outside of those? Not
6 about like a paperwork issue, but about an internal issue, and --

7 A. Yeah. Definitely. I mean, especially recently, obviously,
8 we've had a lot more. But even before that, like, we'd have the
9 monthly meetings; but then, I'd have maybe meeting to deal with
10 just special approaches, or meetings to deal with just check
11 airmen, or -- I'm trying to think of anything else. Or a training
12 program, or GOM. You know, I've met with various people, you
13 know, for different things. Or if they, yeah, if they had
14 concerns, generally, in the monthly meetings, that's when it's
15 like, okay, what else do we have? What else is out there? You
16 know, constantly leading a silent room for, you know, giving them
17 a moment of silence to be like, okay, bring up anything. And I
18 feel like we have a very -- you know, at least with the current,
19 right?

20 I mean, the current 119ers, I feel like we've had a good
21 communication. You know, I don't feel like there's nothing that,
22 you know, they don't feel comfortable talking to me about. You
23 know, I mean, if there's a problem, I'm very much, so, let's work
24 through it, you know. Let's talk through it. Let's make it work.
25 Let's do what we need to do. I mean, even if it's -- you know,

1 we'll do what we have to do, right? We'll do the procedures that
2 we need to do, but we'll take care of whatever we need to.

3 MS. HILL: Okay. Thank you.

4 MS. CARLSON: Welcome.

5 MR. ETCHER: You're good?

6 MS. HILL: Yep.

7 MR. ETCHER: All rightie. You're still doing all right?

8 MS. CARLSON: So far.

9 MR. ETCHER: All right.

10 MS. CARLSON: You haven't killed me off yet.

11 MR. ETCHER: I don't want to do that. I haven't done that to
12 anyone yet.

13 MS. HILL: Yeah, at that level.

14 MR. ETCHER: That was on -- yeah, right.

15 MS. CARLSON: Right.

16 MR. ETCHER: Mitch?

17 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Lyndsay, for sharing your
18 knowledge, and wisdom, and experience with us today. We
19 appreciate your time. I just have a few questions.

20 MS. CARLSON: Sure.

21 BY MR. MITCHELL:

22 Q. And this one may be -- this is definitely your opinion. Do
23 you feel task-saturated?

24 A. Opinion, yes.

25 Q. So, if you're pulling accident investigation duty, and you

1 get called out on an accident, and you're dealing with that for a
2 day, two days, three days, is anyone else able to step in to help
3 do the work that you might be doing normally?

4 A. If -- not generally, because generally, you know, whatever it
5 is, it's going to be just still on my virtual desk. We'll call it
6 that.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It's still going to be there. I mean, again, if there is
9 something critical, like, hey, I've got to -- I'm going to be
10 traveling more, if I'm going to be doing something, then that's --
11 or if like there was an inspection I was going to do, that's when
12 I would talk to my manager and say, hey, look, what do we want to
13 do with this? So, I mean, there would be a discussion around it.
14 It's not like we would try -- it would just get dropped if there
15 was something important. But we would --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- try to manage it.

18 Q. But generally, if you're out on leave, you're out on
19 vacation, you're doing an investigation, there's nobody to step in
20 and do your job? It just waits for you to get back? Is that --

21 A. Generally, yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Unless there's something critical that -- then, we try to
24 work as a group and figure it out. But generally, it's going to
25 be waiting for me.

1 Q. So, you were talking about the policy of 8900.1, the
2 turnaround for submissions.

3 A. Right.

4 Q. Generally, do you have those turned around in time?

5 A. I -- it's a hard question to answer, to be honest. I'm
6 thinking.

7 Q. Yeah. (Indiscernible).

8 A. I'm just trying to think of situations. I would say, not
9 always, you know?

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. You know, but at that point, we try to -- that's where the
12 communication comes into play, you know, with the carrier, if
13 something going to be late or if we can't get to this. Hey, you
14 know, where are we -- that's my big thing as a POI is
15 communication with the carrier.

16 Q. Sure.

17 A. So, I mean, if it's not going to be, I try to communicate
18 that.

19 Q. So, for me to get an idea, let's say you have something
20 that's going to be late. Is it generally because of task
21 saturation?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Okay. (Indiscernible) have to say because you're waiting on
24 something else?

25 A. Sometimes, it's that.

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. You know. I mean, there's definitely some times that, you
3 know, you'll get so many tasks on your desk, and you're like,
4 okay, I get this far, and then I've got to stop, right? Because
5 I'm missing a piece, so I've got to go back and get that from
6 whoever, right?

7 Q. Would you say that the majority of any time something would
8 not fit within that turnaround would be due to task saturation?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Okay. Thank you. Do you feel encouraged by leadership, your
11 managers, peers, whatever, to get out of the office and go on site
12 to visit the operators?

13 A. Again, that's a very opinion thing, right? I would say,
14 encouraged, yes, right? I mean, if we can get out. It's just a
15 matter of, again, I think it goes back to that task saturation of
16 being able to, okay, what do we have? Then, getting out. Now, of
17 course, we're going to hit the mandatory items of getting out, but
18 if I could -- again, opinion, right? If I --

19 Q. Sure.

20 A. -- could get out there more, that would be awesome. You
21 know, you probably could catch more things. But it's a task.

22 Q. Would it be accurate to say that if you're out with an
23 operator visiting, doing an inspection, what have you, the work
24 that's back on your desk working to review manuals, those type of
25 things, waits until you return?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. I know you have a huge list of duties other than just
3 principal operations inspector --

4 A. Right.

5 Q. -- with the other things you do regarding enforcement and
6 accident investigation.

7 A. Right.

8 Q. And you had also mentioned that sometimes, you have to reach
9 out to other FSDOs to assist, perhaps, with the inspection of an
10 operator that you're working with. Do you get the same requests
11 from those other FSDOs? Does your manager get requests and say
12 like, hey, Lyndsay, I need you to go look at X, Y, Z for Fargo,
13 because they don't have somebody that can come do it?

14 A. Yeah. So, there is some of that. You know, if like --
15 especially, kind of like the same or similar situation of a check
16 airman from another, you know, (indiscernible) base here. I know
17 we have a couple of those that are here like that, so that does
18 happen.

19 Q. So, in addition to the work you already have, you get tasked
20 with assisting --

21 A. Right, and --

22 Q. -- others?

23 A. -- maybe an -- it's not been as much recently, but like, for
24 example, I'm balloon-rated, you know, so sometimes, you know, I
25 get other offices that'll reach out about balloon questions

1 specifically, or even tasks along that. It hasn't been as much
2 recently, but, you know, every once in a while, like, I go to
3 South Dakota to do a balloon check, you know, an observation on a
4 DP (ph.). So, I mean, there are some nuances. It depends on the
5 inspector, right? But yeah, so, you do get asked to do other
6 things for other offices.

7 Q. Understand. And I know you mentioned this, and I'm just
8 asking you to repeat it, because I didn't hear it in my little --

9 A. That's fine.

10 Q. -- head. You said the requirements for the 135 certificate
11 require the chief pilot, director of operations, and what was the
12 third?

13 A. I said, agent for service. Agent for service.

14 Q. Agent for service. Okay.

15 A. It's not necessarily a 119 position, per se. It's more of a
16 who you're going to establish communication with.

17 Q. Okay. That was the piece I missed, and --

18 A. It's just another piece that's approved on the ops spec.

19 Q. Got you. Okay. Thank you. I just wasn't sure what you
20 said, so I wanted to get clarity. Thank you so much.

21 A. That's okay. You're welcome.

22 Q. So, in respect to an operator, if they have avionics onto
23 their fleet, is there a requirement for training?

24 A. It depends. You have to go through the 8900. Sometimes, you
25 have to go through -- it's off -- and I can't think of the

1 document off the top of my head. It comes from the AG, I believe,
2 where you can actually determine based off of the category of
3 avionics and things like that. You have to go through kind of
4 like -- not necessarily a flowchart, but you have to go through
5 and determine whether or not it's necessarily.

6 Q. Okay. Do you happen to know off the top of your head, if an
7 operator decided to add a standby attitude indicator, would that
8 require documented training?

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

10 Q. Okay. Just wondering if you know off the top of your head.

11 A. No, I don't.

12 Q. But it does exist somewhere of --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- what the expectations, what the --

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. -- requirement is?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Okay. Thank you. That's fine. Since you've been the POI
19 for Guardian since -- for a little over two years, have you seen a
20 lot of growth in the company?

21 A. I know they've added on more aircraft and added a few more
22 bases, and I know the long-term plan was for growth, so I know the
23 long-term plan -- as to how much growth, I can't quantify that off
24 the top of my head.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. But I do know that a long-term plan was for more growth.

2 Q. Any thoughts on, has the complexity of their operation
3 increased?

4 A. I wouldn't say that there's been a lot of changes in that
5 aspect. It's always been, you know, pretty much the standard
6 fleet, standard -- you know, even though they're adding aircraft,
7 it's usually standard. We keep along with the standard fleet.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah, so, the complexity is, sometimes, it's more of less
10 of -- and it goes back to the, you know, the meeting of pilots,
11 and sometimes the flux of changes of, you know, pilots changing,
12 obviously, so check airmen changing, and things like that. And
13 they've always had special approaches. It's just a matter of kind
14 of keeping up. So, it's complex, but I don't know that it's
15 necessarily adding complexity, other than, obviously, now that
16 they're adding the potential of changing location and changing DO.
17 That's adding complexity.

18 Q. Sure.

19 A. So, currently, yes, but not previously --

20 Q. So, maybe --

21 A. -- as much.

22 Q. -- complexity wasn't the right word. In the last two years,
23 has the volume of tasks or work required --

24 A. Work?

25 Q. -- of you increased?

1 A. I don't know if I can quantify that off the top of my head.
2 I don't -- it's hard, because you're -- I'm thinking of like
3 overall. I mean, like, if I think of overall, yes, but I wouldn't
4 say -- I don't know. That's a tough question --

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. -- to answer.

7 Q. That's fine.

8 A. I don't know --

9 Q. But --

10 A. -- how to quantify that.

11 Q. And just so I heard you correctly, you said that they've
12 added aircraft; is that correct?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. And they added new bases?

15 A. I believe so. Again, I'd have to doublecheck.

16 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. That's all the questions I have.

17 MR. ETCHER: Okay. We made it through round one. We only
18 have eight more rounds to go --

19 MS. CARLSON: Sweet.

20 (Crosstalk)

21 MS. CARLSON: We only -- do we have dinner?

22 MR. ETCHER: Yeah. No, we have -- we're going to go to
23 round two. It's always quicker, always a lot quicker.

24 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

25 MR. ETCHER: But do you want a break before we start?

1 MS. CARLSON: Actually, I will take one.

2 MR. ETCHER: All right. Let me take us offline, here --

3 MS. CARLSON: That is about, that's --

4 MR. ETCHER: -- 36 past.

5 (Off the record at 1:36 p.m.)

6 (On the record at 1:50 p.m.)

7 MR. ETCHER: All right. Back on the record at 1:50 local.

8 You made it through round one. Round two's quicker.

9 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

10 MR. ETCHER: So, I just have maybe 18 questions. No, I'm
11 just kidding.

12 MS. CARLSON: Oh, perfect.

13 MR. ETCHER: I just have a few questions just to kind of help
14 me understand a few things; and then, to go around and make sure
15 nobody else has questions or, if they do, they can ask them, as
16 well.

17 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

18 BY MR. ETCHER:

19 Q. I think Millicent had asked you a question about Guardian
20 wanting to do a special approach procedure?

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. What special approach procedure are they trying to do? Or,
23 wanting to do? I'm sorry.

24 A. Oh, they have multiple.

25 Q. Like what?

1 A. So, special approaches are for one of like a couple of
2 reasons. Special approaches could be due to the fact that the
3 approach requires pilot training, or it could be just that the
4 approach is proprietary, meaning that somebody owns the procedure,
5 and that you have to have permission to actually utilize that
6 procedure. So, it could be one of two things.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So, they have multiples. They're probably one of my bigger
9 operators that has multiples up, and mostly, in Alaska, but
10 there's some in the contiguous 48, as well.

11 Q. Okay. I just wanted to make sure they weren't trying to
12 develop and approach or something, and I was --

13 A. So, they can --

14 (Crosstalk)

15 A. -- pay for a procedure to be developed, and again, then, that
16 would be more like proprietary.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. I think they've done that down. I think they've got one
19 coming up in Zuni down in Arizona that they've done that for.
20 Again, then, it goes through the whole -- then, it goes through
21 420, where they develop, you know, everything (indiscernible) and
22 all that good stuff. And then, they bring it down, and they give
23 us the form that says, here, this is what's required for their
24 pilot training, or if there's any additional requirements, and
25 things like that.

1 Q. All right. Perfect. The question came to me when you were
2 talking with Sabrina, but would you have to do a risk analysis on
3 all your operators?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. So, considering Guardian, their size, their, I'll say,
6 complexity, for lack of a better phrase, how often do you have to
7 do a risk assessment?

8 A. Annually.

9 Q. Annually?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And how -- what are some of the things you look at on that?
12 Just ballpark, even?

13 A. Yeah. I mean, there's a lot of things. Everything -- there
14 are some thing that are already calculated, and they're like
15 accidents. That's -- we don't -- I can't like adjust that right.
16 So, that's already calculated in there. There's things like
17 management change. There's complexity of -- I don't know what the
18 wording is, if it's operation or -- again, take it for what it's
19 worth, right?

20 Q. Right.

21 A. Without me looking at it. You know, age of fleet. Change --
22 I already said change of personnel. Merging of operations.
23 Changing a location. That's another specific one. Obviously,
24 those are on the top of my head right now, but so -- and there
25 could be this thing. There's like another box, you know, that --

1 like, if I identify something that's not listed, I can have my own
2 input into the system, as well.

3 Q. Okay. So, they're having a little bit of management change.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. They're moving -- potentially moving. That increases the
6 risk?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. A lot? A little? Do you know?

9 A. A lot.

10 Q. A lot?

11 A. It also is, it's a little bit -- again, it's a little bit
12 subjective in the aspect of, we categorize it -- there is a matrix
13 within the 8900 that tells you, hey, you know, probable
14 likelihood, and that kind of stuff. So, you can somewhat, you
15 know, derive it from the policy to determine where that risk
16 should lie.

17 Q. Okay. So, if the risk is higher than where it should lie,
18 what latitude to you have, or what can you do, or is there
19 anything --

20 A. So --

21 Q. -- you can do?

22 A. Yeah, of course. So, from -- again, it's called the chat.
23 Again, (indiscernible) off the top of my head. I'd have to look
24 it up. I'm sorry. But basically, it's where we do the annual
25 risk assessment of the operator, and it's at least annually. Now,

1 you can operate it every day if you wanted to. It's not like
2 it's, you can only do it once, okay? So, from there, you can
3 derive data collection tools or basically, inspections, where you
4 can collect data on whatever it is you're wanting to review. So,
5 in the case of like the change of location, we can put in data
6 collection tools.

7 There's another tool. Again, now that you ask me the name of
8 things -- but there's something called an RNT, which is, it's kind
9 of like taking that risk, and that's kind of what we're doing with
10 this one, is, it's -- I'm trying to think of a good way to explain
11 it. You basically go -- it derives you through kind of a step-by-
12 step process of mitigating that risk. So, you start off with
13 whatever risk; and then, you document what it is you're doing and
14 what the carrier's doing, and you see if you can actually mitigate
15 the risk down. So, that's what we're doing with that particular
16 piece, if figuring out how to effectively use that tool.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So, it's a tool to us.

19 Q. Okay. If it's too high, though, you guys don't say, oh,
20 we're taking your certificate away, or anything like that, or do
21 you have that authority?

22 A. Not like -- I wouldn't say, personally, I have that
23 authority, right? But, you know, I mean, obviously, if there's
24 certain things -- if there's certain indicators or if there's
25 certain things, like if we have specific evidence to say, hey --

1 you know, if somebody comes to us and goes, okay, this is what's
2 happening on that operator, this is where they violate the
3 regulations, this is where they're not following
4 guidance/policy/regulation/regulatory requirements, there are
5 things that you can do to do like a reexamination of the air
6 carrier certificate, right? Or obviously, you have the
7 enforcement if there's regulatory issues, right? So, there's
8 different tools that way. But then, of course, it's just like
9 this. It has to be based upon facts, right? So --

10 Q. Okay. That helps. I just wanted to understand all the
11 changes, and, you know, I wondered how that -- how you guys look
12 at that --

13 A. Right.

14 Q. -- so --

15 A. We definitely do. It's just, we track it through our system.

16 Q. Okay. When Guardian goes into other airports, I mean, I know
17 they're on demand, and medevac, and all that, so I'm sure that
18 changes, do they -- is there any kind of risk assessment you're
19 aware of that you require them to do?

20 A. It's the part of their operational control process, right?
21 That they have -- it's in the GOM, as well. So, it talks about
22 what the -- the steps that they're required to do as, you know, to
23 maintain the operational control. The pilots are -- you know, and
24 I've seen it when I've done line checks and stuff, that, you know,
25 where they do the risk assessment of the flight; and then, they

1 call up their operations center. I'm very careful not to call it
2 an OCC, because that's a helicopter ambulance requirement. But --
3 so, their operations center, they tell them what that risk number
4 is, is what basically happens. And then, they assess -- you know,
5 the operations specialist doesn't -- or observations. I think
6 they call them communications specialists. Again, terminology
7 might be slightly off, right? But that person just looks at the
8 number and goes, is it above a threshold? And if it is, then it
9 needs to go to a higher level to be reevaluated.

10 Q. Okay, okay. Have you gotten the chance to interact with that
11 risk assessment tool they have?

12 A. You know, by watching checks, right? I don't actually
13 physically --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- do it, because I'm watching them do it, not me, so --

16 Q. I just wasn't sure if you had an opportunity to look at it to
17 see, does that really capture everything that you need --

18 A. Right. Like, you know, during an evaluation, sometimes, I
19 even suggest it. I'm like, hey, you know, I know that's not a
20 specific item, you know, but when you're being evaluated, that's
21 another risk, right? You're doing multiple approaches right in a
22 row that you're not necessarily doing on a regular flight. That's
23 an added risk, right? So, you know, we have discussions about
24 things like that if they come up.

25 Q. Okay. All right. And just for the record, do you have to

1 look at -- you know, Guardian hires some pilots regularly or
2 frequently, whatever it is. Do you ever have to look into the
3 pilot record database or the PRIA for them, as well, or is that
4 strictly them?

5 A. That's -- so, as an inspector, as a POI, I do not have access
6 to that database.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I do have to inspect whether or not they have actually done
9 that, where they -- obviously, PRIA prior to, right?

10 Q. Right.

11 A. Which, we still have PRIA a little bit. So, I do have to see
12 whether they have done that piece, right? That's my part, is
13 whether they've done it. Now, I don't have -- like, the PRD, I
14 don't have access to that database --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- as an inspector.

17 Q. So, from our viewpoint, have they 100 percent done the PRIA?

18 A. I cannot confirm 100 percent, right?

19 Q. Right.

20 A. When I was last there in September, that's part of what we
21 actually -- that was part of that inspection, is to look at what
22 they're doing, you know, and try to see. And a little bit, from
23 my -- you know, since PRD's a little bit newer, just to get that
24 education myself as -- and I had them walk me through what they
25 see. So, we went through and looked at some. Obviously, I didn't

1 look at 100 percent of the records, so I can't answer 100 percent,
2 right? So -- but from what I saw, the, you know, the ones I did
3 inspect, it was there.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. Your opinion.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. And maybe it's more of an expert opinion, what I call.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. How's the -- what do you see in experience level with their
9 pilots that they're hiring? Is it -- how would you classify that?
10 All over the map, or kind of on the low side, high side? Just
11 kind of help me understand.

12 A. Yeah, I don't know if -- I guess it is -- again, this is more
13 from listening to the carrier, you know what I mean? Obviously, I
14 look at making sure they meet the regulatory requirements of
15 minimums, right? That's my purpose. You know, as to vetting out,
16 hey, has that person got the proper experience for it, whatever?
17 You know, that's their lane, more so, you know. But I hear it,
18 whether it's that carrier or even other carriers that I have, I
19 hear the same thing. It's hard to get pilots, right? So, I mean,
20 I hear that part of it. That's about the best I can explain that.

21 Q. Okay. All right. So, just -- I like small words, big
22 pictures, if you will. But I just want to paraphrase my
23 understanding in my brain. They're like every other operator.
24 They have challenges, as well, with timing --

25 A. Right.

1 Q. -- pilots, but there's nothing that raises concern to you
2 with the quality of the experience level to that point that it's
3 bad?

4 A. Again, you know, what I looked at when I looked at regulatory
5 requirements, right? You know, that's my first piece. Now, if
6 they've gone through PRIA, and they've done their due diligence to
7 look through that, and they've looked through their requirements,
8 that's my piece. I don't evaluate the pilots for going, oh, you
9 know, hey, that person should be better or worse, right? You
10 know. That's just not my piece.

11 Q. And I just wanted to make sure. That kind of helps it a
12 little bit in my brain, so I appreciate that. I think, with
13 Sabrina, you had talked about if they submit a change, it goes to
14 a central email, so it doesn't go directly to you?

15 A. So, what I ask my -- that's -- at the minimum, they have to
16 send it to the office email. With --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- my operators, I've asked them to also copy me in, so that
19 way, I know it's going in, right?

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So, that way, I'm aware. So, it's not like, oh, surprise.
22 Here's a change. So, I do ask them to copy me in. So, with any
23 of my carriers, I can tell you that I generally know what's
24 coming.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Like, that one, it's like we said. We had a meeting about
2 it. I'm like, okay, you need to officially submit the
3 documentation to us so we know how to address whatever it is that
4 you're submitting.

5 Q. I just wanted to make sure that you didn't have to wait for
6 your manager to --

7 A. No.

8 Q. -- send it to you, and that could take who knows how long,
9 so --

10 A. I mean, in the odd case, every once in a while, if they
11 forget, you know, I mean, that might happen. But even in that, I
12 usually, with the monthly meetings, I know that something's coming
13 if they happened to have forgot to attach me to it. So,
14 generally, I'm not unaware of something coming through the pipe.

15 Q. All right. Are you aware of any Guardian-specific, if you
16 will, whistleblower complaints?

17 A. No.

18 Q. No? Not that have been brought to your attention?

19 A. Not that I know of.

20 Q. All rightie. I know you provided your contact information to
21 Guardian, but have you ever had a Guardian employee reach out to
22 you with concern for anything?

23 A. No, and even like after occurrences or whatever, I say, you
24 know, I'm here if you ever have anything. You know, I try to put
25 that out there.

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. You know, or if I'm -- even if I'm doing a line -- no, not
3 line check, but -- I'm used to saying, line check, so apologize.
4 But like when I'm doing (indiscernible) I'm like, hey, if you ever
5 need anything, you know, I try to put that out there when I do at
6 least touch base with any of the other people that I see.
- 7 Q. But none of them have actually reached out and --
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. -- with a complaint or -- okay.
- 10 A. No.
- 11 Q. All right. And the last question I have -- I know you're
12 going, finally, I'm done with him. But --
- 13 A. I don't know. Am I really done?
- 14 Q. Maybe. We'll see.
- 15 A. Yeah, right.
- 16 Q. Hearing all you do, all your operators, but I also hear -- in
17 my head, I visualize tons of paperwork.
- 18 A. Sure.
- 19 Q. How much of your job is actually doing paperwork versus on-
20 site visits and things like that?
- 21 A. This is just a total stab in the dark, right?
- 22 Q. And that's -- anything in the ballpark. It's just --
- 23 A. Right.
- 24 Q. -- so I can kind of understand.
- 25 A. Yeah, I'd say, 70 percent is, you know, doing work at the

1 desk versus, the other 30 is doing the line checks, check airman
2 observations, or my other stuff with DPEs, or even like maintain
3 my own currency, getting out, or inspections, or just -- there's a
4 lot of other things that come into play. But again, that's --

5 Q. And I know.

6 A. -- a complete estimate, right?

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. I mean, just, you know.

9 MR. ETCHER: Okay. That's what I needed. I told you I had
10 one last question, so that's --

11 MS. CARLSON: I'm going to hold you to that.

12 MR. ETCHER: And I told you I (indiscernible). I'm going to
13 ask Sabrina, do you have any questions?

14 DR. WOODS: I think, really, just one more, or at least one
15 more category.

16 BY DR. WOODS:

17 Q. Mitch had talked to you a little bit about like, I mean, the
18 nature of your job, but sometimes, there's a lot going on there,
19 opportunities for being task-saturated. But in your opinion,
20 human capital aside and staffing aside, do you feel you have the
21 resources you need to execute your job on a day-to-day basis? So,
22 again, other humans aside, and I mean like technologically, the
23 physical tools you need to do your job, or is there something that
24 would make it just a little bit easier?

25 A. I got a new computer recently, so that helped, but --

1 MR. ETCHER: That sounds good.

2 MS. CARLSON: Yeah, that thing was slow. But I mean, like,
3 you know, generally, if I do need something, I don't know if like
4 physical thing that I need, necessarily, if that's where you're --
5 I'm trying to make sure I understand your question.

6 BY DR. WOODS:

7 Q. Are the policies in place, do you feel, to do your job, or
8 there like kind of a red tape barrier sometimes to get from point
9 A to B? Technologically, yes, a computer will be a perfect
10 example of that. So, kind of all of those things, with the
11 exception of, obviously, having more people to do the job.

12 A. I think the resources are out there. Sometimes, it's
13 understanding where those resources are is kind of probably the
14 bigger thing. Because there is a wide array of resources within
15 the FAA, but sometimes, it's just really knowing that that
16 resource exists sometimes.

17 Or, you know, again, opinion, travel knowledge of going, oh,
18 yeah, there's this area over here you can go find, right? So,
19 learning about, sometimes, it's, you know, like it's great for me
20 to be able to teach that to new inspectors, right? Okay, here's
21 your resources. And you know, I constantly get asked the question
22 of, well, how do you know where everything's at? And like, it's a
23 learned piece, right? So, sometimes, that's the harder part of
24 the job, is learning where those resources lie. I mean,
25 obviously, again, human capital is the bigger piece, right? But I

1 think they're there. It's just knowing where, if that kind of
2 answers your question.

3 Q. No, it does, perfectly. Yeah. So, it sounds like, from what
4 you're saying, to paraphrase that, you know, the resources exist.
5 It's having a full understanding and appreciation for where those
6 resources live --

7 A. Right.

8 Q. -- and how to access them.

9 A. And sometimes, it comes down to the resource of time, being
10 able to research those resources, right? It comes -- and that's
11 back to the human capital piece of it, right? But it's also -- I
12 mean, I could give an example of me trying to figure out how to
13 best utilize our system to capture all this risk, right? And
14 trying to figure that out, you know, kind of on my own a little
15 bit, but -- so, I'm kind of reaching out to the people I know to
16 go, okay, and where can I best find -- how do I best capture this?
17 You know, how do I best track this? Those kind of things. And
18 those are sometimes, I think, the harder pieces. But at the same
19 time, I mean, they have classes. They have things, you know. But
20 even at that, you're so task-saturated sometimes that sometimes,
21 that it's hard to take the time to really develop into those kind
22 of areas as an inspector.

23 Q. Is there a like -- I know you talked about like opening a
24 chat, and there's ways that there's communication that can flow,
25 but is there a, like a phone-a-friend database that exists between

1 like all inspectors to where you can maybe start storing some of
2 these nuggets of travel knowledge?

3 A. There are. I mean, again -- well, and travel knowledge might
4 not be the right answer, right? But -- that's a real hard
5 question.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. It's -- again, it probably exists. It's just knowing where
8 to get it, right? So, sometimes, I think that's the harder part.
9 Like, when I was first having to learn about the special
10 approaches, you know, that's where like I would go to Matt and
11 like, okay, how did you do this? What did -- who did you talk to?
12 And that kind of thing. So, that's where it's like -- like I
13 said, sometimes, that transition happens over a period, right?
14 And it's like, oh, okay, you have that resource. Great. Now, I
15 can tuck that in my toolbox, right?

16 But the problem is, is, not every single carrier you have is
17 going to have the same problems, so needing the same resources for
18 one is not the same resources for another. So, it's really kind
19 of difficult, because it's so -- I think it's because a GA ops
20 inspector is so broad that we touch so many different things, so
21 know all those resources, it's really -- it can be -- it's a
22 difficult thing. I think that's probably the biggest challenge of
23 our job is, since we are so broad in what we have to deal with, is
24 that, I think that's where the challenge lies.

25 Q. Okay. So -- and this is an opinion-based question.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. You have a brand new bouncing baby inspector that --

3 A. Right.

4 Q. -- comes in through the door.

5 A. Right.

6 Q. Says, I'm here to work. In your opinion, what percentage
7 of -- to get where they need to be, to where you are, to get where
8 they need to be to function, what percentage of that would you say
9 is learned in the schoolhouse versus OJT?

10 A. I'd say, probably majority. So, I mean, the schoolhouse gets
11 you the basics of, you know, where to -- kind of the basics,
12 right? The OJT is probably a good -- again, if you're going to
13 break it up percentagewise, you know, your schoolhouse stuff is a
14 good core, but to get to the details of like, okay, now, here's
15 where you've actually got to go and dig into things, you know,
16 you're learning more of that as you go. Again, totally opinion.
17 Maybe like a good at least 80 percent is OJT.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Just because they can't give everything that they need to
20 in -- I mean, my A string class was a 10-week class, you know,
21 so -- and I know it's changed over the years as to how they split
22 it up. If you -- give or take, it's about 10 weeks for a GA ops
23 inspector just for the basic ground portion. So, I mean, you
24 know, you're definitely not going to learn all you need to learn
25 in that 10 weeks, so that's why they back that up with the OJT.

1 DR. WOODS: Okay. Okay. Yep. I think that's all I have.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. CARLSON: You're welcome.

4 MR. ETCHER: Okay. Millicent?

5 MS. HILL: I'm okay.

6 MR. ETCHER: You're good? All right.

7 MS. HILL: Okay.

8 MR. ETCHER: Mitch?

9 MR. MITCHELL: I just have one, maybe two questions.

10 BY MR. MITCHELL:

11 Q. You said you have to maintain your pilot currency?

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. Is that to be done during work hours or on your own time?

14 A. Work hours.

15 Q. So, therefore, you also have to maintain a medical
16 certificate?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Is that appointment done during the daytime, or --

19 A. A daytime.

20 Q. So, in addition to your POI duties, which can include, of
21 course, accident investigation, assisting other FSDOs --

22 A. Right.

23 Q. -- now, you're also having to fly to maintain your currency?

24 A. In which, we do that in Texas.

25 Q. I'm sorry?

- 1 A. We do that in Texas.
- 2 Q. Do you go down to flight safety, or --
- 3 A. No, we have a training center in Texas, in --
- 4 Q. Oh.
- 5 A. -- Fort Worth --
- 6 Q. Oh, okay. Cool.
- 7 A. -- is where we all go for currency.
- 8 Q. And you go once a quarter?
- 9 A. Yep. And then, there's --
- 10 Q. Okay.
- 11 A. -- usually formal training every, at least every other year,
- 12 that you have to go to for flying currency. If you're a
- 13 helicopter, it's a little bit more, but --
- 14 Q. Some time in the simulator, or --
- 15 A. Aircraft.
- 16 Q. Aircraft. All right.
- 17 A. Some -- well, I take that back. It depends on the platform,
- 18 but some of it's simulator; some of it's aircraft.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. It's a little bit of mix.
- 21 Q. And how long did you say that was? A week?
- 22 A. For formal or --
- 23 Q. Well, you said you go down once a quarter.
- 24 A. Right. It depends on which platforms you're in.
- 25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So, it can be up to two days, it could be -- you know, it
2 just --

3 Q. How long does it take you to go --

4 A. So --

5 Q. -- down to Texas to be current?

6 A. I'm multiengine and single engine, so I go for a day, and it
7 depends. Obviously, annually, we also have to get a check, like
8 an annual check, so -- just like they do on the 135 side, so that
9 can add an extra half day if you're getting a check, as well.

10 Q. Do you maintain a second class medical?

11 A. Yes. That's the minimum requirement of an inspector.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And then, like, for me, I have also balloon. I haven't done
14 balloon currency in a while, but -- so, I do that locally but
15 that's another thing that adds to it, right.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So, it depends on how many platforms you're in as to how long
18 that takes.

19 Q. Again, quite a bit of stuff to do.

20 A. Well, yeah.

21 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, I don't have any additional questions.
22 Thank you very much.

23 MS. CARLSON: Welcome.

24 MR. ETCHER: All right.

25 MS. CARLSON: I'm seeing if you hold true.

1 MR. ETCHER: Well, I always lie.

2 MS. CARLSON: See?

3 MR. ETCHER: I have one question.

4 MS. CARLSON: I knew you had.

5 BY MR. ETCHER:

6 Q. Yeah. We've asked you a ton of questions, but there's always

7 A. -- I'm always fearful that we'll miss the one question that

8 you're like, I can't believe they didn't ask me about this, or,

9 man, this might help them. Is there anything like that that --

10 A. No, the biggest thing that I wanted to make sure you guys

11 were aware of is the organizational change and the location

12 change. That was my biggest thing, because obviously, I know

13 you're going to get whatever you need. Obviously, I'm

14 supplementing if I needed to, which I haven't really needed to,

15 but if I need to help facilitate information to the FAA I see, you

16 know, I'm going to give that to them in whatever they need, right?

17 Make sure they got what they need. So, that's not my privy at

18 this point, right? But, you know, I just want to make sure like

19 organizationally-wise, if there's -- you know, that was kind of

20 like the big piece. That's like, ooh, it's big for me, so I'm

21 assuming, you know, it would be something that might be beneficial

22 for you guys to know. So, that was my biggest piece wanting to

23 make sure you guys knew, which, it sounds like did, so, you know,

24 that was probably my biggest out of anything that I can think of

25 off the top of my head.

1 MR. ETCHER: Okay. Well, I know you have my card, and I know
2 we've emailed, and I contacted you a few times, anyway, so --

3 MS. CARLSON: Right.

4 MR. ETCHER: -- if you think of anything, please don't
5 hesitate. We will send these transcripts to -- I guess we'll send
6 them to Mitch, and he'll send them to where they need to go, so
7 you can review them.

8 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

9 MR. ETCHER: But, you know, anything you can think of later,
10 don't hesitate --

11 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

12 MR. ETCHER: -- to reach out and shout. But with that, we
13 can close. We concluded at 2:15 local.

14 MS. CARLSON: Okay.

15 (Whereupon, at 2:15 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: GUARDIAN FLIGHT PLANE CRASH
 FAA INTERVIEWS
 Interview of Lyndsay Carlson

ACCIDENT NO.:

DATE: March 23, 2023

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



Lisa D. Sevarino
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

GUARDIAN FLIGHT PLANE CRASH *

FAA INTERVIEWS *

Accident No.:

*

* * * * *

Interview of: MATTHEW BLAD, Frontline Manager

Salt Lake City, Utah FSDO

Thursday,
March 23, 2023

APPEARANCES:

SHAWN ETCHER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DR. SABRINA WOODS, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MILLICENT HILL, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MITCH A. MITCHELL, Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration

CRISTINA ZAMBRANA, Counsel
FAA Office of the Chief Counsel

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Matthew Blad:		
By Mr. Etcher		114
By Dr. Woods		142
By Mr. Mitchell		145
By Mr. Etcher		150
By Ms. Hill		160
By Mr. Etcher		161

I N T E R V I E W

(2:36 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. ETCHER: Okay, so the time is 2:36 local time. Good
4 afternoon, my name is Shawn Etcher, I'm an operational factors
5 investigator with the NTSB. So, all that means is that I'm going
6 to look at everything before the cockpit door, how it interacts
7 with the pilots, procedures, things like that. We are here
8 because you guys provided oversight to an operator and we just
9 kind of want to understand how that oversight comes. I'm going to
10 go around the table here and have everybody else introduce
11 themselves and their role. We will start with Sabrina.

12 DR. WOODS: Hey, Dr. Sabrina Woods, I'm the human performance
13 investigator assigned to this case and my job is essentially to
14 give a complete, whole package overall estimate of everything that
15 goes into the operation, the policies, the people, the training,
16 all of that.

17 MR. ETCHER: Thank you.
18 Millicent?

19 MS. HILL: Millicent Hill, the investigator in charge.

20 MR. ETCHER: And Mitch?

21 MR. MITCHELL: Good afternoon, Mitch Mitchell, aviation
22 accident investigator with AVP 100 for the FAA.

23 MR. ETCHER: And that is everybody that will be interviewing
24 you today. As you can see in front of you, there is a recording
25 going. We are going to record and transcribe this interview.

1 That transcript itself will become part of the public docket when
2 that is opened up. The audio will not. Are you okay with us
3 recording and transcribing you?

4 MR. BLAD: Yes.

5 MR. ETCHER: All right, now, anytime you -- anytime anybody
6 talks with us, they get the opportunity to have a representative
7 with them of their choice. Do you have one of those that you
8 would like to have with you?

9 MR. BLAD: I would like Cristina here with me.

10 MR. ETCHER: And Ms. Cristina, would you be so kind?

11 MS. ZAMBRANA: Cristina Zambrana, Federal Aviation
12 Administration, Office of the Chief Counsel.

13 MR. ETCHER: Thank you.

14 So, that's everybody that's here and so, if anybody comes in,
15 we'll ask them to leave. But that's all that you'll have to deal
16 with for the time being anyway.

17 MR. BLAD: Okay.

18 MR. ETCHER: Before we get started, I'd like to set down just
19 a few ground rules if you want. If you need a break for any
20 reason, you need to go to the bathroom, get a drink, confer with
21 counsel, anything like that, just say so. We'll hit pause, if we
22 need to, we'll even leave the room, whatever you need. This is
23 not a check ride, you don't have to sit here in pain, thinking you
24 have to go to the bathroom, just say so. We will also try every
25 now and then to just double check if you need a break. It's okay,

1 breaks are good.

2 MR. BLAD: Okay.

3 MR. ETCHER: We love facts, you know, because we want to know
4 factually all we can. But sometimes we'll ask questions that are
5 asking for an opinion or you may have an opinion on something,
6 just let us know if it's an opinion of yours. That way, when I
7 read this transcript later, I can differentiate between facts and
8 opinions. Most importantly, in my brain, I come up with what I
9 think are great questions, but they don't always connect out
10 through my mouth. So, if I ask a question and you don't really
11 understand what it means, just ask for clarification. This isn't
12 a check ride; this is an education for me. You're helping me
13 here, so I appreciate that because if you give me an answer here
14 that I don't quite understand, I'm going to ask for some
15 clarification as well. All right? And because this is not a
16 check ride, I don't know is a good answer if you don't know. So,
17 don't worry about that. But before we get started, do you have
18 any questions?

19 MR. BLAD: I don't think so.

20 MR. ETCHER: All right, is everybody ready?

21 INTERVIEW OF MATTHEW BLAD

22 BY MR. ETCHER:

23 Q. So, I always start with the toughest questions first.

24 A. Very good.

25 Q. Can you please give us your full name and spell the last?

1 A. So, Matthew Blad, last name phonetically spelled B L A D.

2 Q. All right, and what is your job title?

3 A. So, I am the -- I'm a frontline manager here at the Salt Lake
4 City Flight Standards Office.

5 Q. All right, and is that for the FAA?

6 A. Yes, for the FAA.

7 Q. How long have you been doing that role?

8 A. Since July of 2020.

9 Q. All right, and what did you do prior to that with the -- oh,
10 let me rephrase that, how long have you been with the FAA first?

11 A. So, I started with the FAA in November of 2015 and it was
12 here in the Salt Lake office as an operations inspector and that's
13 what I was until I became a frontline manager in 2020.

14 Q. Okay. All right, do you have any airmen certificates or
15 ratings?

16 A. I do. I hold commercial airplane single-engine land, multi-
17 engine land, and instrument airplane. I also have flight
18 instructor airplane single-engine land, airplane multi-engine
19 land, and instrument airplane.

20 Q. Do you have to maintain currency on those?

21 A. I have to renew my CFI certificate every two years.

22 Q. But do you have to do 90-day currency, instrument approach
23 currency, anything like that?

24 A. Not as a frontline manager, no.

25 Q. All right, so we're going to start getting into -- just a

1 little bit into the structure here.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Kind of help us understand who's in your chain of command
4 above you, kind of who you oversee, things like that, if you could
5 be so kind as to enlighten me on who do you actually manage?

6 A. So, my team consists of operations inspectors -- FAA
7 operations inspectors. They're -- I do have fixed-wing
8 inspectors, rotorcraft inspectors, and I have one dual-qualified
9 inspector. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay, and how many inspectors do you have that you oversee?

11 A. So, let's see, I have five inspectors right now.

12 Q. Okay, and are all those inspectors overseeing other operators
13 or they primarily do check rides? Kind of help me -- is there a
14 range of what your inspectors do?

15 A. So -- yes, so I have one inspector that is new, he's a
16 trainee, so he doesn't have any specific oversight
17 responsibilities other than get your training done. Other than
18 that, the rest of my inspectors are qualified as principal
19 operations inspectors. I have two rotorcraft inspectors that
20 oversee strictly rotorcraft certificates and then I have the -- my
21 one dual-qualified individual has -- yeah, same thing, he has a
22 mix of certificates and then the fixed-wing people have fixed-wing
23 certificates.

24 Q. Okay, so I was trying to do math as you were talking. Me and
25 math do not always agree with what I -- you had two rotorcraft

1 inspectors?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. One dual?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. One trainee and would that be -- and five total, so that
6 means one fixed-wing ops inspector?

7 A. Yeah -- so actually, no, you're right, I misspoke. I have
8 two fixed-wing inspectors.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So, it's -- so, I have to go through their names in my head.
11 So, yeah, I have six.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Sorry.

14 Q. No, don't apologize. I was trying to add it up in my brain
15 and I totally messed it up anyways. So, I'm glad you got that
16 clarified, so thank you very much. So, who do you report to?

17 A. So, I report to the office manager. Matt Green (ph.) is our
18 office manager here at the Salt Lake City Flight Standards Office.

19 Q. Okay, so in your role as a frontline manager, how often do
20 you interact with your office inspectors? Do you do that -- is
21 that a daily thing?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. It is?

24 A. That is a daily thing, yes.

25 Q. Are they always in the office with you or is it remote based?

1 Kind of help me understand how easy it is to communicate and
2 interact with them?

3 A. Yeah, so they're not always in the office. We average about
4 one day in the office a week. Sometimes, I'm in the office the
5 same day they are, sometimes I'm not. If not, we utilized, like,
6 Teams and Zoom to communicate that way.

7 Q. All right, do you manage any certificates yourself?

8 A. I do not.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. No.

11 Q. Because I know you said you were an office inspector prior to
12 your current role. How many certificates did you oversee when you
13 were an office inspector towards the end -- we'll go towards the
14 end, more -- the more recent?

15 A. I would have to look. I don't know.

16 Q. Okay, did you manage the Guardian certificate, let me ask
17 that?

18 A. Uh huh, I did.

19 Q. Okay, so you do know you managed that?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. All right, we had the honor and privilege to interview the
22 Guardian POI and she gave us a lot of education. My brain is
23 still trying to absorb it; it's going to take a while, I'm sure.
24 The one thing that kind of popped up into my brain as we were
25 interviewing her is she appears to have a lot of certificates, and

1 designees, and all that that she oversees. From your point as a
2 manager, is that -- I don't want to say too much because I know
3 everybody's got different abilities, but is that a lot, what she
4 manages and oversees?

5 A. I mean, define a lot, like --

6 Q. And that's a relative term again as well.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. As a manager, is that enough -- she has enough time in the
9 week to manage them efficiently from your point?

10 A. Yeah, so we base our decisions on assignments based on, yeah,
11 what we feel they can manage.

12 Q. Okay, so you have two fixed-wing principals, she's
13 being -- her being one, I assume?

14 A. Uh huh, yes.

15 Q. The other principal, do they carry a similar amount of
16 certificates that they manage as well?

17 A. They do, yeah. So, I mean, the agency has their complexity
18 point system that they utilize and so, yeah, that's what we use to
19 help balance and, hopefully, ensure fair and equitable
20 distribution of work across the board. So, yes.

21 Q. Okay, so I'm glad you said that because I'm kind of confused
22 on how these assignments are distributed. You know, I mean, I
23 always hear the horror stories of I had a manager, he hated me, so
24 he just kept chucking me all sorts of stuff. But there's
25 obviously some rhyme or reason to how you guys do it. So, kind of

1 walk me through how you decide that?

2 A. So, are you deciding -- are you just wanting to know day-to-
3 day assignments or, like, the operator assignments?

4 Q. Just the operator assignments right now. We're going to get
5 into the day-to-day here in just a moment.

6 A. Okay, yeah, so operator assignments -- so, each operator
7 is -- has a certain number of points associated with it depending
8 on the size, the scope, number of aircraft, complexity of those
9 aircraft, et cetera, et cetera. And so, with that,
10 the -- generally the pay grade that the inspector's at, so for
11 example, the POI would be a GS-13. That would be -- there would
12 be a point range that you'd want them -- or that they'd manage for
13 that with the top end being no more than 2,499 points.

14 So, with that, we can take our inspectors and say all right,
15 I have this many points available for each inspector and we look
16 at all our operators, we try to identify, you know, the workload
17 associated with each operator. Sometimes the points reflect that
18 okay, sometimes don't really show that. So, you know, there's
19 some work involved in managing that. But then based on that,
20 yeah, we then distribute those operators. So, you know, okay,
21 we're going to try to make sure everyone has close to equal
22 amounts of part 135 operators, let's see if that works out. You
23 know, this person might get two, this person might get three, that
24 person might get four, it just depends on how many inspectors and
25 the points that they have available. You'd go through and it's

1 the same for 141s, and 147s, and 133s down the list. So, yeah,
2 that's how we manage those POI assignments.

3 Q. Okay, so that magic number 2,499, I think you said? Forgive
4 me.

5 A. Uh huh, yeah.

6 Q. It's just an odd number in my head, sorry.

7 A. Well, yeah.

8 Q. Does that -- is that just the points for a 135 certificate or
9 is that for 135, 137s, 141s, everything?

10 A. That's a good question. So, it includes Part-135
11 certificates, Part-133, Part-137, Part-141, and designated pilot
12 examiners. There are some Part-91 operators that carry points, but
13 not very many. So, generally, those five areas are the bigger
14 point values for an inspector.

15 Q. Okay, so for Guardian, in this case, can you recall kind of
16 what their point value -- is that what I call it?

17 A. Yeah, I would have to go look. I don't know off the top of
18 my head.

19 Q. Okay, that's okay. Maybe this is fact or maybe an opinion of
20 yours, I'll let you decide, considering Guardian's geographical
21 footprint and the size of their operation as it is today, for
22 instance, would that be a fairly complex 135 operation or midline?
23 That's nothing complexity wise, I just want to understand how I
24 can visualize a complexity?

25 A. Yes. No, they absolutely would be what we consider a complex

1 operation. They are going to be one of the higher point values in
2 the office.

3 Q. Okay, excellent. So, we understand when the current POI was
4 assigned to Guardian -- when you assign a certificate to somebody,
5 will you let them hold it from now until, for lack of a better
6 phrase, the end of time or whatever? Or do you move that around a
7 lot, you know, change it up just to help balance it? I just --

8 A. So, that's a good question. It depends. So, there's
9 different factors that would go into that to -- you know,
10 obviously, there can be benefits to continuity of inspectors, but
11 sometimes that's not possible. So, there are changes that are
12 made from time to time.

13 Q. And when you guys make those changes -- I assume that comes
14 to you, right, to make that change, or is that above you?

15 A. Nope, that's me.

16 Q. That's you. So, when you make those changes and you tell the
17 ops inspector hey, lucky you, you can lose a certificate, is there
18 a pass off, a transition to -- is it a formal transition from one
19 inspector to another or -- kind of help me understand how
20 does -- if I'm the new inspector getting the assignment, how am I
21 supposed to know what's been the history of them?

22 A. Yeah, so I would prepare a report to take to that inspector
23 and say here's your new assignment and the inspector would be the
24 one to reach to that operator and say hey, this is who I am,
25 pleased to meet you, I'm your new inspector, and, you know, kind

1 of start down that path. Then, yeah, the new inspector would
2 coordinate with the previous inspector to hand off, you know,
3 here's what we're currently working on, or here's some things
4 we've been discussing, here's some goals they're looking for so
5 that there's some continuity and not just a clean stop talking to
6 them, you talk to them. There's a work through for that.

7 Q. Okay, because you just -- I never know -- I'm always afraid
8 if I don't ask that, I'll always have that question. So, I
9 appreciate that. How many -- and maybe you don't know this
10 answer, how many certificates does this office actually --

11 A. It is in the neighborhood of 150 operators. Now, not Part-
12 135, those would be operators that carry complexity points.

13 Q. Okay, 150, and you have six inspectors, one of which is new?
14 I got to ask, sorry for the bluntness of the questions, but is
15 that really doable, you know, from your viewpoint? That seems
16 like a lot of certificates, a lot of operators, not a lot of
17 staff, or maybe it is adequately staffed. I just -- in my brain,
18 I think wow, that seems like a lot. But help me understand if it
19 is or isn't?

20 A. So, is your question are we adequately staffed? Or maybe I'm
21 a little confused.

22 Q. No, we'll start with that. Are you adequately staffed for
23 all of those certificates?

24 A. So, no, we do not have enough inspectors to cover all
25 certificates.

1 Q. So, with that, how many inspectors -- should I say are you
2 short, do you lack?

3 A. So, I think on our current work chart two more inspectors
4 would be ideal for our situation.

5 Q. So, you have two open slots then in Salt Lake?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. How long have they been open?

8 A. I don't know.

9 Q. So, it's not been a recent opening?

10 A. No, we've -- since I've been in this office, we've always had
11 gaps and needing more ops inspectors.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So, I mean, I can't speak to management prior, but yeah,
14 since I've become an FLM, absolutely, there's been gaps where
15 we're always trying to hire.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. We even take captains.

18 Q. (Indiscernible)

19 A. I'm just teasing.

20 Q. I lost my train of thought on that one.

21 A. Sorry, that's -- I shouldn't do that.

22 Q. No, it's all good, I appreciate that. So, originally, you
23 said -- we're going back to the point system, the 2499 for a
24 13 -- a pay scale of 13, do you have 14s?

25 A. We do not in this office.

1 Q. Are there 14s within the FAA that you're aware of
2 for -- inspector wise?

3 A. Yeah, there are 14s for inspectors, yes.

4 Q. Can I ask why your office doesn't have a 14? I assume that
5 increases the point value, though?

6 A. It does. Yeah, we don't have the ability to support a 14.

7 Q. Okay, so Salt Lake has never had a 14 that you're aware of?

8 A. I don't know about that.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I know since I've been an FLM, we've not had a 14.

11 Q. That's a better answer than my question was, so thank you.

12 All right, let's get into the day-to-day life of an FLM.

13 A. It's joyful.

14 Q. I'm sure it's pretty much every day the exact same, right?

15 I'm kidding, that was a little bit sarcastic, if you couldn't
16 tell. But kind of walk me through if there is such a thing as a
17 general day in the life or a week in the life? Kind of help me
18 understand what you do every day regularly?

19 A. Yeah, so I mean, regularly, we hold, like, unit meetings and
20 are trying to -- meeting with everyone, make sure there's -- you
21 know, new information's being disseminated, opportunities to
22 address questions, concerns, you know, someone need help with
23 something, looking at, you know, workflow that's coming in. So,
24 looking at the new requests that have come into the office,
25 logging those into our assignment queue, our tracking system,

1 looking at what assignments can be made to the inspector,
2 reviewing inspector -- reviewing assignments that have been
3 completed by inspectors.

4 Also, meeting with other management members, you know, to
5 discuss anything that needs to be cross-coordinated. Often, we're
6 working with other offices to look for resources and get help in
7 other ways depending on what we need, yeah, answering phone calls,
8 working with the inspectors. So, there's a lot of time dedicated
9 one on one with an inspector that, you know, I have a question, or
10 I have a concern, or can you help me with this, or where do I find
11 that, or who do I call for this? I mean, there's a million
12 different things that they need at any given point, so yeah.

13 Q. Okay, so let's talk about assigning things to inspectors.
14 When you say assigning things, are you talking assigning new
15 certificates or are you just saying assigning enforcement, or
16 pilot deviations, or --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. What are you looking at assigning to inspectors?

19 A. So, we call them tasks. So, new tasks that come in. so,
20 yeah, I need my CFI renewed, or yeah, I need an MEO reviewed, or
21 we want to, you know, we need to upgrade from a basic to a full
22 135. Any scope of tasks that come in, that's what I'm referring
23 to.

24 Q. Okay, so how do you decide if somebody wants to upgrade from
25 a basic to a full 135 -- I'll just use that because that was what

1 my brain retained.

2 A. Sure.

3 Q. How do you decide who gets assigned that? I mean, that seems
4 like -- I want to say a lot of work but maybe it's not?

5 A. Well, yeah, that one would be a lot of work, you're right,
6 and we wouldn't get those daily necessarily.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But yeah, a project like that, yes, we'd want to sit down,
9 look at what inspectors we have available, who's qualified and
10 trained on that, do we need someone else trained on that, and, you
11 know, looking at those types of items before we make an
12 assignment. The more common tasks like yeah, I need a restriction
13 removed off my certificate, you know, same thing, what inspector
14 has space or availability to work that and make the assignments
15 that way.

16 Q. Okay, when you assign tasks, do they come with due dates?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Or are they just open-ended, like hey, get on this when you
19 can, please?

20 A. No, they come with due dates.

21 Q. Okay, so from your viewpoint, are the due dates always hit,
22 you know, for lack of a better -- do inspectors always make those
23 due dates?

24 A. No, not always.

25 Q. Okay, so what's some of the reasons that they may not, do you

1 know?

2 A. Yeah, I mean, it could be an issue with maybe the item
3 they've submitted -- the MEO, for example, if they submitted it
4 and it needs correction, it needs, you know, some help and it gets
5 returned to the operator, that can cause things because you're
6 waiting for the operator to make the corrections and send it back.
7 It could be -- like generally, the program just assigns a 30-day
8 due date and if it's a project like upgrading from a full to a
9 basic, maybe that needs to go a little bit longer. So, the
10 inspector would come and say hey, Matt, I can't get this done in
11 30 days and I go oh, okay, and we discuss what's a realistic
12 timeline. It could be challenges; if an inspector has to go on
13 leave, or they get sick or, you know, training courses pop up, or
14 they got to go to Fort Worth to do their flight proficiency. You
15 know, those types of things can delay the work they can do in the
16 office, so we can adjust those due dates as we need.

17 Q. Okay, I have to ask, if you adjust those due dates, is that
18 punitive to the inspector or does that just happen sometimes?

19 A. No, I mean, it's not directly punitive. As long as they're
20 talking to me. I mean if we have a recurring issue, you know, we
21 might go down that bath.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But generally, it's -- you know, it's going long for this
24 reason, okay, I understand, I get it, let's change it.

25 Q. Okay, I noticed you said, you know, sometimes your inspectors

1 have to go for training to Dallas, do you have to manage that too?

2 As a frontline manager, do you have to manage their training
3 schedules and all that or is that incumbent upon the inspector?

4 A. Yeah -- I mean, yes and no. Yearly, we go in and we will,
5 you know, put in and recurrent training that the inspector needs.
6 Usually, it's at the end of the fiscal year, so we put
7 in -- actually, that's not true, it was in January that we put in
8 for the next fiscal year. So, that gets scheduled out and I don't
9 have any control over when that gets scheduled, right. My control
10 is more which courses are you going to be possibly enrolled in and
11 then once that schedule comes out, it would be on the inspector
12 to, you know, work with that, put it in the schedule. If there's
13 an issue, then yeah, we can discuss coordinating with the training
14 group if it needs to be changed or modified or whatever we need to
15 do there.

16 Q. Okay. All right, so that gives my brain a little bit to chew
17 on here for a little bit on the office itself. Let's start going
18 down the avenue, if you will, of Guardian. I think you said you
19 were on their -- that you were their inspector for a little while?
20 How long were you their inspector?

21 A. It was about a year if I remember correctly. A year and
22 change.

23 Q. Did you -- were you the previous inspector before the current
24 inspector or was there one between you two?

25 A. No, there was one between us. So, I was the inspector, then

1 we had another inspector before Lyndsay became their POI.

2 Q. Okay, now I know -- when were you their inspector? Let's try
3 it there first. These are the tough questions.

4 A. I know.

5 Q. It'll get easier.

6 A. I believe it was January of 2020 that I was put on that
7 certificate and then I wouldn't been that -- on that certificate
8 until July of -- or excuse me, it was January of 2019 until July
9 of 2020.

10 Q. Okay, so you were -- math again -- about 18, 19 months?

11 A. Yeah, a year and a half.

12 Q. Okay, oh, sure, use technical terms, year and a half. Okay,
13 so during that time -- and again, I apologize, I know that's going
14 to make you think back several years, so if things aren't clear,
15 it's okay, just let us know. During that time, how was your
16 interaction with Guardian? You know, as an inspector, did you
17 interact with them regularly?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Did you have a good working relationship or was it -- I don't
20 want to say adversarial, but sometimes in pilots' minds and FAA,
21 you know, oh, the FAA, they're out to get us.

22 A. Sure.

23 Q. You know, how was your interaction with them? How do you
24 feel?

25 A. I feel the interactions went well. It never got -- and

1 again, I'm speaking for me, I can't speak for them --

2 Q. Right, I want your opinion, your thoughts.

3 A. On my end, yeah, it never felt adversarial or -- even when
4 there were, you know, hey, here's this thing, we need to get it
5 fixed. They were always more than willing to -- okay, great, how
6 did that happen, how do we fix it, you know, and getting that
7 figured out. It was, you know, very open communication. If they
8 needed to call, or text, or email, like, we were good at
9 communicating. We had our regular, you know, sit downs, but if
10 there were things in the interim that needed to be communicated, I
11 didn't have any issue calling someone and I never had any
12 resistance on -- ah, talk to me later, talk to someone else. It
13 was yeah, what can we do to get it solved or whatever.

14 Q. Okay, when you were in that role as an inspector with them,
15 did you approve any of their 119s?

16 A. I do not recall if I did or not.

17 Q. I don't know, I don't recall, that's fine. This isn't a
18 check ride, so no worries.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay, did you interact with their training department?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. How was that interaction? Wait a minute, hold on, let me
23 back that up. We'll back up a few seconds here. How was their
24 training in your -- what you can recall? Was it robust? Is there
25 some things that you pointed out that needed work done, anything

1 along that line?

2 A. I mean, it's been a while. I don't remember any, like,
3 blaring issues with their training program. I'm sure going
4 through things I had feedback. I couldn't tell you what exactly
5 that feedback was. But I don't remember any, like, huge, you
6 know, woah, you're missing a whole section of things here. So,
7 yeah, I mean, from what I remember, it was -- it met all the
8 requirements it needed to meet.

9 Q. Okay. All right, and I know it's been a while, so I --

10 A. It's been a minute.

11 Q. Don't do math because I couldn't do it.

12 A. Oh, you've already seen I'm terrible with even counting
13 today.

14 Q. So, if you can't remember, it's okay, but how many times did
15 you do on-sight visits? Did you go to Guardian -- try to get
16 there once a year and hope you did or were you there quarterly?

17 A. Yeah, it would've been quarterly.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, I would've been down there.

20 Q. Was it a surprise, here I am visit, or was it a hey, I want
21 to come down and sit down with you guys in a couple weeks?

22 A. I don't recall ever surprising them.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It would've been hey, you know, here's the inspection in need
25 to get done, when's a good time for you guys, when can I come get

1 that done? Whether it be, you know, their facility in South
2 Jordan or at an outstation, we would coordinate that ahead of
3 time.

4 Q. Okay, so you went to some of their outstations?

5 A. Uh huh.

6 Q. Which ones? Do you -- can you recall just one or two because
7 I know they have a large footprint it seems like.

8 A. They do have a large footprint. I would have to go look, I'm
9 sorry.

10 Q. No apology needed.

11 A. We go all over for all sorts of operators. It's hard
12 sometimes to remember which one is which.

13 Q. I could imagine. When the current POI -- they have to go all
14 over, is it easy to give them the authority to do that, give them
15 overtime, comp time, whatever you guys have to do? Or is that,
16 from your viewpoint, a lot more work and doesn't happen often?

17 A. It's not a lot more work. We -- I mean, we can authorize it.
18 I've not run into any obstacles or challenges if that's needed.

19 Q. Okay, now I know when you were describing to me your -- I'll
20 call it the day in the life, I know it wasn't just a day, but you
21 talked about how you reach out to other offices as well to get
22 help with assets or whatever. In your current role, have you had
23 to do that for Guardian, to reach out to other offices? I know
24 they have places as far east as Michigan, and North Fargo, and
25 north to Alaska, and down to Hawaii. Have you had to reach out to

1 some of those fringe offices to get help for assets to provide
2 oversight at all?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. How often do you have to do that?

5 A. I feel like it comes in waves. But I would -- in my mind, I
6 would say at least once a quarter, we're asking from help
7 from -- yeah, depending on what it is, right. So, the offices
8 that we tend to interact most with for help with Guardian is
9 Fargo, North Dakota, Fairbanks, and Anchorage, sometimes Juneau
10 out in Alaska, and then Honolulu out in Hawaii.

11 Q. Okay, and because you reach out to them the most, is that
12 just because of how far those places are?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay, so hearing how busy, how many certificates and stuff
15 you guys manage, I assume other offices probably are understaffed
16 as well. How hard is it to get assets help from other offices?

17 A. I mean, it depends.

18 Q. And you don't have to list offices necessarily.

19 A. Yeah -- I mean, yeah, most of the time, I'm able to
20 find -- well, okay, most of the time with simple requests, like
21 most of Guardian's are check airman observations or, you know,
22 some sort of check ride or go look at this training event, a
23 simple thing like that, it has not been that hard. Sometimes, the
24 timeline can get extended a little where, you know, hey, Fargo,
25 can you help me and they go yeah, can it happen in three weeks and

1 we go okay, let's talk to Guardian and work that out.

2 Occasionally, we do get told no that yeah, we're too busy, we
3 can't help you right now, thanks, have a good day.

4 Q. Okay, so you kind of figure I'm going to ask -- when you get
5 told no, what's your next step? Or do you have a next step?

6 A. Yeah, so you fish around for another office or another -- you
7 know, can Guardian bring that event here for Lyndsay to do or can
8 we, you know, yeah, get another office to do it? That type of
9 thing.

10 Q. Okay, do you have to send Lyndsay out sometimes to those
11 other places that you couldn't get an asset for?

12 A. Not Lyndsay, no, we've had good success with those offices
13 being able to help us with those tasks.

14 Q. Okay, and I know you kind of listed some of the basic tasks
15 like check airmen observations, checking event, I think you said?
16 Is that, like, pilot check rides?

17 A. Like, yeah, Part-135 if someone needs a 299 or 297, 293,
18 whatever.

19 Q. Okay, and, you know, that's just on the operations side, do
20 you -- is that all you have to worry about is dealing with the
21 operations side?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. You don't have to do the PMI stuff, do you?

24 A. No, the other frontline would manage that.

25 Q. Okay, I just wanted to make sure because there's two there,

1 so I appreciate that. All right, when you reach out to those
2 assets, do they give you feedback like oh, yeah, I did this check
3 airman's observation and oh, good golly, or oh, it was perfect,
4 there was no issues? Do they give you those kind of feedback?

5 A. So, that would be for Lyndsay. My role, I coordinate it, the
6 office gives me a thumbs up, and then I'm usually emailing Lyndsay
7 and Guardian to say here you go, you work out the details and then
8 yeah.

9 Q. Okay, so that asset doesn't have to go to his or her manager
10 and then that manager goes to you with the details and then back
11 down to -- it's more direct linked? Okay, that would've probably
12 been a better way for me to ask that question, but I appreciate
13 you working with me there. All right, so considering the
14 uniqueness of Guardian in the medevac world, they're not really
15 scheduled operations. How much of a challenge does that make for
16 this office in your opinion to make sure they practice what they
17 preach? They're trained this way. You know, I know airlines, you
18 can go out and do a line check and it's more scheduled, weather
19 permitting, of course. But it's more scheduled, where this isn't.
20 How hard is that to make sure that the user is actually doing what
21 the manual says?

22 A. I don't know that I'm understanding what you're asking.

23 Q. Okay, no problem. I told you, sometimes my brain will think
24 of something and my mouth doesn't say it right. So, pilots going
25 through training, they're going to know how to do it, the manual

1 says this, you know, they're going to be ready for training
2 because it's training. But sometimes, when they get on the line,
3 they might take shortcuts here, there, whatever, and you get a
4 line check or, you know, an observation, right, from an FAA guy,
5 and inspector, or whatever, you guys usually will see if
6 somebody's doing those shortcuts. But in a medevac world, because
7 there is no scheduled service, how can you guys observe their line
8 operations, or can you?

9 MS. ZAMBRANA: Is that --

10 MR. BLAD: Yeah, I think that would be more of a Lyndsay
11 question.

12 BY MR. ETCHER:

13 Q. Okay, I wasn't sure if you had any involvement with that at
14 all?

15 A. No, I mean, my involvement would be if she needs travel
16 approved or something like that.

17 Q. Does she have to travel to go do that often?

18 A. I mean, define often? I don't know. I would have to go look
19 to see how many events have occurred like that.

20 Q. Okay, no problem. I just wasn't sure if that was something
21 that you knew off the top of your head.

22 A. I'm sorry.

23 Q. Oh, no apology needed. As a frontline manager, do you
24 interact with Guardian at all? Does Lyndsay need your interaction
25 with them or is that totally her thing and you don't interact with

1 them at all?

2 A. We don't normally interact with them. We have more since
3 these accidents. There's been a couple of meetings where we've,
4 you know, sat down with the whole management team and the
5 certificate management team and their team to discuss what's going
6 on. But normally, no, I don't have regular scheduled interactions
7 with them.

8 Q. So, since these recent events that have occurred, the
9 interaction, has it been with you or you and Lyndsay? I just want
10 to make sure I understand who's doing the interacting.

11 A. So, it's been -- yeah, it's been -- it's never been me with
12 Guardian, it's always the CMT, the certificate management team, so
13 the POI, the PAI, the PMI, and then there's been meetings where,
14 like, myself, the other frontline manager, and the office manager
15 have joined them to meet with Guardian.

16 Q. Okay, so it wasn't taken out of the principal's hands?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay, that's what I wanted to know without the questions, so
19 I appreciate that. So, I want to jump back just a moment to your
20 day in the life and with requests, you get things assigned out.
21 If an operator wants a change in a manual, do they have to notify
22 you, the office, or can they just go straight to the POI and say
23 hey, we'd like to do this without manual, here's what we have
24 suggested. How does that work? How does --

25 A. Yeah, so the -- I mean, we call it the official

1 request -- would come; we have an office inbox where that would
2 come so that it can be, you know, sorted between is it air
3 worthiness or ops, entered into the system, and then assigned. I
4 would say with -- the inspectors normally know what's coming in
5 from their operators. Many times, those emails, they're -- you
6 can see the inspector is cc'd on it anyway. So, yeah.

7 Q. Okay, and is that the official reason? Is that just so you
8 can balance workloads or is there other reasons that it has to go
9 through that and just direct to the principal operations
10 inspector?

11 A. Balancing the workload is a big piece of it.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. The other part would just be so that it can get -- we can
14 ensure that it gets entered into our tracking system so that it
15 doesn't get lost, or overloaded, or forgotten.

16 Q. Okay. All right, let's say Guardian puts a request in to
17 this thing that they want to revamp -- pick a manual -- the GOM.

18 A. Sure.

19 Q. They want to revamp it, they want to redo it, how long, do
20 you know off the top of your head, does that -- from the time it's
21 here in the office until you guys send it back with corrections or
22 approval, how long does that normally take, or is there a due date
23 on that?

24 A. Again, it would depend.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It depends on, you know, how many other tasks Lyndsay has at
2 the time, her workload. Also, the -- we try to analyze the risk
3 associated with something. I mean, if it's high priority, this
4 needs to get done, then we can rearrange her priority to say hey,
5 here you go, do this. So, it's hard to put a specific number on
6 how long that would take.

7 Q. Okay, so there's no oh, it's got to be back to them in two
8 weeks or shame on you, goes in your eval or anything like?
9 There's no hard and fast, you know, requirement by the FAA that
10 you get a manual request in, it has to be turned back to them in
11 two weeks or something?

12 A. So, are you asking is there an FAA policy on stuff like that?

13 Q. Yeah, we'll go with FAA policy on that.

14 A. All right.

15 Q. Is there an FAA policy on that?

16 A. On a GOM manual, no.

17 Q. Okay, just a general?

18 A. Yeah, there's no timeline set for a GOM review.

19 Q. Okay, perfect. So, we understand that Guardian is large
20 geographically, but they're also going to move geographically.
21 Have you been in touch -- is there anything you have to do for
22 that geographical move with their certificates or is that strictly
23 the principal who will deal with that?

24 A. No, so that actually would more fall with -- well, so the
25 operator puts in the request and then this office, which, for us,

1 Mr. Green, our office manager, would be kind of the head to
2 initially coordinate with the office they want to move to. So,
3 North Texas, to say hey, this has been put in, you know, it's
4 going to happen, you know, just kind of that initial here we go,
5 get ready, you know, what needs to be done. But then, the actual,
6 like, tasks of all the things that need to be moved over, that's
7 going to be on the CMT, the certificate management team, the POI,
8 to manage.

9 Q. Okay, is it possible that the new FSDO that might get this
10 little certificate to manage can say no and then you guys have to
11 keep it? Is that always a possibility or is it more likely that
12 certificate is going to move to that office?

13 A. Honestly, I don't know if that's a possibility. I mean, I
14 can't say anything's a hundred percent thou shalt.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. But at this point, I would say it's very likely that they're
17 going to -- that office is going to be able to support that just
18 based on the feedback I've heard.

19 Q. Okay. All right, I think you've answered a lot of my
20 questions right now. Before I pass it on, do you need a break or
21 anything?

22 A. I am fine.

23 Q. You're fine?

24 A. Yeah.

25 MR. ETCHER: All right, then, Ms. Sabrina.

1 DR. WOODS: Thank you.

2 BY DR. WOODS:

3 Q. I really -- I think I really just have one question.

4 Although, that might change based on your answer.

5 A. Perfect.

6 Q. Earlier, you just kind of hinted at, like, you have six
7 individuals and, you know, they have their tasks and at times,
8 they have to be qualified, obviously, to execute their tasks and
9 at that time, there may be additional training and that you have
10 to deal with training requests. Who do you -- how do you manage
11 that? Who do you go through to procure additional training for
12 your people?

13 A. Yeah, so when I was -- that piece, I would refer -- I was
14 referring to the on-the-job training, OJT. So, that would
15 be -- we do have trainers in our office. Lyndsay actually is a
16 trainer and we have two other inspectors that are trainers. So, I
17 would first, ideally, go to one of them to manage that. If our
18 office doesn't have the ability, whether it's workload or
19 whatever, then I can go to another office to say hey, do you have
20 a trainer available to assist with this task.

21 Q. Do you ever have a need for or a request for specific
22 outside -- like outsourcing your training, like, for instance,
23 procuring a type rating? Has that ever happened in your time as
24 the manager for one of your individuals?

25 A. Maybe I don't understand because, like, to procure the type

1 rating, no, we've not done one of those. But what's your question
2 related to training, I think I missed some of that.

3 Q. Just any kind of training that you would have to outsource,
4 like -- you know, like going to additional training in Oklahoma or
5 going to -- do you see what I'm saying?

6 A. Okay, yeah, so that -- so yeah, that would be different than
7 the on-the-job training. That's a different piece of it. And
8 yes, normally, we try to get out ahead of that to say, you know,
9 you need whatever your accident course every 24 months and we try
10 to schedule that. If there's something that comes up in the
11 interim, we can put in a request to say hey, can we get this, you
12 know, sooner than later? Or if we feel like it can wait, we'll
13 make a note on the next input cycle for the training, we would put
14 it in at that point.

15 Q. And who are you making the request to?

16 A. The training group or -- I don't know who they are, but yeah,
17 those requests for, like, classes, courses would go to the
18 training group. The OJT piece of it would be for our office
19 to -- or really for me to help manage that.

20 Q. And as the FLM, are you the one tracking that for each of
21 your individuals? Or are they tracking their own and then they
22 notify you as to hey, I'm coming due for XYZ, Boss, I need you to
23 hook it up?

24 A. Yeah, so the trainee in SASS -- I don't know if you guys are
25 familiar with SASS?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. So, inside SASS, there's a module now where the trainee can
3 put their training items that they need of OJT and then yeah, they
4 can track what level they need, level one, level two, or level
5 three. And then yeah, we can say hey, you need level two on this
6 item, let's put this trainer in there, you know, go and get that
7 done type of thing. I feel like I didn't answer your question.

8 Q. So, keeping track, manages certificates, doing inspections,
9 keeping qualified, accident investigation work, training. I'm
10 almost positive I'm missing, like, four additional things that
11 each person is responsible for. Is each individual autonomous in
12 what hat they have to wear each day or are you managing that for
13 them?

14 A. I generally don't manage their day to day you're going to
15 work on this specific task this day, this specific task this day.
16 I'm managing what's your current workload, you know, what -- do
17 you have any challenges that we need to overcome, you know, what's
18 going on with those items.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But as far as, like, do they want to work on task A at this
21 time and task B tomorrow, generally, that's for them.

22 DR. WOODS: Okay, that's all I have. Thank you.

23 MR. BLAD: You're welcome.

24 MR. ETCHER: Millicent?

25 MS. HILL: I'm good.

1 MR. ETCHER: You're good?

2 Mitch?

3 BY MR. MITCHELL:

4 Q. Oh, thank you, sir, for your time today. How long ago was it
5 that you were Guardian's POI? I'm sorry.

6 A. So, I believe it was January 2019 until about July 2020.

7 Q. 2019. So, in the roughly 18 months you were their POI, did
8 you see significant growth of Guardian?

9 A. To be honest, I don't remember how many bases or aircraft
10 they added when I was there.

11 Q. Okay, since you were given the position of being their POI to
12 today, are you aware of any significant growth of Guardian?

13 A. I mean, significant -- define significant for me? Like
14 they've always been a pretty large -- but --

15 Q. Sure, let's just say has their operation expanded?

16 A. Yes, their operation has expanded.

17 Q. Okay, do you know -- do you happen to remember how many
18 points were assigned to Guardian at the time that you were the
19 POI?

20 A. I do not remember, I'm sorry.

21 Q. Do you have any idea of the last time that the points were
22 updated for Guardian?

23 A. They were in the neighborhood of 900 points. But I don't
24 know exactly off the top of my head.

25 Q. Okay, do you know when that 900 points was assigned to

1 Guardian?

2 A. What do you mean?

3 Q. Date wise -- I mean when did they become 900 or close to it?

4 A. Oh, I don't know.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. It -- there's variables that go into that number that -- I
7 mean, each time they add an aircraft or each time they, you know,
8 add a base or something, that number is going to fluctuate.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So, it's not like a set number for a set time.

11 Q. Okay, so can you educate me a little bit on how those
12 points -- I think you said, you know, number of aircraft, number
13 of bases, what other things go into how those points are
14 established?

15 A. I would have to go look at all the criteria that's outlined.
16 But yeah, aircraft, the type of aircraft, like, if it's single
17 engine, multi engine, turbine, type ratings, that goes into it. I
18 believe, like, number of employees, number of bases, pilots, check
19 airmen all feed into that. But to get the official specific list,
20 I'd have to look that up for you.

21 Q. Okay, do you know who establishes how many points are -- I
22 mean, who does that work? Who goes through and figures out that
23 this operator is this many points?

24 A. So, we have a computer program that calculates how many
25 points that operator is worth.

1 Q. Do you know how frequently that is reviewed or updated?

2 A. I do not.

3 Q. Does that computer program reside within the building of this
4 FSDO?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Do you have any idea where that computer program or -- who
7 issues that? I mean, where does that come from?

8 A. It's a program I have on my computer that we utilize. I
9 don't know who manages it or created it.

10 Q. Okay, maybe I can word my question better about what I'm
11 trying to figure out. So, at any given time, can you go in and
12 look at how many points an operator is assigned?

13 A. I mean, yes and no. Unfortunately, it's just the way the
14 program's designed, it doesn't tell me, like, Guardian's worth 900
15 points. Instead, it says -- I go in and say I want to see what
16 Lyndsay has and it'll say okay, Lyndsay has this number of points.
17 It does break down the criteria if I want to do the math myself.
18 But yeah, it doesn't, like, spit out to say Guardian, 900 points.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So -- but if I go through and do the math, I can get a pretty
21 close number and then it does tell me yes, Lyndsay has X number of
22 points of Part-135, X number of points Part-137, et cetera, et
23 cetera.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Yes, it is --

1 Q. I'm still just trying to figure out -- an operator is given a
2 certain number of points or -- I don't know if given's the right
3 word -- awarded a certain amount of points based off of fleet and
4 a lot of variables that you've mentioned. I'm just trying to
5 figure out who is it that is updating that, how often it gets
6 updated and looked at?

7 A. So, I believe that is feeding off of vitals from both
8 SASS -- and, well, 135s would be coming from SASS. But EVID
9 (ph.), I think, is another program that feeds into that.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So, yeah.

12 Q. But it's not a person that you can say Bob, in accounting,
13 does that or something?

14 A. Not that I'm aware of.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I believe it is autonomous, but I am only this.

17 Q. Okay, I know you mentioned that you're short by two
18 inspectors and you have been since your tenure here at Salt Lake
19 City FSDO. So, do you currently have openings that are available?

20 A. Uh huh.

21 Q. Are you getting applicants for these openings?

22 A. I don't know what the current opening looks like. They open
23 and close. They're given a timeframe that they sit on USA Jobs.
24 So, when it closes, then we would -- they say here's your people
25 that have applied. But we -- yeah --

1 MS. ZAMBRANA: Is that your -- is that something you would
2 know?

3 MR. BLAD: I mean, I don't -- I mean, yeah, if someone
4 applied, we would get notified and we'd say all right, do we need
5 to interview them or whatever.

6 BY MR. MITCHELL:

7 Q. Okay, but there are currently -- you're trying to backfill
8 those positions?

9 A. We're always trying to backfill.

10 Q. Well, when you say you're constantly trying to backfill or
11 always trying to backfill, have you had a lot of inspectors come
12 and leave?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay, so it's kind of ongoing? It hasn't just been sitting
15 vacant?

16 A. No, not like a single opening. You're right, we've had
17 people come and go and come and go.

18 Q. That's -- yeah, that's what I was going for, thank you. You
19 said that overtime is available, do you have any restrictions on
20 approving overtime?

21 A. I mean, we can't just do unlimited. But generally, I mean,
22 yeah. Any overtime that my inspectors have come with that -- you
23 know, dealing with an operator, we're just -- it has been
24 approved.

25 Q. I'm going to ask your opinion on this one. Back when you

1 were the POI for Guardian, do you feel like you were task
2 saturated?

3 A. I mean, that was a while ago. I always felt very busy as an
4 inspector. I'm sure there were times that, you know, it felt more
5 busy than others, but there's never really an idle moment for an
6 operations inspector.

7 Q. Did you provide oversight to any other certificates besides
8 Guardian?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Do you happen to remember how many?

11 A. I don't. Yeah, I don't.

12 MR. MITCHELL: Okay, I have no further questions.

13 MR. ETCHER: Okay.

14 BY MR. ETCHER:

15 Q. We've been going about an hour, we made it through round one,
16 so whew. But do you need a break or anything or do you want to
17 keep going?

18 A. I am -- I am fine.

19 Q. Okay, well round two is always -- I shouldn't say always,
20 that's definitive, but it almost always -- how's that -- is a lot
21 quicker.

22 A. Excellent.

23 Q. So, that's what everybody says.

24 A. Are you going to tell me the score for round one? Am I up or
25 am I --

- 1 Q. Well, you're on your 900.
- 2 A. Is this golf or more like football? I don't know.
- 3 Q. This is golf, sorry.
- 4 A. Okay, I'm okay.
- 5 Q. So, you've helped a bunch. Between you and Lyndsay, I
- 6 think -- I might see brain oozing out of my head because it's
- 7 just -- it's full right now. But I appreciate the time you've
- 8 given. You guys have been a great help. I have a few questions.
- 9 Kind of along the line of some of theirs, just adding onto some
- 10 questions that have popped up and a few others. Kind of dove
- 11 tailing off of Mitch's question on job openings, filling positions
- 12 and stuff, are you involved with interviewing new inspectors that
- 13 apply?
- 14 A. Yes, not all of them. But generally, yes.
- 15 Q. Do you know how long it usually takes when the job bid closes
- 16 on USA Jobs until you get somebody in the office?
- 17 A. I don't know a specific timeline. But this is an area where
- 18 I will give my opinion in that it is too long because we have had
- 19 people that initially are interested and say great, but then
- 20 because it goes so long, they go oh, no, I got something else,
- 21 I'm -- peace out, I'm going to this thing.
- 22 Q. Okay, so I guess that happens then quite -- I don't want to
- 23 say quite regularly, but does that happen often?
- 24 A. I don't know that it happens often, but it happens.
- 25 Q. It happens enough that you know it happens?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. All right, how long has it been since you've had a new
3 or newish inspector come into this office? (Verbatim)

4 A. So, the inspector we just brought on was February of this
5 year.

6 Q. Okay, so let's take -- so, that was, like, a month and a half
7 ago give or take?

8 A. Uh huh.

9 Q. Okay, not picking on him or anything -- or her, I'm not sure
10 what it is, but do they come in ready or are they coming -- I
11 mean, I assume they have to go to the schoolhouse to learn, lots
12 of time, in Oklahoma City? Or has he -- have they not done that
13 yet?

14 A. So, when you say come in ready, are you talking about do they
15 come in qualified and ready to do a bunch of work?

16 Q. Qualified ready that OJT does not take an excessive amount of
17 time? Yes, I know there's always nuances to every office, I get
18 that, but ready to be an FAA inspector and now they just got to
19 kind of learn the dynamics here and what's required of them here?

20 A. So, is your -- sorry, I'm still trying to -- so, is your
21 question are they coming in with, like, the base knowledge they
22 need, are they qualified to be an inspector because there's always
23 going to be stuff we have to teach and show them how we work?

24 Q. Go with that and we'll see where your answer goes and see if
25 I need to add more to it. So, yeah, let's go with that, how's

1 that?

2 A. So, I mean, there are base qualifications that an operations
3 inspector has to meet as far as, like, hours, certificates. When
4 I say hours, I mean flight hours, sorry.

5 Q. Just hours in general?

6 A. No, flight hours, certificates, and there's a couple other
7 things in there like a medical certificate, stuff like that.
8 During an interview, I mean, they're going to ask some basic
9 questions around your -- their knowledge and their background.
10 But no, there's no, like -- there's not, like, a written test that
11 we issue to someone and say do you know all this information. So,
12 an inspector that comes in is going to carry, generally, knowledge
13 in the areas they've done work in and not very much in other
14 areas.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, they come in ready to go, yeah. The inspectors we have,
17 they're ready to learn, they do have a base knowledge, they know
18 how aviation works, right, these aren't new student pilots or
19 anything. These are people that have been doing something for a
20 while. But there is a lot of training that has to get done and
21 that training can take a year or more before we consider them
22 qualified to, you know, carry a load of any sort.

23 Q. Okay, and that helps. When they come through the door, their
24 first day on the job, have they already went to Oklahoma City for
25 training or is that something you schedule for them and get them

1 to?

2 A. No, that's something that, yeah, we would put in a schedule
3 request. Like, I don't go in and say you're going to go on this
4 day and this day. But we put in the request and then they say
5 cool, here's his block of classes to go to Oklahoma or Fort Worth
6 or wherever that training's going to occur.

7 Q. Okay, so you send them to training and when they come
8 back -- and I know -- I assume training's more than just a few
9 days in Oklahoma City, I assume it's weeks?

10 A. Oh, it's weeks. It's -- excuse me, I've got the hiccups. I
11 believe it's, like, 14 or 16 weeks' worth of, we call it, string
12 training.

13 Q. Okay, when inspectors come out of that training, are they
14 totally ready to be an inspector and do the job?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Or is there a lot more of OJT here just to get to that point
17 also?

18 A. Yes, there's a lot of OJT that has to occur.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Before -- yeah, before we can let them go do something on
21 their own.

22 Q. So -- and I don't want to put words in your mouth and I don't
23 want to make numbers up that are completely wrong, but your new
24 inspector that's on -- I'm kind of trying to do mental math here,
25 I'm going to guess it's going to be a year or more before they're

1 ready to take a certificate on, or two, or three, or whatever it
2 is?

3 A. Yeah, the other piece to that -- yes, it'll be more than a
4 year for this specific inspector because he did -- he came into
5 the agency at an 11. So, then after about a year, hopefully, if
6 he's gotten all his training done, we can get him to a 12 and then
7 he's going to have to be a 12 for at least a year and do some
8 additional training before we can promote him to a 13. When he's
9 a 13, now, we'd be able to assign him certificates. So, it'll be,
10 I mean, at least two years before I can get this guy assigned to a
11 certificate like Guardian.

12 Q. Okay, do they always come in as an 11 or do some come as 12?

13 A. No, some come in at 12.

14 Q. So, then -- but you're still at least a year?

15 A. At least.

16 Q. Okay, I'm just trying to have an understanding of -- you
17 know, you have two openings, how long is it going to take before
18 you have somebody able to alleviate others?

19 A. Yes, it is at least a year. That is a fact.

20 Q. Okay, excellent. Let's say you were crazy enough to hire me
21 on as an inspector and I did all my training and everything and
22 now you give me certificates to manage and all that other stuff.
23 Again, I said you had a mental lapse when you hired me, so we'll
24 go with that first. Can there -- can I come to you after I get so
25 many certificates and things like that and just keep getting more

1 work? Can I come to you and say woah, I got to raise the flag
2 here -- the white flag, I give up, mercy, can you take me off
3 rotation for a while from getting these other duties, these other
4 assignments? Or can you take some certificates away from me
5 because I'm overwhelmed? Can I do that?

6 A. Yeah, absolutely, you can do that.

7 Q. So, I want to ask a follow-on question then. I assume among
8 my colleagues that would not be a good thing, you know, you don't
9 want to hurt your family, if you will. So, does that ever happen?
10 Has that ever happened that you're aware of?

11 A. That has never happened to me as far as someone asking can
12 you take this certificate away from me. Now, workload
13 discussions, yes, those happen frequently. I'm busy or, you know,
14 we've talked about this assignment's going to go long, or I need
15 help. That happens a lot.

16 I'm going to go out on a limb and keep talking against,
17 probably, my better judgement. Even -- so, for, like, a new 13,
18 we try not to just give them a full -- here's 2,499 points, go
19 have at it. Let's start maybe with a thousand points or 15
20 hundred points and we will try to look at the operators that we
21 have. Again, there's a balance, right, because we've got to be
22 fair and equitable, so I can't just carte blanche this and say
23 this is what I want to do.

24 But we'll try to give them operators that maybe aren't as
25 high demand or as complex as an operator like Guardian. So, you

1 know, maybe some smaller, maybe some single pilot, maybe a couple
2 basics or something, whatever it is to let them kind of learn
3 okay, now I'm on my own, I've got these operators, I'm going to
4 kind of, you know, break into it, so to speak and we'll let that
5 happen. So, that allows me, too, to observe and see how they
6 manage their workload, right, can they take on more. Or are we
7 struggling under the weight, do we need to, you know, see if we
8 can throttle it back. But for my -- I'll call them my seasoned
9 inspectors, like Lyndsay, yeah, they take on the full workload and
10 they go cool, let's do it.

11 Q. Okay, but again, you hired me as an inspector in this
12 scenario.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. It's fictitious as we know.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. So, you would never do that. But can I raise the white flag
17 and say I'm calling mercy here? I mean, how would that go -- how
18 would that look to you if I did that? I'm just trying to
19 understand the mindset.

20 A. Yeah, I mean, we're getting into some hypotheticals here.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. So, yeah, I would have to look at, you know, your overall
23 performance. Is it a white flag because you're not performing,
24 you're unable, or unwilling to perform? Is it a white flag
25 because you truly are qualified and working your hardest but just

1 can't keep up? I mean, there would have to be some discussion
2 there. So, it's not like a carte blanche, you're raising the
3 white flag, great. It would -- there would be other tentacles
4 associated with that.

5 Q. Okay, that's what I was looking for.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. So, thank you. I know they were all hypotheticals because
8 like I said, there's no way that you guys want me here, so
9 excellent. So, we understand Guardian's moving, we talked about
10 that and we also know that you, being the FAA, does risk
11 assessments on that. But we also know Guardian's doing some
12 leadership changes and things along that line. How does that work
13 into your all's risk assessment to that? Will that kind of start
14 raising them up higher risk, lower risk, you know, change is good
15 or in this case, change isn't good? Kind of help me understand
16 what that might look like for you guys?

17 A. Yeah, so generally, that lane would be the POI. But yes,
18 management changes, moving bases, yes, those are going to increase
19 the risk for an operator.

20 Q. But you, as a frontline manager, you don't get involved with
21 that much at all?

22 A. So, I'm not the one that goes into SASS to say this is how
23 we're going to increase the risk. Absolutely, I can be part of
24 that discussion to see what does it look like, what do we need to
25 do. You know, that whole thing, yes, I'm part of that discussion.

1 But ultimately, it's not me going into the program to actually
2 raise the risk for Guardian.

3 Q. Okay. All right, so with those kind of moves -- and forgive
4 me, I think you answered it, but it didn't register in my brain,
5 would those kind of changes -- would that raise the risk?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Would it raise it just a little bit or could that
8 considerably raise that on the risk, fail scale? Or is every
9 operator different?

10 A. I mean, yeah, you could have a thousand different scenarios.
11 Yeah, I mean, again, it depends. I know that's not a good answer,
12 but it depends.

13 Q. It's okay, it's an answer.

14 A. There's variables into it.

15 Q. It depends is an answer and it does say something to me, so I
16 thank you for that. Does this office get any whistleblower
17 hotline complaints in general?

18 A. So, when you say whistleblower hotline, we have -- there are
19 whistleblower complaints and there's also hotline complaints. So,
20 I just want to be careful. So, whistleblower complaints -- I'm
21 not aware of any whistleblower complaints since my management
22 tenure here.

23 Q. So -- and I should've said whistleblower slash hotline.

24 A. Yeah, sorry.

25 Q. But no, you're correct, there are two different kinds. So,

1 how about hotline complaints?

2 A. So, we do receive hotline complaints that we investigate and
3 yeah, those are -- they come in, we sign them out, do the
4 investigation.

5 Q. To your recollection, has Guardian ever received any hotline
6 complaints?

7 A. I do not recall any hotline complaints for Guardian.

8 Q. Okay, currently or when you were their POI, whichever -- I
9 know that's been a while, so it might be hard to recall, but did
10 you ever have a Guardian employee reach out just to when you were
11 the POI or just to the office with concerns or anything?

12 A. Not that I can remember.

13 MR. ETCHER: Okay, I think you've answered all of my
14 questions for round one -- two, no I'm just kidding. I think
15 you've answered all my questions and I appreciate it. Let me go
16 around just to make sure Sabrina gets all her questions answered.

17 DR. WOODS: I don't have anymore, thank you.

18 MR. ETCHER: Millicent?

19 BY MS. HILL:

20 Q. What does it take to get a 14 in the office? Is that a
21 special approval? Or if you have the workload demand, what does
22 it take to get someone moved to a 14 to accept more?

23 A. So, is your question what would this office have to do to get
24 a 14 or what would we have to do to promote someone to a 14?

25 Q. Both?

1 A. So, that would be the office manager that determines we can
2 support a 14. But then after that, we'd go through an interview
3 process for that.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. But yeah, that wouldn't be me that says we're going to get a
6 14.

7 Q. Are they uncommon in the FSDOs? Or -- I mean, you don't have
8 any now, is that because the workload doesn't demand it? Or you
9 just don't have approval for one?

10 A. When you say uncommon -- I mean, not every FSDO has 14-level
11 inspectors. Generally, those on the FSDO side, generally, the 14s
12 are associated with certificate management units. So, like, the
13 only thing that comes to mind as a specific example are some of
14 the helicopter ambulance operators that have a dedicated POI, PMI,
15 PAI where that's their only certificate and those would be 14s.
16 In the agency, CMOs have 14s, they hand them out like candy, I
17 guess. But on the FSDO side, it's definitely not as common.

18 MS. HILL: Okay, thanks.

19 MR. ETCHER: You're good?

20 MS. HILL: Yeah.

21 MR. ETCHER: Okay, Mitch?

22 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, I don't have any additional questions,
23 thank you.

24 BY MR. ETCHER:

25 Q. Well, thank you a lot for educating us and it has been

1 helpful. I do appreciate it. But I always have one last
2 question.

3 A. Of course.

4 Q. You had to assume something, right? We ask a lot of
5 questions, you've given us a lot of answers, we ask more
6 questions, you still give us answers. But I'm always afraid we're
7 not going to ask the right question and you're like man, if they
8 just knew about this it might help. Is there anything you can
9 think of that you thought we would ask that we didn't or we should
10 have?

11 A. I don't know. Yeah, I can't think of any specific -- to be
12 honest, I didn't really know what to prep for with this. It was
13 just okay, you know, just because you're saying there's no right
14 or wrong answer, it's not a test. So, I didn't -- yeah, I don't
15 know that I had anything that I thought you were going to ask
16 about that you didn't.

17 MR. ETCHER: Okay, well, with that, then, we can call this
18 interview concluded at 1548 local.

19 MR. BLAD: Don't mess it up.

20 (Whereupon, at 3:48 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: GUARDIAN FLIGHT PLANE CRASH
 FAA INTERVIEWS
 Interview of Matthew Blad

ACCIDENT NO.:

DATE: March 23, 2023

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.

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the transcriber.

Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber