ANC25MA018

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

Group Chair's Factual Report – Attachment 1

Interview Transcripts

November 15, 2025

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: MARK DAVIS, 13D On the Job Training Instructor
Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Thursday,
February 27, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:45 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Time now is 11:45 Alaska Time.

So good morning, it's still morning. My name is Betty Koschig, and I am with the NTSB. I'm an air traffic control investigator. Actually, all of us in the room here are traffic controllers or had been at one time.

What's your name?

MR. DAVIS: My name is Mark Elliott Davis, Jr.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So I don't think I need you to spell your name, those are understandable.

Before we get started, I just wanted to verify that you did know that we were audio recording this interview.

MR. DAVIS: I'm aware that we're audio recording this interview this morning.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, thank you. And like I said earlier, we will provide you a transcription of the audio. The audio will not be part of any of our public documents. The only people who keep the audio is the NTSB. We send the audio out to get it transcribed by a contractor that has an agreement with us. They will not release it. We will not release the audio.

The only thing that's going to be released to the public will be the transcription itself so just know where all that is going because we want to make sure we safe guard the audio. Okay?

MR. DAVIS: I understand.

MS. KOSCHIG: So I see you do have a representative here. Is this the person you would like to represent you?

MR. DAVIS: Yes. Elijah McDonald represents me.

MS. KOSCHIG: Great. And would you please state your name?

MR. MCDONALD: Elijah McDonald.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So just to let you know, as the representative, he's there for your support. If you have any questions or you want to confer with him, you can do it here; or if you're talking, it's probably best to go out unless you want it on the audio.

You can stop the interview, you can go out and talk, come back, we'll start the interview up. So that's -- he's here for your support.

Any of the questions we ask are going to be for you. We're not going to direct any questions to him. And he may know some of the answers, and if you want to look at him to get verification or whatever, that's fine. But he is here for your support.

So why we're here. We are here to conduct an air traffic control investigation into the fatal accident of Bering 445 that occurred on February 6th of 2025.

Are you familiar with that accident?

MR. DAVIS: I am.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Good. Before we get it started and asking questions about the accident or any of that, I want to make some introductions.

As the NTSB, part of our process is to invite parties to help us with technical expertise, subject-matter experts. Even though we're controllers, it's been a while since we've been on the scope, less time for Casey, but a lot of time for me, but we are the experts when it comes to the investigative process.

And as far as procedures, regulations, though, we got that down, but we definitely haven't had any recency on positions. So we depend on our subject-matter experts to help us out to make sure that we're getting everything straight.

So having FAA and NATCA here, it does well round us, keep us well rounded as the NTSB in making sure that all the information, all the facts are lined up straight.

So, without further ado, I'm going to let my colleague introduce himself.

MR. OGDEN: Thanks. My name's Casey Ogden. I'm an air safety investigator at the National Transportation Safety Board.

My background's primarily military. I did spend some time in the FAA before transitioning to this role.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

MR. BOUSU: Good morning. My name is Trevor Bousu. I'm an operations manager at Denver Center. Nineteen years in the Agency; 4 as a controller and, then, 15 in management.

MS. MARINAS: Hi. Karena Marinas, NATCA air safety investigator. I'm a controller at Los Angeles Center.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold. I'm a controller at Omaha

TRACON, and I'm also a NATCA ASI.

MR. DAVIS: Nice to meet you all.

MR. OGDEN: Nice to meet you.

MS. KOSCHIG: That's us. We're the NTSB group on this. Even though I know it seems a little odd to have, you know, the FAA, NATCA and all of us working together, this is where we do our best work and where we come together as a unit. So we're the ATC team on this one. We'll go through the whole process of this together, dealing with the factual and all the way to publication. We will be the group.

So this is -- it's a pretty exciting thing to have everybody together on one team going, you know, with your main effort being safety.

A little bit about us as the NTSB.

We're an independent agency which means that we don't work for DOT, DOD, FAA, any of the three letters, anybody. We go straight up to Congress. We got our chair and, then, it's Congress so we got a very short chain of command.

With that, though, gives us great responsibility. So our main focus on any investigation is to look at the safety issues and come up and try to make safety recommendations. So we will look at a lot of issues. We'll ask you a lot of questions that you're probably, like, wow, okay, I wasn't expecting that.

But you've been here for a while so we want to make sure that we get everyone's input because everybody sees things in a

different way so we value your opinion today as we go into our fact, which, right now, we're in our fact-finding stage.

So there's always different phases of this. Right now, we're fact finding. So we collect a lot of information, and we're glad you can give us some as well.

Any questions so far?

MR. DAVIS: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So what to expect. This will last about an hour on the average.

What I will do is, like now, going over some things with you, getting to know you a little bit more professionally here in a few minutes and, then, we'll start talking about the accident. And, then, we'll just kind of bounce off of other things that, like, the equipment, procedures, stuff like that that we have some interest in to see what your take is on everything and your input on that.

But I will, like I said, I'll start out and, then, we'll go around the room and let everybody else ask questions so everybody's going to get a chance to talk to you.

During this, we're going to -- the kind of questions we ask will be, like, do you recollect anything or do you recall this. If you don't recall something, I don't recall is a great answer. If you don't know something, I don't know is a great answer. We don't want you just to make something up.

If we ask you questions that are common sense, you're, like,

well, you should know that, we may think we know it, but we will never make an assumption so we want to hear what your answer is. Those kind of questions sometimes, it's not that we're dumb, we just want to make sure that it's from your mouth not ours.

Let's see. Just making sure I went over everything.

Also, you'll notice we might be jotting down stuff, typing. We're not surfing the internet. We are taking notes. The notes that we take, we will destroy those. Those are not going to go anywhere. We're just taking notes so that we can refer back if you said something that somebody's, like, oh, I want to ask about that.

Because as we go around the room, we don't want to interrupt each other, and we don't want to interrupt you to jump in and piggy back on a question. We kind of hold our questions until it's our turn. That's what those -- just to let you know that.

Because we're very good about making sure that we keep our transparency on that.

(Clears throat.) You'll have to excuse me, sorry.

If you do need a break at any time, just let us know that you need to step out and then we'll come back and we'll start again.

Did I get everything there, Casey?

MR. OGDEN: I believe so.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you. He keeps me in line.

MR. OGDEN: We'll go with that.

MS. KOSCHIG: (Clears throat.) Excuse me. Let's get

started.

INTERVIEW OF MARK DAVIS

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. What are your operating initials?

A. Mike Echo.

Q. All right. And how old were you at the time of the accident?

A. Thirty-eight.

Q. Okay. I know it seems like a weird question; we ask that to the pilots too.

When did you start working for the FAA?

A. May 2018.

Q. Was that the Academy?

A. Yes.

Q. Where'd you go from there?

A. To this facility.

Q. And you've been here ever since?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Have you done any details or anything like that?

A. No.

Q. Got any military?

A. No.

Q. Do you have any college degrees?

A. I have college credits, no degrees.

Q. College, great. That's great. What college you go to?

A. It's Eastern Gateway Community College, just online.

Q. Oh, okay. That's great. Do you hold any aeronautical certificates?
A. No.
Q. Do you have a current medical?
A. Yes.
Q. Any restrictions?
A. No.
Q. What positions are you qualified or certified on here?
A. Six positions in the North area; Sectors 3, 9, 13, 4, 15 and 16.
Q. Are you CIC?
A. Yes.
Q. Are you current on all positions?
A. Yes.
Q. You work overtime?
A. I do.
Q. About how many hours a month?
A. That depends on the overtime required.
Q. Okay. So on average, how often do you work overtime?
A. At least eight hours.
Q. At least eight hours. A month?
A. A month.
Q. Okay. Do you like working overtime?
A. Yes.
Q. So what is your -- what was your work schedule the week of

the accident, like, your RDOs, what days, days of the weeks and the hours?

A. The week of the accident, my work schedule was a Tuesday, Wednesday, RDO shift. That Thursday was my first day back from my RDOs, and I arrived there at 2:30 in the afternoon.

Q. Okay. What do you work on Fridays?

A. That varies. My schedule changes every four weeks. I have to check my schedule constantly to know when I come in.

Q. Well, we can probably find out what it was, to check back on that if you just -- for that.

A. It was either a 1:00 or a 2:30. I know that for sure.

Q. All right. Cool. So on the day of the accident, you worked, you came in at 2:30 though?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Was that -- that was a normal shift, not overtime, just to verify?

A. Correct.

Q. What position were you working at the time of the accident?

A. I was OJTI for 13D.

Q. All right. Were you combined on any other positions?

A. 13D is combined with Sector 3 and Sector 9 so it is effectively 13D, 13, 9 and 3D.

Q. They're always combined, though, right?

A. Most of the time.

Q. Most of the time, okay. Always is too big of a -- I mean,

that's like saying never, right. Okay.

So how long had you been on position, or do you recall how long you'd been on position when the accident occurred?

A. A little less than an hour, 45, 50 minutes.

Q. Okay. Do you recall what the complexity of the traffic was at that time and the volume, on a scale of one to five for each one of those?

A. Volume was a two, complexity was a one.

Q. And when were you relieved from the accident, or when were you relieved from position that day?

Were you relieved earlier, did you do a regular position relief brief or a normal cycle, just kind of filling out if you got relieved because of the accident?

Because I do know that finding out the accident wasn't totally known until the next day so how did -- when were you relieved?

A. I don't recall. Typically, we train for an hour and a half so the next position relief would come in at 4:00.

Q. Did you conduct your pre-duty weather briefing before you came, before you signed on?

A. I did.

Q. Okay. Do you have the cell phone with you in the room at that time?

A. I do not.

Q. Was there anything going on, or do you recall anything going

on in the area that was distracting?
A. No.
Q. All right. Did you file an ATSAP?
A. I did.
Q. Do you recall, did you get any feedback from that?
A. Like, via email?
Q. Yeah, I mean, like, any -- yeah. Did they -- any kind of response from, what, the ERC?
MR. OGDEN: Right.
MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.
MR. OGDEN: Was any action taken or recommended by the ERC that you know of?
MR. DAVIS: No.
MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Thank you. I couldn't find the wording.
MR. OGDEN: You're okay.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. Do you recall who else was in the room at the time, in the area that you're, the area that you were working at?
A. No. I'm not aware of who was on the other side of the room. I recall who I was working with, who was the R-side, and who was the supervisor on desk at the time.
Q. All right. Were you given the opportunity to review the audio or watch the replay of the accident?
A. Yes.
Q. And when was that?

A. Approximately 2, maybe a day or 2 days after.
Q. Have you seen it since then, or have you seen it again?
A. No.
Q. Great. I mean, on those, it's good you had the opportunity to see it, but with questions we ask, we really hoped that you can kind of go back to the time, what was going on at the room at that time because I know when you see the audio, you tend to want to go by what the audio or the video showed.

But I want to get more into what was happening into the room and what you were doing, what everybody else was doing so it gets us a good account of that.

I think that's all of those kinds of questions.

I'd like to get started with talking about your day that day. So you came in at 2:30. If you'll let us know what you did when you came in and all the way through the time of the accident and, then, afterwards, what the process was, what you were doing, what your trainee was doing. What do you recall that day?
A. So you just want me to walk you through?
Q. Just, please, walk me through it. I appreciate that.
A. Okay. I clocked in. I checked my weather and put my initials in. I immediately looked at our break list that our CIC, our supervisor, usually writes down. And before I could even see my name, someone told me that I'm training. I'm, like, okay.

I took a little glance at the strip board on Sector 13 just to kind of get an idea if it was busy or not busy, and it was not

busy. Then I looked around to see where the trainee was.

Then I plugged in, checked the weather. That's what you're supposed to do when you take any position, and did the pre-brief scan and then we got a briefing.

I don't recall if we got a D-side out or if the R-side trainee was, what we call, one arming it, and performing the duties of a R-side and a D-side at the same time.

Q. Okay. So what happened after that?

A. Very typical training session. The developmental is a former CPC here so it was pretty easy training that person. Just checking boxes. I do take a lot of detailed notes, though, no matter what training.

So 45, 50 minutes go by, solid training session. The developmental calls an inbound to a Flight Service station and so I'm listening to the back and forth conversation between the trainee and the Flight Service station, and I'm also looking at the scope at the same time.

And, then, I see the MSAW alert go off or, sorry, yeah. I see the MSAW alert go off and, then, I hear it as well. The R-side is alerted to it as well.

Their first action is to -- I don't recall the altitude, by the way. I just heard the MSAW went off. Their first action is to climb the aircraft to a safe altitude for the MIA.

And it felt like no time between that first action and their better judgment immediately takes over, and they issue good

phraseology, a low altitude alert to the aircraft which to climb and maintain 4,000 and the low altitude alert phraseology, neither gets a response from the aircraft.

So this all happens while my trainee is on the line. As soon as she gets off the line, I tell her to call Nome Flight Service. And while she's calling Nome Flight Service, I yell at our supervisor on the desk, Nate McDonald, to come over here because this is happening.

And, again, I don't recall exactly what was on the scope. I know that the MSAW went off. I remember an altitude of 2,300 at one point. I remember an altitude of 1,600 at one point. And I remember them dropping off radar as well as their company north of the Nome airport dropping off radar as well, and a third aircraft staying on radar because they were not only hitting off of the Nome GBT but off of the Tin City radar as well.

So both Bering Air is inbound to Nome were only high enough as far as altitude to be on radar via the Nome GBT. So once that went out at the same time that Bering Air 445 rapidly descended, it was just not a great situation to have an equipment failure.

Yeah. That's all I got to say.

Q. When you saw the rapid descent, did you instruct your trainee to call Nome and let them know that, or how did that come about?

A. So, yeah, let me clarify that.

Q. Yes, please.

A. I told my trainee to call Nome Flight Service specifically

because the R-side, taking good action to get a response from that aircraft, ask the other Bering Air, hey, can you get on company frequency and get your buddy, say something to us.

They responded so we know the frequency's working fine, but they said they weren't able to get them on company frequency. And we tried the King Air northeast of Nome, King Air 426 here at Delta, it was level at 16,000 westbound, and that would have been, like, a more sure bet that we were able to get a relay through them, and neither aircraft was able to get a relay.

So since both of those avenues were a crap shot, we were on the landline with Nome Flight Service, and we asked them to reach out to, via the guard frequency or anything else that they have that we weren't aware of for this aircraft, that we no longer have comms with and had rapidly descended. So we let them know that.

We got off the line. They make their call. Supervisor is made more aware of the situation. I think he's standing behind me at that point.

And, then, we called back because I'm an inpatient guy, and I didn't get a call back from Nome Flight Service fast enough. We call them back, and Nome Flight Service says a tanker on the ground can hear that aircraft, but we never knew what frequency they heard them on. That was that.

As far as, like, events that led up to that, though --

Q. Yes, please.

A. -- I mean, he was a Caravan departing Unalakleet. He was

already in the air, level at 8,000, westbound from Unalakleet going to Nome when we sat down.

To my recollection, we did not have any aircraft in or out of Nome for the 2 hours prior. So, effectively, there was no PIREPs that could be collected or disseminated to that aircraft, and the Nome NEXRAD was out so there was no radar depicted precipitation.

Q. Okay. All right. First, I got a few questions, then, I'm going to let my colleagues ask some because I don't want to just keep you to myself.

A. Sure.

Q. So, first of all, was this one of -- how often had you trained this trainee, had you been monitoring this trainee? How many times before had you worked with her?

A. I don't know, maybe two or three, four times. I trained her on the other side too.

Q. Oh, okay. Good.

A. Yeah.

Q. She sounded really good on the frequency. So you could tell she kind of been here before.

A. Yeah.

Q. So she's progressing pretty well, huh?

A. Hm-hmm.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, that's great to hear. There was something else.

I am going to pass it because I do know everybody else has

got questions.

MR. OGDEN: Okay. Yeah. Thank you for your time. I appreciate it. You know, you're helping us gain more insight in this event, and it's great.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Have you been interviewed about this event before now?

A. No.

Q. Okay. So the trainee you were working with that day, are you their primary trainer?

A. No.

Q. How often do you work with that trainee?

A. As in training or, like, working alongside?

Q. As in training.

A. I mean, I guess every other week.

Q. I see. How do you feel they're doing performance wise? You had mentioned that they're previously rated, sounds like they're doing pretty well, but in your words?

A. Great.

Q. Awesome. Talking about the sequence of events, you had been on position, you said, for approximately 45 minutes. I just want to refresh your memory a little bit, I know it's been some time.

There was a Ryan Air, I believe, 40 that went into Nome. The Bering Air 445 departed Unalakleet. There was another Bering Air, I believe, 1045, and let me see, and a Bering Air 920.

They had some operations into Nome and at the time, there

were PIREP-able conditions, did you or the trainee ever prompt the controller to request a PIREP, or was there any input made by the OS in regards to PIREPs?

A. Are you stating that there are IFR aircraft in and out of Nome during our time when we're training?

Q. Yes. It appears there was an aircraft that showed an RNAV 28 approach; I believe that was Ryan Air 40, potentially. And, then, Bering Air 445, when they departed Unalakleet, there were would PIREP-able conditions at that time that weren't a PIREP.

I just wondered if there was input paid by anyone in reference to PIREPs?

A. So to my recollection, Bering Air 445 was already in the air and level at 8,000, and we did not give that clearance, that departure clearance off of Unalakleet.

Q. Understood. Okay. But just for clarification, no input for PIREPs that you recall?

A. No.

Q. So staying on the subject of PIREPs, what is a significant PIREP to you?

A. Anything involving icing, low-level windshear, anything that would cause an aircraft to have to deviate or compromise flight worthiness.

Q. Okay. When do you typically see controllers getting PIREPs for aircraft, is it in the enroute phase of flying, departure phase, the arrival phase, what does that typically look like?

A. So definitely arrival, departure.

If it's departure, we can immediately grab something from that aircraft and collect flight conditions.

If it's an arrival and it's an airport where they're going to cancel with us on the ground via the frequency that's located there then we'll get that PIREP -- or we'll collect it from them.

If it's a Flight Service station served airport then we ask them to forward that PIREP to Flight Service or to tower if it's a tower-controlled airport.

Q. Understood. So when dealing with Flight Service, airports with Flight Service, how do you close that loop on that PIREP?

A. So they'll call us back. They say, hey, you know, this guy cancelled IFR, and we've got a PIREP when you're ready to copy.

So they are responsible for putting that PIREP into the system for wide dissemination, but we still write it down so for anybody else that's going into that airport, we can disseminate that PIREP.

Q. Understood. So you write it down. Do you check the system, is there a way for you to check it while you're working at the scope to see that they input it, or you write it down and, then, you have your way to disseminate it from there?

A. There's not a way for me to check it at the scope, but our supervisor can.

Q. Okay. I'm sure I can -- gotcha. The weather you encountered that day, I know NEXRAD was out of service for some period of

time. So the depiction meant, in there, but the weather, from the pre-duty weather brief that you experienced in the shift, was that what you expected or was that normal or abnormal for the shift?
A. I expected it to be VFR. I was under the impression that the Nome airport was VFR.
Q. I see. Did your expectations of weather change based on what you had worked so far during the day up to the event, or everything was kind of as expected?
A. No. Everything was as expected.
Q. So this next question, kind of 50 percent of the time, 75 percent of the time, none of the time, how often do you recall icing forecasts for your area?
A. How often do I recall it?
Q. Yeah. How often do you notice icing in the areas that you're working, in the North area, specifically?
A. Can you be more specific?
Q. Okay. Out of your shifts in a month, you're working the scopes, out of that month, how many days out of your working shifts are you experiencing icing in the forecast?
A. I guess that depends on the month. We have areas within our sectors that are known icing pockets that you just, it's just an awareness via experience where you have to be more vigilant for icing occurring in that area.
Q. Understood.
A. But if there's no reports --

Q. Right. Okay. There was a document that had mentioned a PIREP approximately 28 minutes prior to the accident time. When looking, I didn't see a PIREP in. I was just wondering if you knew anything about that, or what that statement could have been in relation to?

A. No. I'm not aware of that.

MR. OGDEN: That's all the questions I have for now. I'm going to pass it along. Thanks.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.

MR. BOUSU: All righty. Thanks for being here.

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. When you and your trainee took the position at 13 D-side, did you guys review the PIREPs that were at the sector at the time? Is that common practice?

A. It is common practice. We review the PIREPs. When the position relief briefing is going on, the controller, whether it be the D-side being relieved or the R-side, if they're one arm, again, I don't recall what the situation was, they will go over the weather for all significant airports.

And, then, they will go over the PIREPs that were collected, and they usually go over the PIREP and then point at the scope, and they'll say, icing here, or a low-level windshear here, or we need PIREPs here because we haven't had anything.

Q. Did the R-side, during the briefing, mention if there had been one, like, we haven't gotten any in a while or anything like

that, was that part of the briefing at all?
A. No.
Q. No, okay. During the training session, what was discussed? You know, you had said you had taken a lot of notes. What was the main kind of topics, and what were you guys discussing that session?
A. I was complimenting my trainee on good priorities.
While the sector was not complex, there was just a lot of phone calls, just busy work, in my opinion. Inbounds to be called, they were all done on time, cancellations to take.
Q. Was any of the discussion on weather PIREPs at all or changing conditions or anything like that with the --
A. No.
Q. Did you guys take the call from Nome for the runway closure?
A. We did.
Q. You did, okay. Did that surprise you at all with -- you had thought that it was going to be VFR conditions, did that surprise you at all that they had called in closed with the icing or de-icing?
A. To de-ice the runway?
Q. Yeah. Did that seem kind of odd?
A. It wasn't a surprise to us. We just -- yeah.
Q. Gotcha. Okay. Did you guys have time that night to do a training session or a debrief, do, like, a Dash 25?
A. Hm-hmm.

Q. Okay. What did that look like, what did you guys talk about on the Dash 25?

A. The Dash 25, I commended the trainee for treating the situation as emergency situation even though they were never officially declared as emergency. I treated it as such and operate it that way.

MR. BOUSU: That's all I had. Appreciate it. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Karena.

MS. MARINAS: One second. Okay.

You've already given us a lot of really good information. So I'm going to scan through some questions I had prepared for you. I think you've answered most of them.

Yeah. This never happens to me. I don't have any questions for you.

MS. KOSCHIG: You don't have any? Oh, wow.

MS. MARINAS: I may come back to it, but I don't think so.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right.

MS. MARINAS: He said most of it in his narrative.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, he did. All right. Go ahead there, Travis.

MR. ARNOLD: I just have a few clarifying questions.

MR. DAVIS: Okay.

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. You mentioned that the GBT went out --

A. Yes.

Q. -- and you lost a track on both Bering Air 445 and another Bering Air?
A. It did come back.
Q. It did come back?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. About how long after did it come back?
A. Enough to make me sweat, so 4 or 5 seconds, but it was a long time.
Q. Sure. That's understandable.

You mentioned it, and I just want to kind of jump back on it. You said that there was a tanker on the ground that Nome Flight Service was talking to that said they could hear specifically Bering 445?
A. Yes. Specifically Bering Air 445.
Q. Can you expand on that, if you have any more info, like, what -- tell me what that means?
A. I wish I could. The Flight Service station employee, I don't know what to call them, advised that the tanker could hear them on the ground. They didn't specify what they heard, and if it was, like, sounds of distress or, you know, we don't know, they didn't specify.

But I pressed my trainee to press Flight Service, like, have them keep doing whatever they're doing to get the communication rolling. But I think the third time that we called, or I don't know whether we called them or they called us back, they said, the

tanker can't hear them anymore, like, okay. Yeah.

And I don't recall what the scope looked like at that point.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah.

Q. I want to talk about the pre-duty brief. Well, I guess, let's just start with, how do you feel about the pre-duty weather briefs?

A. I pay a lot of attention to the turbulence forecasts, especially if I'm going to be working 4, 15, 16 because those are the high-flyer sectors.

Everything else, something, there's, like, a little thing at the end where it says, like, the airports, which is usually the hubs for every sector, whether it be the North area or South area high, they need PIREPs.

Q. Sure. Okay.

A. So, I mean, that's helpful.

Q. Keeping on the pre-duty weather brief, I think I know the answer to this, but do you recall any known, or, I'm sorry, forecasted icing for the Nome area that day?

A. I do not recall.

Q. And, then, the last question I have. You spoke just briefly about known icing pockets, areas where there's icing pockets, can you expand on that a little bit, kind of, maybe if you could on our terms, where those pockets are?

A. Sure. There are pockets in the vicinity of Nome. I have

not, in my experience, had them between Unalakleet and Nome airport. I am used to those pockets being northwest and north, due north, of the Nome airport, particularly where it becomes more mountainous area.

MR. ARNOLD: Okay. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Thanks for stealing my question.

MR. ARNOLD: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: I do want to -- a little bit more talk about when the, when everything started happening.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. The GBT went off for a few seconds and, then, the airplane, with the pilot, they lost communication, lost the radar, MSAW went off, when did it occur to you that this could be an accident?

I mean, I know it's just a sequence of events there that --

A. Yeah. I mean, and it's -- that's difficult to recall the exact sequence of events.

But the MSAW going off and, then, the GBT going off was enough for me to yell at Nate. And it was quite rude, if I recall, I didn't care so -- yeah.

So, yeah, when that happened, when the GBT went out and the MSAW went off, that's too many wrong things.

Q. Exactly. So could -- should he have been able to hear that MSAW from where he was?

A. No, if I -- well, yes, technically, but he was just getting off the phone with coordination for the left side of the runway.

I don't know what it was, but I remember he had just got off the phone.

So if you're CIC or supervisor, you have one ear piece on and, then, he's got the phone in the other hand.

But his response wouldn't have been any faster if he had saw it versus me yelling at him because whoever was over there, everybody heard me.

Q. Oh, okay. That's good.

The other question, so we know that -- you were saying that when you called over the D-side said, your trainee got the information that the tanker had said he was in touch with the airplane or with the pilot, so was that a little -- I mean, considering you've already gone through this sequence of events, was that a little confusing to you at that point because if the sequence of events played out the way -- you've lost all this and it's possibly an accident and, then, all of a sudden, you're getting somebody saying, oh, wait, somebody else is talking to them.

What was going through your mind, I guess, at that point?

A. I was hopeful. I mean, I'm not doing, you know, high math on a frequency, but I didn't see it, but my trainee stated that she saw the R-side right click the Beacon code, and she saw a descent rate of 5,900.

You don't have to do math to know what that does to an airplane.

Q. Yeah, exactly.
A. But, yeah, the tanker saying, oh, I hear them was a little bit of hope.
Also, there was a developmental on an adjacent sector, not working, just monitoring, and I asked them to pull up -- what's the website?
Q. FlightAware?
A. Yes. Yes, thank you.
Q. Okay. Sorry.
A. By that time, the website came up at the same time that Nate or somebody else was able to call company.
And they were probably looking at the same thing where they said, oh, this aircraft's still at 3,400. I was, like, oh, well, that's great. And FlightAware came up, it's like 3,400. I'm, like, that doesn't seem right.
I don't know how that works. That's sciencey stuff, but that was like an old hit or something.
Q. Yeah. That's what it was. It was a -- that was the last hit that they had on it. Yeah.
A. Yeah. But as far as what was going through my head, that was hope and -- yeah.
But I believe at that time, the processes of ALNOT was already in the works between Nate McDonald and Chad Nicholson.
Q. But when did you officially learn that it was an accident?
A. The next day. Yeah. Yeah, I believe the next day. I --

yeah.

Q. There was a, you said that there was another developmental there in the room and he was working on, he was just monitoring, not signed onto anything, but where was he at on the --

A. So he was on, in front of Sector 9. So Sector 13 is on the right side of the room in the North area, and it is the middle console of the right side of the room. And he's -- and so Sector 9 is on the right console.

Q. All right. So does he -- you work with him much, him or her? I don't even know which one it is.

A. Yeah. He's not here anymore.

Q. Oh, okay. All right. Okay.

A. He's very quiet.

Q. Oh. Yeah.

A. Yeah. He didn't say a thing. Matter of fact, if that didn't happen, I wouldn't even know he was there except -- yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. It sounded like he was very quiet from other -- I still got one question, but I'm going to pass around again.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah. I apologize, more weather related, PIREP-related questions. I know they're very fun.

MR. DAVIS: That's fine, Casey.

MR. OGDEN: I appreciate it.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. What weather resources do you use as you perform your ATC

functions?
A. I use the pre-duty weather brief. I use PIREPs. I use pilot, that's not a right term, I don't use pilots, but I use PIREPs that I get from pilots.
And before taking a position, we just always take a look at our altimeters and the weather at our hubs. And if you're detail oriented, you start pulling up a lot of little satellite airports around hub airports that may impact your session.
Q. Understood. I'm sure there's many, but is there a common challenging weather scenario here for you at ZAN that you encounter, we'll say in this time of year?
A. This time of year?
Q. Yeah.
A. No.
Q. Okay. If you ever need weather support while on position, how would you get that?
A. You would typically have to ask your supervisor who would ask the weather people. I don't know where they pull their data from, but I'm sure they can get you something a little more current.
Q. I see. Do you recall if any weather support had been asked for on the day on the event?
A. No.
Q. Have you ever seen the CWSU weather people walk down to position and provide weather support?
A. Yes, but not recently.

Q. Okay. So any training you've received in the last year related to weather, PIREP, any type of those conditions, anything that stands out that you can recall?
A. It's definitely recurrent training, and how quickly, you know, like, ice forms on an air flow and how it's very important to give pilots everything they need to get out of that icing, whether it's deviations or block altitudes, something.
Q. Gotcha. In your opinion, what made that training memorable, why did that stick with you more than other training?
A. I'm pretty sure there was a story attached to it, a narrative, a distinctive accent or something.
Q. I see. Gotcha. I got one more follow up from the event.
We were talking about potential aircraft that may or may not have been in the area, and you had said something about VFR, you know, or they VFR, if an aircraft's VFR and they're flying into an airport that has conditions that would meet the requirement for PIREP solicitation, would you request that VFR aircraft to give flight conditions, or do you treat VFR aircraft one way and IFR aircraft another way?
A. It depends on whether we're talking to them.
Q. Okay. We'll say that you are talking to them.
A. Oh, okay. Yeah, if you can get a PIREP, there's no reason not to.
Q. Understood. Just checking to see if there was a difference in services provided.

A. Sure. I mean, I think it's -- a great example is if an aircraft departs IFR and immediately when they're out of those IFR conditions, like, oh, we'd like to cancel, they just need to get out of the airport. And, then, it's a perfect time to ask for those flight conditions.

Q. Yeah, absolutely. Okay. All right. Last question. Money's no object, you could have anything that you would like for the facility, what would that be, whether it be more NEXRADs, more radars, more staffing, anything, magic wand?

A. Yes.

Q. All of it?

A. Yes.

Q. Anything you would add so we'll say NEXRADs, staff, more radar, weather equipment, anything?

A. I know I sound like a joke, but, yeah, we need consistent NEXRADs. We need GBTs working consistently. We need more bodies.

Q. Anything else you can think of?

A. Not off the top of my head. No.

MR. OGDEN: Fair enough. That's all the questions I have. I appreciate it.

MR. DAVIS: Thanks, Casey.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.

MR. BOUSU: I don't have any follow up.

MS. MARINAS: Just one. So what can you recall -- how would you characterize the weather in 3, 9, 13 before the accident

versus after the accident?

MR. DAVIS: I don't recall the weather in Sectors 13 or 9. I know there was traffic there, and we were talking to airplanes, but that was it.

I recall Nome was VFR. And after the GBT went out and Bering Air 445 dropped off radar, the Nome METAR updated, and it went down to four miles visibility and a pretty low ceiling, something in the hundreds of feet.

So, again, a third thing that went wrong at the same time.

So that's the only change I recall in reference to the starting weather for the session.

MS. MARINAS: Okay. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Travis.

MR. ARNOLD: No questions. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: I've got one, but I'm going to make sure nobody else has any others.

(No audible response.)

MS. KOSCHIG: All right, no. Okay. The last -- well not exactly the last question. I probably have a couple of them.

Is there any question that I didn't ask you or none of us asked you, you thought we were going to ask you?

MR. DAVIS: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I get some pretty good answers on that one sometimes.

And the other question, the last one, is, is there anything

you'd like to add that you would like to share with us that help would help us with safety, anything to help improve safety, any ideas, suggestions for working in a Center's airspace because we do understand there's complex issues all over the NAS?

MR. DAVIS: I'm sure something will come up later when I'm in my bed later. But no, right now, I don't have anything off the top.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right. So I don't have, we don't have any more questions so let's go ahead and end the interview.

The time now is 12:41 Alaska Time.

(Whereupon, at 12:41 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Mark Davis
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 27, 2025

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.

[redacted]

Christina H. Neilson
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: AMANDA ALCANTARA, 13D Trainee Controller
Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Tuesday,
February 25, 2025

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CASEY OGDEN, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

TREVOR BOUSU, Air Traffic Control Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

KARENA MARINAS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

TRAVIS ARNOLD, Air Safety Investigator in Training
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

CHRIS WELDY, Representative
(On behalf of Amanda Alcantara)

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:39 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. The time now is 1439 Alaska Time. Good afternoon. My name is Betty Koschig, and I'm a senior investigator at the NTSB. I've been there for about 16 years, and pretty soon I'll let everybody go around and introduce themselves. But what is your name?

MS. ALCANTARA: Amanda Alcantara.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Can you spell your last name?

MS. ALCANTARA: Yeah. A-l-c-a-n-t-a-r-a.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Cool. So, before we get started on all the questions and stuff, I just want to inform you that we are audio recording this, and that you are aware of it.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay. Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Like I said, we will have a transcription made, but the only people that will have access to this audio, that person is me, and then whoever we send our transcript -- our audio to which is we contract out, and we have an agreement with them. They will not give that audio to anyone. So it's very, very private. That audio will not go in the docket where anybody else can listen to it. The only thing that will go in the docket which is our thing that will go out to the public is the actual transcription. So no one will hear your voice come over all of that.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Just so that you know, but it does become part of the public record. You did say you want to get a copy of it.

MS. ALCANTARA: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: And we do have your email.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So I see that you do have a representative. Is this the person you want to be your representative today?

MS. ALCANTARA: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great. And will you please state your name?

MR. WELDY: Chris Weldy.

MS. KOSCHIG: Will you spell your last name?

MR. WELDY: W-e-l-d-y.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So during the interview, all the questions that we ask are going to be for you. But if you wanted to talk to your representative, you're more than welcome. You know, we can just stop the interview. You can go out, ask questions, come back and start up. Very easy to do.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: But, I know sometimes we get into different questions and you may look to him for answers. And that's fine, but it's going to be the answers that come out of your mouth that we want. So that's a discussion that you guys can have with each other, you know, if you want to go out, too, as well with her, no

problem. I just want to make sure you knew.

Also, if you need a break, I don't think it's going to last that long. Usually these don't last more than an hour.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So if you need a break, fine. Just say you need a break and we'll come back and start over again.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So, part of the process of a NTSB investigation is that we have parties that participate with us, and we do invite parties in especially when we can have ATC expertise. And, in this situation, in this case, we have NATCA and we have a FAA expert, our subject matter experts. So they are part of our party process. So this is the NTSB team. Even though they come from different parts, this is the team. You just usually don't see us work together, but there's a lot of things that go on with these parties that's pretty neat. So -- because, you know, we need everyone's help. We want to be as transparent as possible and make sure we gather all the information.

I'm going to stop. I'm going to let everyone introduce themselves. I will refer to my colleague first.

MR. OGDEN: Thanks. Casey Ogden. My background is primarily military. I spent about 8 years in the Air Force, transitioned from the Air Force to the FAA, and then from the FAA I transitioned my role as an air safety investigator at the NTSB.

MR. BOUSU: My name is Trevor Bousu, operations manager at

Denver Center, 19 years in the agency, 4 years as a controller and 15 years in management.

MS. MARINAS: Hi. I'm Karena Marinas, NATCA aviation safety investigator. I'm a controller at LA Center.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold, agency 16 years, NATCA ASI and have been an ASI for about half a year now.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So that's us. We're the team. And now we know you guys. So, we're going to get started on this, but before we do, I would like you to know a little bit about the NTSB.

First of all, we're an independent agency. We don't work for the DOT. We don't work for the DOD, FAA or any other regulatory agency. We are totally -- go straight up to Congress. So that is -- it's good because even though we don't have any regulatory requirements, I mean we have no regulatory power, we do, we are able to go straight up to Congress pretty fast on safety recommendations, anything that's related to safety. That is our power of the pen basically. So that's where most of the power from the NTSB comes because we can't make anybody do anything. So just to let you know that.

And what we are here for is to gather facts. We're not here to lay blame. We're here to find out what happened and go from there. Gather the facts, get your story, get everyone's story and so we can be a piece of the puzzle because there's other groups out there that's also picking up pieces of this puzzle, and we put

them altogether as the NTSB and come up with what we call the probable cause of the accident. It takes all of us together to look at everything because, you know, there's always speculation out there. We can't speculate. So we have to show whatever happened factually. So that's what makes our agency pretty good and why we have our experts with us to help us ensure that we are collecting the data we need and we use their advice in this as well. So just to let you know that.

So, this investigation is about, just so, I want to make sure we're all on the same page. This investigation is about the Bering 445 accident that occurred on February 6th, and I understand that you were on the D13 position as a trainee that night?

MS. ALCANTARA: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great. So we'll talk a little bit more about that later, but just to give you a little bit of highlight how we're going to work things today so there's no surprises. Because I know this isn't something everybody wants to do, and we appreciate you being here. So, but how we're going to work this, I'm going to start out asking a bunch of questions about you, just to get to know you a little bit, your ATC history and then we'll get into questions about the accident. And then we might ask some questions -- other questions about, you know, your experience at the facility and just find out general stuff you know.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: All we're wanting is just the facts and the truth and that's it. So, during this time if we ask you a question and you don't know the answer, I don't know is a perfect answer. I mean there's some questions we'll ask that we would like you go give your opinion on, but if you don't want to give your opinion on something, that's fine. But when it comes to the factual stuff that you know, we do want to know that.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: But it's the speculation part that's if you want to give your opinion, you're more than welcome to do it.

Also, you will see us jotting down stuff, maybe on our pad or typing on the computer. I promise we're not surfing the internet or texting each other. Some of us take notes so that if there's something that you said we want to come back to that, so we can go back to that and look so that we'll ask you a follow-up question on it. But anything that we write down and hear on this, that is not going anywhere. That will be destroyed. You won't find it anywhere else. So just to let you know, that's just our notes.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Let's see. Okay. Like I said, this will take about an hour. So if you do need a break at any time, just let us know.

Let's see. I think I skipped over anything. So let me see here. And I do realize that it has been a couple of weeks since this happened. So, have you watched the replay on it?

MS. ALCANTARA: I watched the replay on the Saturday after the accident.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

MS. ALCANTARA: But since then, nothing, and I didn't know about this either.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MS. ALCANTARA: So, I have not had a chance to like relook at the details. So.

MS. KOSCHIG: You know what. That's good, because now you can recall it mainly how it happened, and that's really what we want.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Because sometimes when you watch those, like if you watch before you came in here, you're going to recall it by what you saw or what you heard, and you'll recall things a little bit differently because what we want to know is we want you to recall things how you experienced it at the time, what you did, you know, your own personal experience with it. So nothing having done the replay recently, it really gives us a much better interview.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: And so thank you for that. So are you going to watch it again or listen to it or --

MS. ALCANTARA: Probably not.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. No, it's -- yeah, it's a bad experience,

and I totally get it. Did you know anybody that was on there?

MS. ALCANTARA: Not personally. My daughter's librarian's husband was one of the passengers.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, I'm sorry.

MS. ALCANTARA: But not personally

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Yeah, we understand it's a very tight community, and we respect that.

Then any questions yet?

MS. ALCANTARA: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Casey, did I capture everything so far?

MR. OGDEN: I think you got it all.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So how about we get started.

INTERVIEW OF AMANDA ALCANTARA

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. I'm going to ask some questions about you and about your history here. What are your operating initials?

A. AT.

Q. Okay. And what was your age at the time of the accident?

A. My age?

Q. Uh-huh.

A. 35.

Q. Okay. And what is -- what -- sorry. So the -- tell us what position you were working at that time? Boy, I'm stumbling over myself here.

A. I was on the D side for 3, 9 and 13.
Q. 3, 9 and 13. Okay. Sorry. I just wanted to make sure I got that. I hope this goes better. And, you're a CPC, correct?
A. I'm a CPC-IT.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. So what positions are you qualified on and what are you training on?
A. I'm certified on D 4, 15 and 16 and R 4, 15 and 16. And then now I'm training on D 3, 9 and 13.
Q. Okay. Is that in the north area?
A. Yes, ma'am.
Q. Okay. Great. Are you current on all of those?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So now a little bit, when did you start working for the FAA?
A. 2015.
Q. Oh, okay. And was that at the Academy?
A. Yes, ma'am.
Q. Do you have any military?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Where were you -- where did you work in the FAA -- after the Academy, where did you go?
A. Straight here.
Q. Been here ever since?

A. No, ma'am.
Q. Okay.
A. I left 4 years ago to DFW TRACON, and then just came back here in October.
Q. Okay. How did you like DFW?
A. I liked the area.
Q. Yeah.
A. Close to family.
Q. Oh, great. I live in Texas.
A. Okay. Yeah.
Q. All right. I might ask you some questions that it may seem like, oh, well, you should know that. But just -- we just want to make sure we get it from your mouth. Have you worked in any contract towers?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Do you have a degree?
A. I have an associate's.
Q. Okay. What's that in? General.
A. General, yeah.
Q. Great. Where's that from?
A. From OCCC in Oklahoma.
Q. Okay. Do you have any aeronautical certificates?
A. No.
Q. Have a current medical?
A. Yes.

Q. Any restrictions?
A. No, ma'am.
Q. Okay. Let's see. Who's your supervisor?
A. Currently Ben Lassiter.
Q. Can you spell his last name?
A. L-a-s-i-t-e-r.
Q. Okay.
MS. ALCANTARA: Is that right?
MR. WELDY: Close enough.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. All right. So your training on that position, do you have a primary trainer?
A. I have a training team that consists of -- do you want their names or their operating initials? What's easier for you?
Q. Their operating initials?
A. Okay. It's AU, KX and MD is my training team.
Q. Okay. And was one of those people your OJTI that night?
A. Not that day. I was training with somebody else.
Q. Okay. And how often does that happen?
A. Not too often. Predominantly you are with your training team.
Q. Okay. All right. Do you work overtime?
A. Not right now.
Q. Okay. So what's your work schedule like starting out? Like the week of the accident, let's start with your -- after your RDO.

A. My typical schedule, my RDOs are Saturday, Sunday.
Q. Um-hum.
A. So my typical schedule would be Monday, Tuesday 1 to 9, Wednesday, Thursday is typically a 10 to 6, and Friday is typically a 8 to 4.
Q. And were your working your normal schedule that day?
A. That day, yes.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, I came in for credit a little bit earlier than my normal shift, but I was assigned a 10 to 6. I believe I signed in at like 8:15 or 8:30 to do an hour of credit before my shift.
Q. Oh, okay. You said you were combined on three positions?
A. Yes.
Q. Is that normal?
A. Depending on traffic, it is very normal for the north area to be split just sides of the room, 4, 15, 16 combined, 3, 9, 13 combined. And when traffic dictates, we split off the sectors as needed.
Q. Do you recall how long you had been on position before the accident occurred?
A. I think about 30, maybe 45 minutes.
Q. Okay. And just based off of what you can recall, the level of complexity, based on a 1 to 5, how complex was your position at that time?
A. I would say a 1.

Q. Okay. And how about the level of traffic?
A. It would be a 2.
Q. Okay. So is that normal for that time of day?
A. It's usually a little busier that time of the day, but we are in winter. So it just depends on the day and how the weather is, how many airplanes are out flying.
Q. Oh, okay. Do you recall how long after the accident that it took them to relieve you?
A. I do not recall.
Q. Okay. Did you have your cell phone with you?
A. No, I did not.
Q. Okay. So what do you guys do with your cell phones?
A. We have boxes outside the control room that most people just put it in there.
Q. Oh, okay. Was there anything going on in the facility at that point that was distracting, anything out of the ordinary?
A. Not that I was aware of.
Q. Okay. Did you file an ATSAP?
A. Yes, ma'am.
Q. Okay. Great. There was another question I forgot, but I'll have to come back to it. I'm sure somebody will pick up on that. Okay.
MS. KOSCHIG: So, did I forget something significant?
MR. OGDEN: No.
MS. KOSCHIG: Please.

MR. OGDEN: Was there any action taken or any recommendations made by the ERC as a result of that accident?

MS. ALCANTARA: Not that I'm aware of.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you. I knew there was something else.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay. So now, I would like you to -- that's basically most of the admin type questions. We may still come up with a couple of more, but I appreciate all of that. That helps us to get to know you better and what was going on. But, could you take us through your workday? When you came in that morning, anything you recall? I totally want to hear how, you know, your experience, what was going on during the accident, but I'd kind of like to hear how your workday started? You came in at 10 o'clock or --

A. Yeah. I came in early. I don't remember for sure, but I usually drop my daughter off and come straight here on my 10 o'clock shifts. So I probably came in at 8:15 or 8:30.

Q. Okay.

A. Watched my weather brief and then checked in at the supervisor's desk, but I don't remember what positions I worked. I know that at the time of the accident, that was my first training session of the day but I don't remember what positions I worked. I know I was obviously on the left side of the room, so 4, 15 and 16, but I don't know what actual positions I worked.

Q. Okay. That's great. Yeah, that gives me a good idea what's kind of going on. So it's your first time on the session that

day.
A. Um-hum.
Q. So let's -- I'm sure I'll probably follow up with some other stuff, but first let's talk about -- let's go over the accident. Let's start when you go ton the position, you know, what your briefing was like, your briefing on the position, and then take us through what you recall about the -- how everything started progressing, and what you did during the accident and after the accident and therefore.
A. Okay. I mean it was just a standard briefing for, you know. I don't recall any PIREPs for the area. I know we didn't have any at Nome. We hadn't had anybody fly in or out. Bering Air 445 called up on frequency for departure clearance off Unalakleet to Nome which was all taken care of by the R side. And then I got a call shortly after that for Nome, after I called the inbound for the Bering Air 445, for them saying the runway was going to be closed for -- to deice the runway which is when the R side told Bering Air that he could basically have his own speed if he wanted to slow down to preclude holding for the runway to be closed for weather -- or sorry, not for weather, for deicing. And then I know he gave him a descent. I don't recall actually seeing the plane descend out of 8,000, but watching the replay, we know he had descended and then everything, but -- and then the MSAW went off the R side, immediately gave a MSAW alert, and at the same time that went off, we lost another Bering Air on our scope. So

we thought maybe like the -- we thought something the GBT went out at Nome. So we weren't -- we still don't really know what happened with that. But, we got the one back and never talked to the 445 again, but the R side had two different airplanes trying to relay for 445, one company and one was a King Air. And then I called Nome Flight Service to try to see if they could relay and broadcast on their frequency. At one point, Nome did say that one of their trucks out there thought that they heard him but they never heard anything past that. They couldn't get him again, and then we had a trainee looking up on Flight aware to try to track the airplane and see if it was showing anything.

Q. Okay.

A. But that was -- and then obviously we let our supervisor know immediately but we never talked to him again.

Q. Okay. All right. So, there was -- you said there was trainee that you had look up the Flight Aware. That's pretty smart.

A. Yeah, he was just monitoring like on the position next. Like he was just watching the operation, and it was actually my trainer who told him to pull up Flight Aware and just see if, you know, if Flight Aware was still tracking anything on 445.

Q. Okay. So he was just kind of in the room --

A. He was just monitoring, yeah.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. Yeah, a lot of trainees will monitor when they're not

training, just to keep learning.
Q. Oh, that's great.
A. Yeah.
Q. Cool. So, after that, then tell us about how you coordinated. Yeah, what happened after that?
A. Well, we -- obviously I immediately called Nome for them to -- for them to try to reach out Bering Air 445. We told the supervisor who obviously informed the watch desk. We had other aircraft trying to relay. We had company trying to relay. I think my supervisor called their company, you know, on the phone as well to try to see what they were showing, if they were still tracking them. I think somebody tried on Guard frequency as well, and then we obviously closed Nome Airport because we didn't know. So the other company held for quite a while because we had two Bering Airs coming in at the same time. And one just held and that was pretty much the coordination.
Q. Okay. And so did you initiate the ALNOT or have the ALNOT get out?
A. So that comes from the watch desk. They're the ones who actually issue that, but --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- we told them immediately that we lost them on frequency, we lost them on radar, the MSAW went off and then -- so I think 30 minutes after the airport, I think they did that for the airport estimate was when the ALNOT was issued, but we -- as the

controllers, we did not let another plane enter out of Nome after that happened. So although it wasn't technically closed, we had it closed as far as anybody in or out.

Q. Oh, yeah, definitely. So did your position come over there at the position or --

A. Yeah.

Q. Who else was in -- can you just give me -- who else was in the room at that point on that side?

A. The R side was Ben Kendell, BK, and then the person training me was Mark Davis, ME, and then I think it was Tony Bragger was the supervisor if I remember right, BY, and then there was obviously controllers on the other side working 4, 15 and 16, but I do not recall who they were.

Q. Okay. Do you have the -- do you know the operating initials of that -- the buy that was just monitoring?

A. No.

Q. Okay.

A. I honestly can't remember who it was but --

Q. Okay. That's fine.

A. Yeah. He's one of the newer ones and I can't remember his name.

Q. Oh, okay. All right. Great. Let's see. I've got so many questions, but I am going to let other people ask questions because I could be here the whole hours.

MS. KOSCHIG: So, Casey, please.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. I apologize. I have a lot of questions.

A. That's okay.

Q. So, have you been interviewed about this event before now?

A. No.

Q. Okay. So in reference to Bering Air 450 -- or 445, I apologize, the accident aircraft, you had inbounded this aircraft to Nome Flight Service. There had actually been some other aircraft arriving. There was a Bering Air 920, Bering Air 1082, Ryan Air 40. There's a little bit of back and forth between the Flight Service Station and yourself. Was there any input from the controller, the active controlling that position like, hey, can you give me a PIREP or anything about the flight conditions at Nome in reference to that coordination?

A. I don't believe -- when I was sitting there, I didn't recall anybody else inbound to Nome besides the 445. So I don't know if those other airplanes went in VFR --

Q. Okay.

A. -- or -- but I know that 445 and then the Bering Air that was behind him, I do not recall their call sign, but were the only two that I called inbound to Nome --

Q. Okay.

A. -- from what I recall.

Q. No, no --

A. So I don't know if the person before me had maybe called in some inbounds, but I don't think we had anybody in or out of Nome in at least two hours is what -- that was my first time on that side of the room for the day, but when we had our briefing on Saturday after the accident, they had said there was nobody in or out for us.

Q. Okay.

A. But -- so I don't know if they were VFR.

Q. Okay. That's okay. Just talking in general in coordination with Nome Flight Service or any flight service in the areas that you work, is it normal for them to relay PIREPs to you?

A. If there's a significant PIREP or any icing or things like that, they usually will call and give us that information but they also put it into the system. But they'll usually call and give it to us as well, and then we write it down at our sector just so that we have it but they're the ones who usually submit the PIREP --

Q. Okay.

A. -- to the system.

Q. And that leads to another question.

A. Yeah.

Q. What is a significant PIREP?

A. Well, any time there's icing or turbulence, they'll usually call and tell us that. If it's a base and tops report, they're not going to call us and give us that information. But if there's

any icing or any turbulence or anything that's going to affect the airplane coming in to land, they'll pass that along to us.
Q. Okay. And I don't want to put words in your mouth, but a significant PIREP would be anything that could significantly affect an aircraft arriving or departing from the airport?
A. Yeah. We have routine PIREPs and we have urgent PIREPs, but urgent can just be anything, you know, base and top reports, any type of turbulence, light to moderate and they would call us with all of those. They just don't call us with the base and tops report.
Q. I see. So it is normal for you in coordination with the Flight Service Station to -- would you pass PIREPs to them?
A. We do not pass PIREPs to them. Sometimes we will have the pilot pass them a PIREP. So like if we know we need PIREPs at say Nome, when we clear one for the approach, we'll say, you know, request you forward your flight conditions to Nome radio on the arrival. So that anything they encounter on the arrival, they'll pass along to the radio who will let us know and put it in the PIREP.
Q. Okay.
A. But we don't usually relay it to Flight Service.
Q. I see. And just asking a question. So if you had what you deemed to be a significant PIREP near the arrival path of Nome, in your experience, you would not relay that to Nome Flight Service?
A. We don't usually tell Nome Flight Service. We tell the

pilots, and -- but we don't usually -- at least from my experience, I don't usually call radio because usually it either comes from radio or on departure, they'll tell us, and then as soon we have the next departure, we relay it to them when they check in with us. So we don't usually call Flight Service and give them those details.

Q. Okay. Could you talk to me about the life cycle of a PIREP in the facility? The pilot gives you, I have icing.

A. Okay. Yeah. So obviously you write that down. We turn it into our supervisor who either puts it in the system or they take it to flight data who puts it in the system. Then it's brought back to the sector, and we keep them for at least an hour and a half, sometimes 2, depending on if we have another PIREP. And a lot of times, if it's the same, you know, we'll get rid of the older one, but they stay at the sector for at least an hour and a half before, you know, being thrown away. And then that's really an hour and a half to 2 hours.

Q. And so it's a paper log that you're filling out. You get the PIREP. You've giving it to the sup?

A. Yeah. And then it comes back to us and it also, when they put it in, it goes on SkyVector. So you can also look it up there but, yeah, we keep paper copies at the sector to be able to disseminate to the next pilots.

Q. Understood. So those paper copies, do they sit in a specific area for PIREPs or is it just controller preference?

A. It's usually controller preference, but most people put it in between the D side and the R side so that both controllers have access to the PIREPs.
Q. You said they'll sit for about an hour and a half. Is there a supervisor that comes by to check it?
A. No, it just whoever's like -- the controller, we usually look through them. Usually, you'll look through them when you take position and like you're reading through them. Any of them that are outdated, you throw them away.
Q. I see. And do you have good access to those paper logs? Have you ever -- has there been an instance where you've needed paper log and you didn't have one or --
A. No, we have like stacks of PIREP forms sitting at the sector.
Q. Awesome.
A. Yeah.
Q. Awesome. Okay. I know it's been a long time, but the pre-duty weather briefing.
A. Yeah.
Q. Do you recall what the pre-duty weather briefing showed on the day of the accident?
A. Not specifically. I mean I know there was icing in the -- I remember like the general area, like of what -- which of my sectors, and I know there was some high level turbulence but I don't remember the specifics on the weather brief.
Q. I see. So with the icing, high level turbulence, would that

be unusual or usual for the sector that you were working?
A. It's usual.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. It makes sense. It's Alaska.
A. Yeah.
Q. Yeah. I wouldn't beat into this too much because it's been so long, but do you recall your expectations of the weather changing based on what you had worked throughout the day? You got your pre-duty weather brief and you're kind of seeing something different on the scope or as you recall it, what did you expect?
A. I don't know because that was my first time on that side of the room. So I don't know what the weather had been, you know, from the morning up until I took position on that side.
Q. Okay.
A. I don't know if it's different from the weather brief from the morning --
Q. Understood.
A. -- because I didn't work over there.
Q. Okay. And then -- so you had moved over to that position. You had been working the other side of the room. You get over there, it's kind of your first hit.
A. Um-hum.
Q. And then as you recall, nothing really going on in the area for about 2 hours prior. Did you receive any PIREPs from any

other sectors that day?
A. Yeah, we had some PIREPs. We just didn't have any for Nome at the time of the incident. But we did have PIREPs in the area but I don't remember which airports, but I know that we had PIREP forms sitting there. It would have been in my briefing.
Q. Okay.
A. But I don't remember at this point.
Q. And I know I'm asking a lot of weather questions. A weather specialist had kind of looked into this. So I'm kind of beating on that drum a little bit.
A. Okay.
Q. But I'm almost through the list. When a flight is the first one to fly into an area --
A. Um-hum.
Q. -- in a while, does something about that request you to request a PIREP from them? How do you determine that a PIREP is needed?
A. So, I usually just look at the weather. If the weather calls for a PIREP, I will request a PIREP even if we just had a PIREP, I usually will still request a PIREP whether it's in or out. And then if we know, like from the weather brief or sometimes after standup, the supervisor will come to us and say, hey, there's predicted weather or icing or turbulence in this area. So if that's the case, too, then we would request a PIREP.
Q. I see. With the Bering Air 445, when given that operation,

when would you have gotten a PIREP?
A. We would have had him -- well, obviously if he ran into ice, they usually tell us but also we would have had him relay flight conditions to Flight Service upon his arrival.
Q. I see. So it wouldn't have been during any of the en route portion, just that final --
A. No, because we wouldn't have had anything.
Q. Understood.
A. Yeah. So it's like as he descends on the approach is where, you know, we would want the flight conditions from that.
Q. Understood. Okay. What weather resources do you use to help you perform your regular air traffic functions?
A. I mean in our AAID, we have weather and turbulence forecasts from -- I think they pull it from the weather brief I think but it's up there. And then obviously just our METARs and then any pilot reports that we have is, I mean really all that we have.
Q. Do you all have access -- I know some facilities do, some facilities don't. Do you all have access to weather cameras at specific airports?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you know if you have weather cameras at Nome?
A. We do.
Q. Had you looked at the weather cameras at Nome for this arrival?
A. Prior to us thinking something happened to him, no, we -- I

had not pulled up, but I know my R side, once we lost him on radar, the R side did pull up the weather cameras to see if he could see potentially anything.

Q. Gotcha.

A. Yeah.

Q. This is a real toss up. I'm sure there's a lot of instances, but are there any challenging weather scenarios here as --

A. Yes.

Q. Can you give me some examples?

A. I mean I would say the biggest is icing. We have a lot of icing here. I would say that's the biggest and then a lot of times there's the level of wind shear in areas.

Q. I see.

A. I would say those are the two biggest like weather factors here.

Q. What time of year is the worst for icing in your experience?

A. Winter.

Q. Winter.

A. Yeah.

Q. Fair enough. Of course. Okay. If you need weather support while on position, where would you get additional weather support from?

A. We would reach out to our supervisor who would either go to the weather person that's over there or see if it's something TMU could help with but our immediate contact would be our supervisor

or whoever is on our desk for the north area.
Q. Gotcha. Have you ever seen CWSU walk down and provide any of that type of support?
A. I mean they bring down the -- like any SIGMETs or CWAs. They bring those directly to our supervisor who delivers them to the control room floor.
Q. Gotcha. Awesome. So are you a pilot? You said you have no aeronautical --
A. No.
Q. Okay. So maybe a little outside the realm, but what do you expect the accident aircraft had as far as weather products?
A. I don't, I don't really know. I mean I could -- I would assume he had the weather before departing Unalakleet because that's part of their requirement, you know, is to have the weather where you're going prior to departing. But other than that, I don't know what he would have had.
Q. Okay. Something like AIRMETs and things like that?
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. All right. This is a big one, big scope. I apologize but it's a lot, but could you step me through what you recall from the training you've received in the past 2 years weatherwise? It can just be a -- like I remember a bunch of PIREPs. I remember them telling us this is how we send them. This is how we get more. Just any examples you have.
A. I mean, yeah. We get a lot of PIREPs. I feel like -- in

general, I feel like Anchorage Center does -- well, I guess I can only speak for the north area because that's all I know, but we do I feel like get a lot of PIREPs but on my last facility, we had a lot of thunderstorms. So, I received a lot of training in, you know, with that and, you know, just how to be an assistance to the pilots in those situations, but ultimately we take our cue from the pilot and what they think they need because they see it. We can't see it. I mean we have what we see on our radar, but we don't know how accurate that is. Like what they see out their window is, you know, a lot more important than what we see on our scope.

Q. That makes sense. So PIREPs. Just a couple more PIREP questions and then I'll get off the drum, I promise. Had there been other arrivals or departures from Nome, what would have been your technique to get PIREPs for that area?

A. So usually as soon as they depart, their first check in, most of the time we radar them and request flight conditions on their climb out.

Q. Okay.

A. And then we write that down, turn it in, pass it to the next guys who departs or the next person who comes inbound, we'll give them the departure PIREP.

Q. Okay. So you've gotten your departure PIREP, and then you have an arrival coming in.

A. Um-hum.

Q. You relay that departure PIREP to your arrival, and then for --
A. Usually, yeah, you usually have them, after a distance as well, just in case there's anything different on the arrival versus the departure.
Q. Okay. So you request additional --
A. I usually do especially with Nome and things like that because we don't know, you know, a lot of times they're departing this direction and they're landing this direction, you know. So it might be different on this side of the airport versus this side of the airport. So we usually do both.
Q. Okay. At what point would you stop getting new PIREPs and then what would prompt you to restart getting PIREPs?
A. I don't ask every airplane when they depart to give a PIREP, you know, if we've already gotten them. But I feel like if haven't gotten on in about 30 minutes or so, I'll usually request another one just in case things changed or if we know the weather's changing, then, you know, we'll request additional PIREPs.
Q. Okay. Now, in your position, I know you're doing the coordination.
A. Um-hum.
Q. You're not necessarily talking to the aircraft.
A. Yeah.
Q. In your experience, would you typically prompt the

controller, hey, we haven't had a PIREP in a while --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and then you'd get one?
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. Had that happened that night?
A. Not on that position, or not at least that time that I was working.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. And then any other -- was there any other prompts given by anyone else in the room during that session that you can recall about getting a PIREP, getting weather dissemination, anything?
A. Not that I recall.
Q. Okay. All right. A couple more, and then I'm done. Not necessarily weather related, but at one point, the controller -- you relayed that the runways had closed.
A. Um-hum.
Q. And that they were going to expect a delay of some type, I believe the controller gave the offer of slowing down.
A. Um-hum.
Q. Has that been formally trained? Is that just from controller experience on the floor. How did that option come about?
A. I mean I can't speak for the controller himself, but I am an R side as well.

Q. Um-hum.
A. So, we kind of like to give the pilot options. If he wants to slow down so he doesn't have to hold, that's fine. If he gets to that point, and we still have to hold, we have to hold the airport side open. But, a lot of times they would prefer slowing down versus holding.
Q. I see.
A. So I think he was just giving the option, letting the pilot decided what he wanted to do, if he wanted to hold or --
Q. I see. So in your experience, would it be more advantageous to slow down rather than to hold over the airport?
A. I mean I guess it depends on, you know, every situation is different.
Q. Sure.
A. In that case, you know, we didn't know weather conditions. So, I don't know what would have been the better option.
Q. Right.
A. But typically we just let it be up to the pilot unless, you know, we know for sure how long the airport's going to be closed. If they had given us a timeframe, which obviously they don't know exactly how long it's going to be. So, if we knew exactly, we would have just, you know, they might just issued holding, like I'm not sure. I think it just depends on the controller.
Q. Okay. Well, that's all I have for now. I really appreciate it. Thanks.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you. Trevor.
MR. BOUSU: I was going to ask.
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. I just have a couple of questions referencing your training.
A. Okay.
Q. Your training, 3, 13 and 9, you said. Is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. You're not currently training on the R side?
A. No.
Q. Okay. And that's -- you'll go to the R side once you finish on the D side?
A. Yes.
Q. Is that combination, the 3, 13 and 9 very common to train on?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you have any training on any of those sectors independently with the trainer? Or do they get split off and you get 3 time, 13 time and 9 time?
A. They do during the summer.
Q. In the summer.
A. Or at least the used to. I haven't been back during the summer --
Q. Okay.
A. -- this go around, but when I was here before, during the summer a lot of times the sectors get split up and then, yes, you would just train on just one sector by itself.

Q. But it's a lot less often during the winter --
A. Yes.
Q. -- due to volume and everything?
A. Um-hum.
Q. Okay. So that night, what did you guys talk about on sector? What were your kind of primary training objective for that day?
A. For me, it's really just getting everything comfortable again.
Q. Okay.
A. You know, getting all the airspace back into my head since I've been gone for 4 years.
Q. And you were previously rated on these?
A. Yeah, I was a CPC here 4 years ago.
Q. Yeah, in that same area?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Perfect. Do you guys get time to do a training form that night do you remember?
A. Yes. We did do our training form that night.
Q. What did that debrief and training session look like? What was talked about with kind of everything -- with kind of what happened?
A. Basically just he wrote up, you know, all the coordination that was done and all the different ways that we tried to track down the 445 --
Q. Okay.

A. -- and, you know, all the coordination with the supervisor and, you know, all of that was basically all that was written on that training form.
Q. Okay.
MR. BOUSU: It was kind of short and sweet. That's all I have.
MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.
MR. BOUSU: Thank you.
MS. KOSCHIG: Karena.
BY MS. MARINAS:
Q. So we were told that the NEXRAD was out at Nome that night. How do you generally get notified of outages by sector and then also how do you communicate that before your tour?
A. We have an outage sheet that sits or that hangs I guess between the sectors, beside the D side and R side position. And so every time you do a relief briefing, outage is basically the first thing that you brief on your relief briefing. So that's how it gets related between but it gets printed off by our supervisor in the morning and then any time outages are added or taken off, we mark them off on the sheet or add them to the sheet.
Q. Do you remember that day if that was on the sheet or had been added to the sheet?
A. It was on the sheet.
Q. From the morning?
A. I believe so.

Q. So, if you're notified or you have it on your sheet that the Nome NEXRAD is going to be out, what are you expecting to see or not to see?
A. Well, I mean we wouldn't see any depicted weather. If anything, you know, was on the scope, we wouldn't see it.
Q. Okay. And, for a planned outage, like that was, who in the area or is anyone in the area obtaining that or --
A. I'm not actually sure. I know that comes I believe to the supervisor and they ask them about it, but I'm not sure like if it goes anywhere else or they just decide it's approved or it maybe be the watch desk. I'm not sure if it's -- it's either the watch desk or it's our -- the supervisor for that area that approves it.
Q. Do you as controllers ever get asked --
A. Not for like a NEXRAD, but if they wanted to take a frequency or a VOR or, you know, a localizer, something like that, a lot of times they'll ask the controller based on the weather like if we think it's fine or a radar or something like that, but not -- I don't feel like I've ever heard anybody ask about the NEXRAD.
Q. Yeah. Okay. What do you normally see when you issue approaches like that one for Bering Air 445 going into the airport? Like how far down can you see them? How far up and down can you talk to them?
A. So as long as the Nome GBT is working, we'll see them all the way down to the ground. Then we'll talk to them all the way down to the ground.

Q. Okay. Do you recall how the scope or scopes were set up for the combination of sectors at that time?
A. 3, 9 and 13 were combined. Is that --
Q. Were they all on one scope or were they split on two scopes? Do you remember?
A. It's always one scope.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, if it's combined, it's one scope, but I have the strips. He has the screen in front of him. It's one sector all combined into one.
Q. Okay. Because we were told -- we were -- somebody had mentioned that maybe one of the sectors would maybe be on a separate scope or something?
A. What they're about is we call it a cheater scope.
Q. Cheater scope.
A. It's basically the sector next that's next to it, we have the screen turned so that if the R side needs to zoom into something, he has an additional scope and doesn't have to zoom in on where we're looking at all of our traffic. He would zoom in on the other scope that isn't being used.
Q. Okay.
A. So, yeah, that's --
Q. But he was only working from one scope --
A. Yes, ma'am.
Q. -- at that time. And do you recall hearing an MSAW on

that --
A. Ye.
Q. You did hear it. When would you expect normally to see a MSAW in that descent?
A. You wouldn't.
Q. You wouldn't.
A. No.
Q. Okay. Thanks.
MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Travis?
BY MR. ARNOLD:
Q. Just a couple of quick follow-up questions. Would you say that the tech ops request to take the NEXRAD down that time of day is pretty normal for them to do that during the day?
A. I mean I don't think it's abnormal.
Q. Sure. Do you remember any concerns previous to that where tech ops has maybe taken down some equipment during the day, maybe it wasn't very advantageous and as controllers, we kind of grip like why do they got to take it down now, couldn't they do it some other time, that type of thing?
A. I mean nothing that I can like remember --
Q. Sure.
A. -- you know, specific examples of. I'm sure there were thing when I was here before. Nothing since I've been back, there haven't been any.
Q. I'm going to jump on that drum for PIREPs.

A. Okay.
Q. So, you spoke a little bit about kind of what prompts you have to go out and solicit a PIREP. You spoke on if there was an arrival or a departure coming that would prompt you to get a report and give it to the office going in for -- having it forward to Flight Service. Can you speak a little bit about soliciting PIREPs for aircraft maybe in an en route stage through an area that you don't have the common descent and climb out?
A. Yeah. So, it makes more sense to talk about the 4, 15, 16 side of things because that's where we have Canada, Russia over flights.
Q. Okay.
A. So a lot of times if we have any forecast of turbulence, like high level, you'll get reports and also if you have aircraft -- any time an aircraft changes their altitude or requests a different altitude we usually ask, are you getting any ice or turbulence --
Q. Sure.
A. -- just in case sometimes they are, sometimes they just wanted a different altitude. But, yeah, any time they change altitudes or things like that, we ask or if it's forecasted --
Q. Sure.
A. -- we'll ask, you know, how their ride is.
Q. In the low level environment, where we're not dealing with those altitudes like you were just speaking of, how often would

you say you're reaching out and getting these en route PIREPs in those scenarios in Bering Air 445's case scenario, for instance, flying at 8,000 feet?

A. I mean I feel like if we don't have forecasted icing or haven't had a lot of -- because even like in the Bethel area or the Nome area, a lot of times they'll request blocks because a lot of times they hit icing going between like Bethel and over to Mekoryuk and like that area. It's very common, and so they'll request blocks but any time they again request a change of altitude, we usually assign a block so they have that large range of airspace to be able to find a safe spot to fly. But like if they're just flying along at 8,000 feet, not saying -- not making any complaints, we haven't had any complaints, I don't know that I would just ask them how their ride is without some indication of it being needed.

Q. Okay. I think that was the last question I had. Thank you.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. I do have a couple of questions. So when the MSAW goes off, you heard the alert.

A. Yes, ma'am.

Q. What did you see on the radar display -- or when you see a MSAW alert, what is it you're expecting to see on the scope?

A. Just their altitude and it shows MSAW --

Q. Okay.

A. -- at the top, yeah.

Q. Okay. Also, one of the things when -- since you've worked at DFW, you got to see how, you know, if you go into -- if you've got a rapid descent, you're getting XXX at comes up, right?
A. Yes, ma'am.
Q. And this one, it just has the one little X, correct? Is that easy to see? What's your opinion on that?
A. We don't notice it too much on like just the small guys, but we have a lot of military. So you will see it sometimes there where, you know, they're fighters, they want climb sometimes. So it'll -- all Xes will go in.
Q. Right.
A. But then usually the next hit, it shows an altitude.
Q. Okay. All right. And what if somebody goes into coast?
A. We will not see an altitude with a coast because it’s not being tracked on our radar.
Q. Okay. Yeah, just making sure because I know -- I mean it's a little bit different than ERAM and, of course, ZFW is totally different because of STARS.
A. Right.
Q. Low level wind shears, how do you get those alerts?
A. Usually just directly from the pilot.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. Do you have any kind of ribbon display that will show that you've got a low level wind shear?

A. Not that I'm aware of.
Q. Okay.
A. But any time low level wind shear is reported, an urgent PIREP is put in and then that usually prompts like the weather people usually will put out some type of CWA or some type of weather product to advise that there's low level wind shear and what the gains and losses are.
Q. Oh, okay. What else here? Okay. So how did you find out that it was an accident?
A. I didn't until the next afternoon.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, I mean confirmed.
Q. So do you know when -- so nobody knew. When you got off work later that night, you still didn't know?
A. Not definitively, no.
Q. Okay. But suspected maybe?
A. Yeah, I mean we suspected right, you know, shortly after.
Q. Right.
A. Yeah.
Q. So was there any more talk because we just got the audio up to a certain point, but do you recall if there were any more conversations going back and forth to Flight Service or anyone else that was still searching for the aircraft? I'm just curious.
A. I'm not sure. I mean obviously all my calls were recorded.
Q. Yeah.

A. All the R side's calls were recorded, but I don't know behind the scenes if my supervisor or the watch desk, if anybody back there was also making phone calls. I'm not sure.
Q. Okay. I was just kind of curious about that.
MS. KOSCHIG: Karena got a lot of my questions. So, I don't have anything else for right now. So, Casey.
MR. OGDEN: I'm going to pass for now, pass it over.
MR. BOUSU: Karena stole mine, too.
MR. ARNOLD: I actually have a follow up on one of her questions.
BY MR. ARNOLD:
Q. I'm going to go right back to those Xes. The fighters X out.
A. Um-hum.
Q. -- on the ERIDS. In the replay that we looked at a little bit, there was one X right in the middle of the data block. The altitude was consistent or constant the entire time. Is that normal? Now, you talked about like if it's a high rate of change that --
A. Yeah, I don't think I've ever seen like -- it was on our MEARTS replay?
Q. Yes, ma'am.
A. I don't know the answer to that. I can't recall ever seeing just like one X where it also shows the altitude.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.

MR. WELDY: Okay. Sorry. Well, I think they've changed that. When she was here before, we'd get the Xes, and they've changed that to just the one X.

MS. ALCANTARA: Okay. .

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.

MR. BOUSU: They did change that.

MR. WELDY: Yeah.

MR. BOUSU: Do you recall when?

MR. WELDY: A couple years ago. I don't.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Thank you.

MS. ALCANTARA: That makes more sense. I'm like I've never seen just one X, yeah. Sorry.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. I guess a hypothetical. I know hypotheticals are always great. Hypothetically, if there were other arrivals going into Nome, would there be a reason that you would not get PIREPs?

A. I mean I guess if it's VFR and there's no icing forecasted.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't think the controller would request a PIREP.

Q. Okay. But if PIREP conditions were out?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Would you expect Flight Service to get a PIREP?

A. That I can't answer. I don't know their guidelines.

Q. Right.
A. Yeah. I feel like they might, but I don't know for sure what their guidelines are.
MR. OGDEN: Do you guys put in PIREPs for negative reports?
MS. ALCANTARA: Yes.
MS. KOSCHIG: That's good. Karena.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. Do you have any questions for us?
A. No, ma'am.
Q. Here's a question I always like -- a couple of questions. So, since you've kind of been out and come back, is there anything that you can think of, that if something changed here, to help make things safer or even help you do your job better, what are some things that if you don't have to worry about funding or anything, you'd like to say, all right, we need this here. What would it be?
A. I mean I feel like the difference from when I was here before and now, the GBTs have made a huge difference. I feel like Alaskan general frequencies sometimes can be an issue because there's areas where we just don't have them for aircraft flying in between, you know, long distances. But other than that, I mean we have just about, you know, everything that we need besides, you know, having frequencies everywhere, you know, and having no more non-radar situations, you know. But I mean I would say that's the only two things I can think of that would, you know, be

beneficial.
Q. Okay. And, I know you did a lot during your time to search for this. Is there anything you would have done differently if you could go back and change anything?
A. No.
Q. Okay. And, the last question I have is there anything that we didn't ask you that you thought we were going to ask you?
A. No, because I don't -- because I didn't know what to expect. I've never done one. So, I didn't have an expectation walking in the door.
Q. Well, hopefully this will be your only one.
A. Yes.
MS. KOSCHIG: So any, oh, by the ways, last chance?
MS. MARINAS : I guess, yeah. Sorry.
BY MS. MARINAS:
Q. Just because, you know, we heard a lot about PIREP training and briefings over the last few months. So I guess what do you recall from those trainings or have you had briefings like that? What are the big things that stood out to you, if anything?
A. I don't think I've had one since like I've been back. So I don't know if they were before like I got back in October, the briefings, but I mean --
Q. You came back in October?
A. Yeah.
Q. And so -- so, yeah, you haven't had any since then.

A. Not that I recall. I can't remember if we had any in Local Safety Council or anything like that. If they are, it would just be like, you know, a slide on a briefing showing what the requirements are for PIREPs, but I don't remember any briefings recently that I've had.

Q. Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So no last questions?

MS. ALCANTARA: No, ma'am.

MS. KOSCHIG: So, we'll end the interview at -- what is this? 1541 Alaska Time.

(Whereupon, at 3:41 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Amanda Alcantara
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 25, 2025

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.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: BENJAMIN KENDELL, 13R Controller
Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,
February 26, 2025

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CASEY OGDEN, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

TREVOR BOUSU, Air Traffic Control Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

KARENA MARINAS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

TRAVIS ARNOLD, Air Safety Investigator in Training
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

ELIJAH McDONALD, Representative
(On behalf of Benjamin Kendell)

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:31 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Again, good morning. This is the -- this is Betty Koschig from the NTSB, and I'm a senior air traffic control investigator. Would you please state your name.

MR. KENDELL: My name is Benjamin Kendell.

MS. KOSCHIG: Can you spell your last name?

MR. KENDELL: K-e-n-d-e-l-l.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great. Thank you. So for the record, just to let you know, that we will be audio recording this interview and do you understand that?

MR. KENDELL: I do.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great. I see that you do have a representative here in the room. Is this the representative that you have agreed to have with your today?

MR. KENDELL: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Would you please state your name please?

MR. McDONALD: Elijah McDonald.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I'm going to go ahead first and do some introductions just so you know who's in the room here. Like I said, I'm Betty Koschig, for NTSB, and I'll let my colleague go around and introduce himself and we'll go forward.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah. My name is Casey Ogden. I've been with the Board over a year now. My background is primarily military. I did some time in the FAA as well.

MR. BOUSU: Good morning. My name is Trevor Bousu. I'm operations manager from Denver Center, 19 years in the agency, 4 years as a controller and 15 in management.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

MS. MARINAS: Karena Marinas, NATCA air safety investigator and a controller at Los Angeles Center.

MR. ARNOLD: Good morning. Travis Arnold, Omaha TRACON, and I'm a NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So that's who we have here, and in a little bit, I'll explain why we're here and what we're going to do for the next probably hour.

But first of all, I just want to clarify that it was my understanding that you're refusing to conduct a video interview with us?

MR. KENDELL: Well, I'm not refusing. I don't have my laptop with me because I was not expecting a video interview. I was just expecting a phone interview.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And you were unable to do that on your phone?

MR. KENDELL: That's correct.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And, just to clarify, were you advised by anybody not to conduct a video interview?

MR. KENDELL: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And also, where are you located right at this minute?

MR. KENDELL: I'm in Fairbanks, Alaska.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And are you in a room that gives you privacy?

MR. KENDELL: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: So no one else an overhear us, correct?

MR. KENDELL: That's correct.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Is there anyone else in the room with you?

MR. KENDELL: There is no one else.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right. Are you recording this interview?

MR. KENDELL: I am not.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great. Thanks. That's prefect. So it's just unusual for us to telephone interviews and I just like to make sure that we know who's in the room.

So we can forward with this. To let you know, that this audio recording, we will make a transcription of it, and you will be able to get a copy of that. And if you have any comments, you can definitely give us some feedback. We'll just put a footnote on it, but we won't change the interview itself. So just to let you know that. And we do have your email. So we'll make sure you get that. And also, our audio recording, we're not going to give that out to anyone. It stays with the NTSB, and the people that we have contracted out, we have an agreement with that they can't send that out either. That won't come out anywhere in public.

MR. KENDELL: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So, all right. Why we're here. And we do appreciate you being here to talk to us so that we can find out more information, but we're here to conduct an air traffic control interview, our investigation, due to the fatal accident with Bering 445 that occurred on February 6th of 2025.

And just, at the NTSB, a little bit about us, is that we're an independent agency, and we're responsible for determining the probably cause of accidents and incidents and for promoting transportation safety. We are not part of the DOD, FAA or any other regulatory agency.

The major product that we produce at the NTSB are safety recommendations. We do not have any type of regulatory or enforcement power. Our power's basically in our recommendations and in the power of the pen to get these things done. So our chain of command is pretty short. We go from the NTSB to Congress. So it's a very short thing. So that's where we get our -- how we stress our power as far as safety issues. And that's our main concern here, is we just want to find out if there were any safety issues. We're here just to find the facts. We're not here to lay blame on anybody. We're here to get the information that we can see what happened and so that it won't happen again, so we can get the probably cause.

So I know you were working the position, and there may be little things that will help us to understand what was going on

with ATC, and it's just a piece of the puzzle that we can use to -- when we get with our other groups, so that we can understand the full story because there's several other groups out there working on this, and they've collected a lot of factual information. And this is just another piece of it. So again, we appreciate you being here for this.

So, in this interview, I'm first going to start out, you know, after this part, I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself, just admin stuff, just to get to know you a little bit since we can't see you. I want to kind of figure out your experience and know more about you and all your experience in aviation. This should last about probably an hour. It usually doesn't last any longer than that, but if you do need a break, you're more than welcome to just let us know you need a break, and we'll stop the interview and then we'll start it back up.

If you want to talk to your representative, it's a little different, but if you did want to stop the interview and talk with your representative, that's no problem at all. We'll just stop the interview. You can call and talk to him and then we'll start again. So you do have that option because he is your rep. So you have access to him.

Any questions so far?

MR. KENDELL: No, nothing.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So, what we're going to do, we'll end up going around the room, asking questions. They'll first start with

me, and then we'll go around the room. So everybody's going to ask certain questions, and we'll make sure we identify ourselves so that you know who's talking to you. But the people that you did -- that were introduced -- who introduced themselves earlier, they are part of the NTSB group because in this setting what we do is we do invite parties to this. So we've got a FAA SME and we've got NATCA SMEs here. So it gives us -- we need this information because like with NATCA and FAA, they have more recency on the positions. NTSB, we know all the rules and regulations, but we are controllers, but we don't have a lot of recency. So that's the reason we really depend on our SMEs.

All right. If there's something that we ask and you don't recall it, you don't recall it is a good answer. If there's something you don't know, you don't -- I don't know is a good answer. We're not asking you to make up something just to fill a question. We want you to be as honest as possible on that.

So that's the basic structure of how we're going to do things today.

Oh, if we do ask questions that you don't understand -- you know, if we're not stating it correctly, ask us, what do you mean? I mean it's just not -- we want to make sure that you're understanding our questions because sometimes we may word something in a weird way, and we just want to make sure you're able to give us the answer that you understand the question.

MR. KENDELL: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So, are you ready to get started with the first part of it?

MR. KENDELL: Yes.

INTERVIEW OF BENJAMIN KENDELL

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. All right. So what are your operating initials?

A. BK.

Q. BK. Okay. One last thing. We may be jotting down some information here or typing information or things you say, but this is the deal. We will not be using that. It will not go out of this room. We will destroy that. It will not go into any document. So just so that you know that. The only things going in the document is -- that's going to be documented is this actual audio, I mean the transcription of it.

A. Okay.

Q. And how old were you on the day of the accident?

A. 36.

Q. Okay. When did you start working for the FAA?

A. 2018.

Q. Was that the Academy?

A. Yes.

Q. And where did you go from there?

A. Once I finished at the Academy, Anchorage is my first facility. It's the -- Anchorage Center is the only facility that I've worked at.

Q. Oh, okay. Great. So you must love it here?
A. Um-hum.
Q. Oh, great. That's good to know. Do you have any military?
A. No, no military experience.
Q. Okay. Do you have any other ATC experience?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Do you have a degree or got some college classes?
A. Yeah, I have a bachelor of science.
Q. Okay. And what was that in?
A. Biomedical science.
Q. Where's the degree from?
A. Pardon.
Q. Where did you obtain that degree?
A. At the University of Queensland in Australia.
Q. Oh, that sound interesting. Do you hold any aeronautical certificates?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Do you have a current medical?
A. I do.
Q. Do you have any restrictions?
A. No.
Q. Okay. That includes glasses, correct, or contacts?
A. I do --
Q. I'm sorry.
A. I do not wear glasses or contacts.

Q. Okay. Thank you. Who's your supervisor?
A. Serena Gaona.
Q. Could you spell that last name please?
A. G-a-o-n-a.
Q. Okay. All right. What positions are you qualified or certified on here?
A. R side and D side, for sectors 13, 3, 9, 15, 16 and 4.
Q. So everything in the area?
A. That's correct.
Q. Okay. And that is the north area just to verify?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Are you CIC?
A. Yes.
Q. Great. Are you an OJTI?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And you are current on all those positions?
A. That's correct.
Q. Okay. Thank you. Do you work overtime?
A. I do.
Q. How often do you work overtime and how many hours?
A. It varies based on the season. The north area traffic is pretty different between summer and winter. So, the usual amount of overtime kind of depends on the time of year. So, I would say at this time of year, maybe 8 to 16 hours a month.
Q. Oh, okay. Do you recall your work schedule the week of the

accident?
A. I do.
Q. Okay. Could you please tell me what that was?
A. I was off on Wednesday, having finished the night shift the previous day on Tuesday morning, and then Thursday I came in for overtime from 2:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. And, then my normal week started on Friday through Tuesday. All my shifts are 2:30 through 10:30.
Q. Okay. So, you were working your normal shift the day of the accident?
A. I was on overtime shift but my normal -- the hours were my usual schedule.
Q. Okay. Yeah. Thank you. Some of the questions we ask, we may think we answer, but we cannot put words in your mouth. If you hear some of those, just know that, you know, we just need to hear it from you. So what position were you working at the time of the accident?
A. 13R.
Q. Were you combined with any other sectors?
A. Well, sectors 3, 9 and 13 were combined.
Q. Okay. Is that normal for that time of day?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. Do you recall how long you had been on position before the accident occurred?
A. About 10 or 15 minutes.

Q. Do you feel you got an adequate pass down?
A. I'm sorry. And adequate what?
Q. Pass down, a position relief briefing.
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Can you describe the complexity of the traffic that day during that time? Like 1 to 5.
A. Light complexity, not very -- probably a 2 out of 5.
Q. Oh, okay. And how about the left of traffic at that time?
A. Light. Also probably a 2.
Q. Okay. Appreciate that. And how long were you on position after the accident before you were relieved?
A. I don't recall exactly. I think about 30 to 45 minutes.
Q. Okay. All right. Do you recall when you were made aware that it was actually an accident?
A. When I was officially told, I don't think we even -- the first I was told that it was definitely an accident --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- wouldn't have been until the next day when they had found the wreckage, but I mean, yeah, it's -- within 30 minutes, I was not under impression that the aircraft was still airborne.
Q. Okay. All right. Did you conduct your pre-duty weather briefing before you came on watch, on duty?
A. I did.
Q. Okay. Are those useful?
A. Usually, yes. The video tells about whether there's going to

be turbulence or icing, any volcanic ash activity. So, yeah, it's always good to know about that sort of stuff at the start of shift.

Q. Oh, okay. Oh, yeah. Do you recall what the weather was for that day or what it was forecasted to be?

A. I don't specifically recall that briefing. I've watched a lot of those videos and I've watched a lot of those since. So that specific one, I can't recall any details about it.

Q. Okay. Great. Did you happen to have your cell phone on you at the time of the accident?

A. No.

Q. Do you recall where it was?

A. It was in the breakroom.

Q. Okay. Do you recall anything going on in the area that could have been distracting?

A. No, nothing. The only people in the area were the ones on position. The D side trainee and her trainer and then the R side and D side on the other sector.

Q. Okay. Was there anybody that was monitoring do you recall, just a newer person or trainee in there?

A. I don't recall, but I was just focused on my sector. If someone was sitting in the area monitoring from another position, I don't think so, but I don't specifically recall.

Q. Okay. Did you file an ATSAP?

A. I did not.

Q. Okay. How come?
A. I just did not feel that it was -- that there was anything to add from the other ATSAPs that were filed at the time, and the MOR and everything that the supervisors were putting in.
Q. Okay. Were you given the opportunity to review the audio or watch the replay?
A. Yes.
Q. And did you do that?
A. Yes, a few days after there was a CER meeting, and I listened to the audio with management and the union rep.
Q. Oh, okay. And I know during our interview, we're going to ask a lot of questions about the -- about what happened, and I hope, you know, we really want to know what you were going through at the time, and I know it's kind of difficult after you've watched the audio or I mean the video and listened to the audio to kind of go back, but I would like you to try to base your answers off of what was actually going on at the time. So that gives us a lot of information of what you had to deal with and what was or wasn't available to you at that point. So, I would appreciate that for some following up questions I know we'll have later. Did you -- were you administered a post-accident drug test?
A. I was.
Q. Oh, okay. How long after was that?
A. A couple of days later. I've already forgotten exactly which day it was on, whether it was the Monday or Tuesday or something.

Q. Oh, okay. All right. So, that's all of the admin type of questions that I have for right now. Do you have any questions for us yet?
A. Nothing that I can think of yet.
Q. Okay. You'll have opportunities to later ask questions if you still -- if you have any. But right now, what I'd like to do, is have you take us through your entire day of work leading up to the accident and what went on after the accident. So you come into work that day. What were some of the things you did and how many sessions did you have on the positions and go from there if you could please.
A. Okay. Well, I arrived at work at around 2:30, and signed in, did my weather brief, checked in with the supervisor which was a CIC at the time. They told me to get on sector at 4 p.m. There was training going on at the time. So there wasn't a position available for me until 4 p.m. So I went out to the breakroom and at a few minutes before 3, I was paged into the control room to take over 13R. And so I got my position relief briefing from the developmental that was on 13R, and then I took over the position and worked for about 15 minutes, and that's when the incident occurred.
Q. Okay. Can you tell us a little bit more what was going on when the incident occurred or the accident occurred? Could you tell us what you were -- tell us about your experience, what you were going through at that time and some of the things that you

did please.
A. Just controlling the traffic in the sector, issuing approach clearance and frequency changes. I -- we were notified by Flight Service that the runway at Nome, 1-0-2-8 was closing in addition to 3-2-1 which was already closed. So I passed that information along to the pilot of Bering Air 445 to let them know it was about a 15 minute runway closure and they would be expected to be reopened after that, to give them the option of slowing down if they wanted to arrive at the airport after the runway was open again. I issued a pilot discretion descent, made sure they had the AFIS, and then I was talking to another aircraft who was coming in garbled on a different frequency. So that took my attention a little bit. I was changing him over to a better frequency that I could hear a little bit better when the MSAW went off. So once I noticed that Bering Air 445 was below their assigned altitude, I reached out for them to have them climb back up to 4,000 and -- but they didn't respond. So I issued a low altitude alert. And, they still didn't respond. So I tried relaying through another aircraft that was I believe about 60 miles north of them, and the D side reached out through Flight Service to try and relay for them. And, then just continued working the rest of the aircraft in the sector. Tried to keep everything running as normally as possible. And, yeah, the supervisor was notified by the way. Yeah.
Q. Okay. So, I'm sure my colleagues will have some more

questions, but what happened after that as far as did you keep reaching out to the aircraft? Tell me a little bit more of what happened? And then when you got off the position, what did you do?

A. Yes, I did continue to reach out for the aircraft a couple of times, just in case they were able to hear us but not able to transmit or something. The supervisor sent over another controller to relieve me, but we didn't feel that it was the best idea to swap controllers until after the status of Bering Air 445 was determined. So we were probably it, relief briefing and terminated it, and I just continued working. And, then the D side got swapped out, and after a while, the controller that had taken the D side slid over and relieved me.

Q. Okay. After you got off position, where did you -- what did you do and where did you go?

A. I went and talked to the supervisor for a few minutes. They told me that it was likely that there had been a crash, and that I would probably not be back on position for the rest of my shift and to just standby and be available in case they needed to do a drug test or anything. So I went in and waited in the breakroom.

Q. Okay. So the rest of the shift, they didn't tell you at that point you needed to do a drug test. Is that correct?

A. That's correct. I think after about 8 p.m., they determined that they weren't going to be doing a drug test and that there was no -- they didn't have any need for me to stay onsite. So they

excused me from the rest of the shift.
Q. Okay. So how are you doing? You know, I'm sure this is not something you've gone through before. So how are you dealing with this?
A. I'm dealing with it as normally as I can. Just back working again, not letting it interfere with my work, just, you know, focusing on the sector in front of me as it is, like it's, you know, it's a new day, a new -- new airplanes, just working the traffic that I have. Yeah, just trying to be back to normal.
Q. Okay. Yeah, I could see -- these impact different people different ways. You know, there are resources out there if you need it to talk to somebody because you never know when it's going to, you know, when something might impact you differently after a while. So just -- but I'm sure that your facility can help you with resources if that is something you would like to do later as well. But we're also concerned that, you know, we know this isn't something you go through every day. So I appreciate you being open to all of our questions, and I know that the rest of the team here has some questions to ask you. So I am going to go around the room and let them ask you some questions.
MS. KOSCHIG: First, Casey.
MR. OGDEN: Yeah.
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. This is Casey. I'm going to start off by asking you about NEXRAD. When you assumed the position, it's my understanding that

NEXRAD was out of service. Were you aware of that fact?
A. I don't recall whether it was mentioned in the briefing. It may have been. It is a system that goes out fairly regularly. So it's not unusual to be without NEXRAD in one of the three areas that we have it. So it wasn't surprising to me or strange that it was not working. But I don't -- I wasn't specifically cognizant of it when Bering Air 445 was flying towards Nome. I wasn't thinking of the fact that I wasn't seeing weather because, you know, even when NEXRAD is functioning, there's not always weather to see. So there's -- the fact that there wasn't anything there was not immediately obvious.
Q. Understood. So when you say NEXRAD is out regularly, is this for scheduled maintenance or is this unscheduled, out of service, it's just happening?
A. I do not know the reason that it was out of service, but it's -- several times within the previous 12 months, it has been out of service.
Q. I see. And are you aware of -- are people approving these outages or are these unscheduled outages that are happening?
A. I do not know the reason it was out of service. I was not the one that approved an outage or was told why it was out. It's just -- it was on the list of outages but I don't know the cause.
Q. Understood. I'm more so speaking to the previous 12 months you had mentioned, not the day.
A. Yeah, those -- same explanation. I don't know the history or

why it was out for any of those outages.
Q. Okay. Thanks. So I kind of want to dig into the event just a little bit. You had been notified that runway 10 and 2-8 was closed and after you had made a suggestion to the accident aircraft. Can you tell me about your thought process with that decision?
A. So, because we were told the runway was closed, I advised Bering Air of the closure, and with the closure, we were given a timeframe that coincided with Bering Air 445's estimated arrival time at Nome. So I suggested slowing down so that he would be more likely after the runway had reopened. Otherwise, if it had been a longer closure or if they were closer to the airport, then I would more likely have issued holding instructions.
Q. Understood. Have you been formally trained on that or is this just something you've picked up over your experience in working?
A. It is something that gets handled on a case-by-case basis. It depends on timing and what's easier for the pilot.
Q. Understood. Were you aware of any traffic that had previously landed at Nome?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Were there any PIREPs recorded when you assumed the position specifically related to Nome? Anything handwritten?
A. There were PIREPs at the position but they were all more than 2 hours old, and from memory, the only one at Nome was layers of

sky cover. It wasn't very significant. So, yeah, it didn't sort of strike me as anything impactful.

Q. Understood. I'm going to kind of delve into some weather related questions. When do you typically get a PIREP? Is it on arrival, departure or en route or any variation of the three?

A. All of the above. The most common is departing out of an airport where the published weather is below the minimums where PIREPs are required. So, if we notice that it's IFR or something like that at an airport, and the pilot departs, we'll usually ask them for flight conditions. And if they're arriving into an airport where a PIREP would be required, we'll give them a heads up with their approach clearance that we would like a PIREP upon arrival or if they're going into an airport with Flight Service, we'll sometimes tell them, you know, when you land, can you give Flight Service a PIREP. But for en route aircraft, it is more as reported. So if the flight is traveling along and they encounter icing, then when they tell us about the icing, that's when we file the PIREP or if they get turbulence or sometimes if they're flying past a volcano, and they see steam or smoke, we'll pass that along. But, yeah, the en route PIREPs are more triggered by something that the pilot encounters, whereas the arrival and departure PIREPs are more commonly solicited when we notice the weather is below the minimums.

Q. Understood. And then going to the pre-duty weather briefing, do you recall anything major that stood out from that briefing?

A. I don't recall anything specific.
Q. I see. And the weather you encountered that day while working, was there anything unusual for that sector or is that pretty normal for this time of year?
A. No, it was very normal.
Q. And did you have any expectations? Based on the weather changing throughout that shift, did anything surprise you or is it still as normal?
A. Nothing was surprising.
Q. Okay. In a general number, you know, 50 percent, 75 percent, how often do you recall icing forecasts for that area?
A. Perhaps 30 to 50 percent.
Q. Okay. So it sounds quite common?
A. In the wintertime, yes.
Q. Makes sense. Okay. When a flight is the first one to fly into an area in a while, does something prompt you to request a PIREP from them?
A. Yes. When, the weather is advertised below the minimums that we're expected to get PIREPs, if we haven't had an aircraft in the area in a while then, yes, we would usually get PIREPs. But usually in the vicinity of airports is the most common place to get them rather then in the en route phase unless it's something that the pilot notifies of.
Q. Understood. What weather resources do you use to help you perform your regular ATC functions?

A. The METARs that are received by the FDP, weather cams, and the turbulence and icing forecasts that are published by the general weather unit.
Q. I see. Do you recall looking at any METAR tasks or anything for Nome prior to the accident?
A. The METAR, yeah, when I arrived on sector, it was part of my briefing. I was told about the weather, and I usually look at the list of -- on the FDP, we have five or six airports with the METARs continually displayed, and they update every time a new one comes in. So Nome is on that list. At the time I took over the sector, it was VMC there, yeah.
Q. Understood. Now, when you're looking at that display that displays five or six airports, is there anything on that display that would indicate that PIREPs are required at those airports or is it just a general display of the current weather at those airports?
A. It's just a general display of the weather, and then it's up to the controller to know what the requirements for requesting PIREPs are based on ceiling and visibility, thunderstorm forecasts and all that sort of stuff.
Q. Just a few more for me. Can you tell me about the life cycle of a PIREP here at ZAN? A pilot reports icing to you, and how does it go from there?
A. Once we receive the PIREP and pass it to the CIC or a supervisor to enter it into the system, either they enter it or

they take it to Flight Data to enter it. And then typically it gets returned to the sector after a few minutes, and it's available at the sector for us to issue to any other aircraft that are going into that area, and we'll hang onto those for an hour and a half to 2 hours, just in case we have someone else go to that airport and needs to know about it. But once a couple of hours have gone by, we figure that the weather has changed, and we usually just toss them out after a couple of hours.

Q. Understood. So are all PIREPs done on a physical sheet here or are they automated from the controller aspect?

A. For the north area, it's all handwritten on a sheet.

Q. Understood. And whose responsibility would it be once that sheet is given up to the supervisor, the CIC, then it comes back, who is responsible for going through the stack of papers at that point and looking for old PIREPs?

A. Whoever's on the sector, R side, B side, it's available for both positions to review and, yeah, typically will shuffle through them once in a while, depending on workload, maybe once every 30 minutes or so, just have a look at the stack and see if anything's relevant or if anything's timed out.

Q. Understood. And what is a significant PIREP to you?

A. Any reports of turbulence or icing, any reports of thunderstorms or volcanic activity. If it's just a cloud layer, that would be not as significant unless I have someone else going into that same airport. I'll usually tell them, you know, the

King Air that departed that airport a half an hour ago, reported tops at 12,000 and no icing or turbulence, that sort of thing. But the more significant ones are anything adverse, so yeah, turbulence and icing.

Q. Understood. Have you ever seen the CWSU walk down to the position and provide direct weather support?

A. Yeah. Not very frequently, but it certainly happens where they'll -- usually through the supervisor or if the supervisor's in the area, sitting next to the sector, they'll give us sort of a heads up all at once, but there's, you know, forecast turbulence or something like that and what areas it covers.

Q. Understood. And speaking to feedback, had a supervisor, OM or CWSU, had anyone given any feedback about PIREPs at Nome requesting them in any way?

A. No. I mean we're often encouraged to get more and more PIREPs. We, you know, we try and get them as frequently as we can but the amount of traffic at some of our airports is pretty infrequent. So some airports we have long periods of time without any aircraft going to.

Q. Understood. So in that session, no one had provided any direct feedback requesting PIREPs while you were working?

A. No.

Q. Okay. All right. Well, I know that was long winded and a lot of questions, but I appreciate you sticking with me through that.

MR. OGDEN: So, thank you, Betty.
MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum. Trevor.
MR. BOUSU: Yeah.
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. Ben, thanks for being with us. I want to ask a little bit about the area configuration when you got to work. You said you got to work at 1430. Is that correct?
A. Thereabouts.
Q. Okay. What was the area configuration when you arrived?
A. So -- well, when I arrived at work or when I took position?
Q. Yep. When you arrived at work. When you got there.
A. I don't know specifically the configuration when I arrived at work. I checked in with the CIC and got a due back time and then I went out to the breakroom.
Q. Okay. So there weren't any -- was there any discussion with the CIC on opening any sectors or anything like that?
A. No.
Q. No. Okay. So traffic just didn't dictate or volume or anything?
A. That's correct. It was just a normal day.
Q. Okay. If you weren't CIC at that time, is that pretty much a normal configuration to put the area in at that time of the day?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And then were you paged back or did you come back at your due back time?

A. I was paged back.
Q. Okay. And was that just to get the training team off position or what was the reason you were paged back?
A. I don't know why the plan changed. But, yeah, I didn't ask. I just -- once I was paged, I showed up in the control room and was told to get 13R.
Q. Okay.
A. So I took over 13R.
Q. Gotcha. And then what was the configuration of the area when you got back?
A. 13R had a developmental and trainer. 13D had a developmental and a trainer. And 4R was open with a -- I believe it was D side.
Q. Gotcha.
A. So 13 -- Sector 13 had 3 and 9 combined up to it and Sector 4 had 15 and 16 combined up to it.
Q. Okay. So two R side positions, correct?
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. When you took Sector 13, how many frequencies are you monitoring?
A. UHF and VHF, about 30 or 32.
Q. 32 frequencies?
A. I can't remember the exact number off the top of my head, but it's -- yeah, it's around 30.
Q. Okay. In the time just before you noticed Bering Air 445's MSAW alert, you had said that there was an aircraft that kind of

came in garbled and everything. Was that on -- did you have to switch over on VSCS to try to get him on another frequency? Was it just congestion or was there any limitations with what you guys are monitoring to get him on a decent frequency?

A. The frequency that the other aircraft was on is not a very strong frequency. So the area that he was in, it was just more usable to have them on 124.0 instead of 124.5. So as soon as I switched him to 24.0, he came in much clearer.

Q. Okay. Were you guys using a -- I think they call it a cheater scope at all for Sector 9 at that time?

A. Well, not specifically for Sector 9.

Q. Okay.

A. All three of my sectors were displayed on my main scope. I did have a cheater scope to us which I often zoomed in around Bethel or Nome depending on where the traffic is.

Q. Okay. Sounds good. Was there an OS on duty when you came back and got paged back?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. All righty. When you sat down at the sector and you said you went through the PIREPs and noticed that they were 2 hours old, was there any thought of soliciting anything else to kind of more current conditions?

A. Yes. When I have an aircraft in the area, I would get a PIREP normally.

Q. Okay.

A. On that specific day, looking at the weather at Nome at the time, it was, you know, reasonably good weather. So I didn't think of soliciting a Nome PIREP immediately, but I had only been on position for a few minutes. So that's something that I think of after sitting there a few minutes once I've had a chance to get familiar with how the sector's running.

Q. Okay. And then how long after you had sat down did Nome call you with the runway closure?

A. I don't recall exactly. Perhaps 7 to 10 minutes.

Q. Okay.

A. Well, they didn't call me. They called the D side.

Q. Called the D side, gotcha. Okay. So I jumped around there quite a bit, but it was just kind of a lot of just follow ups. So I am good. Thank you, Ben. Appreciate it.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Karena.

MS. MARINAS: Thank you.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. So, are you looking at the -- for your weather there at Nome, I'm just trying to understand what you saw versus some of what the weather people here put up that was available that day. You said you were looking at the METARs specifically for Nome?

A. Yes.

Q. And where were you getting that from?

A. It's on the FDP screen which is located at the D side position.

Q. How about the -- is it the AAID, the display that's at your position? Do you ever use that? And what do you use it for?
A. I use the AAID all the time. It's -- that is the system where we can pull up NOTAMs and approach plates, airspace, schedules, that sort of thing. Yeah. I did not use it during this particular session, but on a normal session, I probably look at it, you know, dozens of times.
Q. Okay. Where would you get information for weather, icing or turbulence are forecasted?
A. In the pre-duty weather brief, the video that we watch at the start of the shift. It's like a slide show video of various maps and that's really the only forecast information that we typically use.
Q. Okay. Do you know what you set your lower altitude filter limits at for Sector 13?
A. Zero.
Q. Zero. Okay. What's a normal interaction you would have with Flight Service working those Sectors 3, 13, 9?
A. Calling inbounds for arrivals into Nome so that they can provide traffic advisories and also calling inbounds to other satellite airports where we won't be able to talk to the pilot directly. They also give us information about work in progress or runway closures, and they'll tell us what the current advertised AFIS is so that we can ensure that the pilots have that before we issue an approach.

Q. How about any exchange of weather information?
A. Once in a while when we -- so, for example, after a flight departs Nome, if we get a PIREP from that aircraft, we'll turn it in to be entered into the system, but we'll also tell Nome on the next time they call, say if they have another aircraft departing, we'll say, oh, the previous flight reported tops at 2500. That way they can tell the next pilot that it really depends on the controller at the time and the amount of traffic and it's not a structured sort of a system. It's really just up to how much information we have and whether we have anything to provide or if they have anything to provide.
Q. Do they get the PIREPs that you enter into the system?
A. I believe so.
Q. Let me scroll back up here. I had a question on the PIREP stuff, too. So you had mentioned that for arrivals, if you, you know, if you haven't had one in a while, you'll ask the pilot to plan to give a PIREP after they land. When would you normally ask for that? When you issue the approach, before you switch them, when would that normally happen?
A. So my personal technique is usually to ask for the PIREP when I'm issuing the approach clearance. So, for example, I issued the approach clearance and then afterward I would say, change to advisory frequency, approved, report cancellation of IFR on this frequency with a PIREP or something like that.
Q. Okay. So do you recall if you were planning to do that with

Bering Air or --

A. Not specifically, and without a -- until I'm issuing the approach clearance, that's my sort of trigger to recheck the weather. So, yeah, I hadn't gotten to that point with them. It would be, you know, when I'm issuing the approach, I look at the weather again, and if I noticed that now it's IFR, now we need the PIREP, something like that, then I would be telling them to provide a PIREP to Flight Service upon arrival. Especially something like after a runway closure, sometime they'll tell them to report braking action or something like that, but it just depends on the circumstances.

Q. Okay. So, in this case, it sounds like what I'm hearing is, I think, is that you're saying that you thought it was VFR at the airport based on the METAR that you had looked at. And you probably would have checked it again once you issued the clearance and were going to switch Bering Air. Is that -- am I getting that correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay. Do you know -- so I'm not super familiar with the MEART system. And we saw in the playback with the rapid descent a small X came up in the altitude. And we had heard that previously it used to be three X's which as -- I work on ERAM. That's what I'm more used to seeing. Is that -- I mean is that true? I guess I'll start there. Did it used to have three X's in a rapid descent and now it has one? Do you know?

A. I don't know if it used to have the different of X's.
Q. Okay.
A. But the system, as far as I've always worked it, will have an X in the altitude area to indicate that it's a faster than profiled climb or descent for that type of aircraft.
Q. All right. Do you -- I mean this is just purely your opinion. Is it easy to notice that X? Have you been kind of conditioned to recognize easily or is it hard to notice? How do you feel about that?
A. No, it's easy to notice.
Q. Okay. Do you recall hearing the MSAW alert that day?
A. I do.
Q. Sorry. One second. So, there was a mention of someone -- that maybe you guys also lost radar on another Bering Air flight nearby around the same time. Do you recall that or lost altitude readout or something like that?
A. Yeah. There was a Bering Air 704 to the north of Nome. I don’t recall exactly when we lost tracking on that one. It was around the same time, within a couple of minutes, but that was only a momentary loss, like 15 to 20 seconds, something like that. And, yeah, it -- we got their tracking back fairly quickly.
Q. Did -- I mean did you guys have any thoughts around that when it happened? Did it bring any conversation up at the sector or anything like that?
A. Yeah. In the previous few weeks, the GBT at Nome had been

intermittently going out of service. So at the time, we were thinking that he GBT had failed. So being that there is no radar site at Nome, the GBT is our most relied upon source of tracking for aircraft below about 6,000 feet. So when Bering Air 445 dropped off radar, my initial thought was that the GBT was going out of service again, mainly due to the recent issues that we had had. If it hadn't been so recently out of service, it probably wouldn't have been my immediate assumption. So, yeah, we did think that perhaps the altitude information because it was times with the loss of tracking, I thought that perhaps the altitude readout might have been a bad hit or something that was, you know, that the computer had seen them start a descent and then it was extrapolating from his descent and thought that he had continued the descent as he dropped off radar. So I thought, oh, that's strange, whereas if it had continued tracking, it would be a little more -- it wouldn't have been -- my assumption wouldn't have started going in the direction of a GBT failure if the track was still there but, yeah, the aircraft dropping off was just a bit more suggestive that the GBT might have been going out.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Travis.

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. Hello. Good morning. I just have a couple of follow-up questions. I want to go back to when you were speaking about after the accident or the event occurred. You spoke briefly about

there was a decision I believe you said mid brief to stop the position relief and to remain on the position. Can you speak a little bit more about that, how that decision was made and maybe ultimately who made that decision?

A. The decision between myself and the relieving controller, we just thought that it was probably best to wait until we knew the status of the aircraft. I had only been on position for a short while up until then. So I initially was surprised when he relieving controller came over, and I felt that I would be more comfortable remaining on position and not putting another controller into a situation where they would be trying to play catch up with a situation with a lot of unknowns. So I didn't want to put someone else on sector where they might be needing to have -- might be needing to perform a lot of the actions that I had already performed or try and get information while they were taking over a new sector.

Q. Okay. Thank you. Just one or two more questions. Most recently you were speaking about the GBT at Nome going out of service pretty frequently it sounds like within the last or the few weeks prior to the accident. Do you feel like in your opinion the -- how often the Nome GBT goes out of service, do you feel like that may have altered how your response was to the aircraft kind of dropping off?

A. Initially, yes. Like the first several seconds, that was what my initial assumption was, but obviously the GBT going out of

service doesn't affect their ability to communicate with us. So when I was not able to establish radio contact with the pilot, after multiple attempts, I started to think that perhaps something else had happened.

Q. Sure. That makes sense. Just one last question I have for you I think, and I want to go all the way back around and beat the drum again on the PIREPs. I just have one quick question. You spoke quite often about being prompted to solicit a PIREP specifically when we're talking about approach clearances, departing aircraft, really, really focused in on airport conditions being not prompt, and then you spoke previously about being prompted to solicit PIREPs or even I guess maybe just receive the PIREP from aircraft reporting turbulence or icing or something like that in an en route phase. Is it pretty common to not reach out to these aircraft in an en route phase, what I'll call cold calling, asking them just kind in the blind, hey, safe flight conditions or do you really maybe in this facility rely on the pilots starting that PIREP?

A. It's workload dependent. On a day when we have multiple reports of adverse conditions, that's a stronger sort of indicator that, hey, there have been reports in the past of turbulence or icing. So let's keep asking and keep seeing where the, you know, is the area moving or changing altitude or something. The more information that we have knowing that there's bad weather out somewhere is when we ask for more PIREPs, but if we know that the

weather is being pretty unremarkable during the day, it's not as common for us to reach out unless we are not busy, and we have time to just ask pilots for safe flight conditions and we expect to get something like smooth or something like that. Yeah, we are working on getting PIREPs when we can, and if we have the time to ask for PIREPs on a clear day, then that's -- yeah, it really just varies. It's just kind of how it goes when we have more information.

Q. Sure. I have actually just a follow up on that. Sorry. You spoke about receiving the forecasted weather conditions in your pre-duty weather brief. I just want to make sure I heard you correctly, that that's really about the only time that you're really referencing any forecasted conditions in that pre-duty weather brief and not at the sector. Is that correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. Do you feel like -- I said I was going to ask my last question and now I'm asking a couple more. Do you feel like, do you feel like it's, for lack of better words, easy to forget about the forecasted conditions in areas?

A. Yeah. If we had something more prominent at the sector that we could see areas of forecasted turbulence or icing, then we would be -- or I would certainly be more likely to ask about those types of conditions. If I didn't have any reports, and I knew someone was flying through an area that they might expect something, I'd give them a heads up and say, hey, if you've

encountered anything, let me know. But, without something at the sector, it's -- yeah, it's certainly difficult to remember to get that when you have -- when you're kind of focusing on what's in front of you, just issuing approach clearances and separating aircraft.

Q. I appreciate that. Thank you.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay. This is Betty again. I've got actually one question. It's kind of two part. Do you recall how many other aircraft you were working that session right around the time of the accident?

A. I don't recall specifically how many. Maybe somewhere between 7 and 10.

Q. Okay. Is that about normal or how --

A. Yeah, it was a fairly standard sort of level of traffic.

Q. Okay. Felt comfortable with that?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Great. And do you recall if any of those aircraft had flown in the area where Bering had flown?

A. None of them, and admittedly I was only on position for a few minutes prior to that, but none of the aircraft that were in the sector when I took over were in the area between Nome and Unalakleet.

Q. Oh, okay. All right. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: I'm going to do one more go around to see if anybody's got any other questions. Casey.

MR. OGDEN: I have no follow up. Thank you.

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. Ben, Trevor Bousu again. When was the last time you had received a PROC for your work as a CIC?

A. When was the last time I had received a what?

Q. A performance record of conversation as a CIC or if you ever have?

A. I don't know that I -- a PRC regarding --

Q. Your performance --

A. -- my --

Q. Yep, your performance on the desk. Have you ever gotten one?

A. I don't recall if I have ever had one about being a CIC.

Q. Okay. Perfect. Thank you.

MR. BOUSU: That was all I had.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Karena.

MS. MARINAS: I don't have anything. Nothing else from me.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Travis.

MR. ARNOLD: I'm out.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay. Do you have any questions for us so far?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Okay. I've got one -- well, I've got a couple of questions for you. And then we'll be over I think. So, can you think of anything that, you know, you've discussed the GBT going out and the NEXRAD. Is there anything else that if -- that would be

helpful for you to do your job that is not here or something that is here that could be expanded upon to make your job a lot easier and by giving you more information and make it safer, you know, giving you the information so you can relay to the pilots?
A. No, not really. Unfortunately I think that the amount of airspace that we work, we end up with a lot of areas that aren't covered by PIREPs simply because there hasn't been anyone there to report but, yeah, we do try and get information when we have people in the area, and if we have that information available to us at the sector, then we do our best to pass it on to other pilots that need it. If the information about forecasts was more readily available at the sector, it would be more forefront in our minds but, you know, if we rely on our memory from the weather briefing, that's, you know, it usually is fine, but obviously we can't remember everything all the time. So, yeah, the weather briefings that we get every day, after a while, they all kind of blur into one. So, yeah, maybe having something on the sectors specific to that day would be advantageous.
Q. That's a great suggestion there. And can you think of anything else, equipment-wise, more frequencies? It sounds like you've got 32 frequencies. So that's a lot. But I mean are you getting good communications with those?
A. Yeah, the frequencies that we have are, you know, adequate to work the airspace. There are areas that we have limited comms but we have to relay through Flight Service or other aircraft, but in

and around Nome and Unalakleet, we have pretty good comms.
Q. Okay. Actually I did have one question. You said you did a frequency change. Were you -- did you do a frequency change or give Bering a frequency change or was that someone else that gave them the frequency change?
A. The prior controller had issued the frequency change to Bering Air 445, and they told me in the briefing that Bering Air 445 was going to contact me on 133.3 once they were closer to Nome.
Q. Okay. And the reason for that was what?
A. So -- because they were crossing the water between Unalakleet and Nome, depending on altitude, sometimes there can be a gap in coverage of VHF comms but, yeah. The aircraft would only be off frequency for a few minutes. So we will sometimes give them a future comm transfer if we predict that they might lose frequency coverage.
Q. Oh, okay. That kind of -- yeah, that answers a lot of questions I had about that one. So it's fairly common then?
A. Yes. In our sectors, we do it all the time. A lot of the traffic that we work is low level. So we do have some gaps between frequency sites. It works fine above 8 to 10,000 feet, but sometimes if they're lower level, below 8,000, there could be a gap.
Q. Oh, okay. Great.
MS. KOSCHIG: So before I ask my last question, does anybody

else have anything else?

(No response.)

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So is there a question that we didn't ask that you thought we were going to ask?

A. No, I haven't been through one of these before. So I didn't really have any expectation of what might be asked.

Q. Okay.

A. But, yeah.

Q. All right. So, we do really appreciate you talking to us today. You've given us so much great information.

MS. KOSCHIG: And, so we will be ending this interview in just a minute, but before I do that, I do want to document that we did start at 0931 Alaska Time. I think I forgot to mention that at the beginning. And so now we will stop the interview at 10:58 Alaska Time. Thank you so much, sir.

MR. KENDELL: Okay.

(Whereupon, at 10:58 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Benjamin Kendell
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 26, 2025

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.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: MICHAEL FARRENS, Relieved 13R On the Job Training Instructor, Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,
February 26, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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(On behalf of Michael Farrens)

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:15 p.m.)

MR. OGDEN: Mine will just be a backup.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. The time now is 15:15 Alaska Time.

All right. Good afternoon. My name's Betty Koschig, and I am a senior air traffic control investigator at the NTSB.

What is your name?

MR. FARRENS: Mike Farrens.

MS. KOSCHIG: Could you please spell your last name, please?

MR. FARRENS: F-a-r-r-e-n-s.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Before we get started with asking you all the questions and stuff, just to let you know that we are audio recording this and you understand that, correct?

MR. FARRENS: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: What we're going to do is, you've requested to have a copy sent to you so when we -- what we will do is send the audio out to have it transcribed. We have a company that we have a contract with that will not and cannot give the audio to anyone else. So it'll just be the NTSB that has it, and they have it.

Once they transcribe it, they send us the transcription, and we will review it so that we can get all the acronyms and everything correct, as correct as possible. We won't change up any of the wording at all.

Then what we'll do is send it to you and if you have comments, like, if you're, like, oh, man, I wish I'd said, you

know, I meant to say this or this is what I meant when I said this, or you wanted to make further comments, or any type of, anything that you wanted to write in there that you wanted us to know about, that's fine. We'll footnote it, but we cannot change the transcription itself.

But that gives you the opportunity to have -- if you have any -- if you have any concerns about what's going out there so you can have your input too so it'll be shown on the footnote part.

MR. FARRENS: All right.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. So I see you have a representative with you. Is this the person you would like to represent you?

MR. FARRENS: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And would you please state your name?

MR. MCDONALD: Elijah McDonald.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So during the interview, all the questions will be asked of you. Your representative is more than happy -- you guys could talk together or you could walk out of the room, have a discussion, and we will stop the interview and, then, come back and reconvene.

I mean, you have the option to talk to your representative at any time because he's here for you.

MR. FARRENS: All right.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So, why we're here.

We're here to conduct an air traffic control investigation into the fatal accident with Bering 445 that occurred on

February 6th, 2025. Are you familiar with that accident?

MR. FARRENS: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right. So we'll ask more questions about that a little bit later.

But first of all, I want to give you, you know, a little introduction to our team.

As part of the NTSB investigation, our process is to invite parties to participate with us as subject-matter experts and, in this situation, we have the FAA with us and we have NATCA with us.

We value their expertise because as NTSB investigators, we definitely know all the regulations and all that, but we don't -- we have not been on scope in a while, and so we really lean on them to ensure that if there's anything recent that's going on as far as hands on, we definitely get their expertise on that. It makes a well-rounded investigation.

So I will let you -- I will let the group introduce themselves. I'll start out with my colleague.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah. My name's Casey Ogden. I'm an air safety investigator at the National Transportation Safety Board. My background's primarily military, and I did spend some short time in the FAA.

MR. BOUSU: Trevor Bousu. I'm an operations manager with Denver Center. Nineteen years in the Agency; 4 as a controller and 15 in management.

MS. MARINAS: Karena Marinas. Controller at Los Angeles

Center and NATCA air safety investigator.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold. I'm a controller at Omaha TRACON and I'm also a NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So we're the NTSB team.

This is, you know, one of those situations where we have three different types of organizations that come together for one common cause, and it's all about safety. That's what we're for is to gather facts and search out any safety issues, learn about the facility. So it's all about fact finding.

As the NTSB, we're an independent agency so we don't work for DOT, DOD, FAA anyone else. We're it. Our regulatory -- we don't have any regulatory power at all. Our main product is and where our powers stays is with safety recommendations. Any kind of safety issue, any way that we can enhance safety, that is our whole goal, our whole job, is just to find these areas that will help in aviation safety.

So that's where -- we might dig in different areas, find out procedures. You're the expert on that position, you know, you know that position so we want to find out what you know about it and dig in to see if you -- what you knew about this, if anything, you knew about the accident flight.

But, in general, we just want to find out about how things operate and find out what kind of equipment that you use and what would be great to have at this facility that enhance safety. So we're going to hit different areas.

MR. FARRENS: All right.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Any questions so far?

MR. FARRENS: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So what to expect here, though.

Like you see, I've always started and talking, and I'll ask a few more questions about -- to get to know you professionally and some, find out where you've been and your history with ATC so we'll dig a little into that, not much.

But, then, we'll start getting into the accident to find out what you know and, then, we'll start to look at different other areas to find out what you can help us with as far as the safety side of things.

I'll start out, then, we'll go around the room and everybody else will have a chance to ask questions, and we'll probably go around a another time until we just don't have any more questions.

But during this whole time, we're going to ask your recollection of things, realize it's been a while since this occurred; it's been a couple of weeks or more. If you don't recall something, you don't recall, it is a good answer. If you don't know something, I don't know is a good answer. If we ask you an opinion question, if you want to give us your opinion, you can, but we don't want you to speculate if you don't want to speculate on things.

MR. FARRENS: All right.

MS. KOSCHIG: We're not trying to dig to get something out of

you to say -- you know what I mean.

So usually this lasts about an hour, maybe a little less, but we'll see how it goes.

You're going to see us jotting down, we like to write notes, something to remind us to ask you a question. I like to type so that I can go back up and say, oh, I need to ask a question about this. So if we're doing that, everything we do here, this is not going to be part of record. That's going to be destroyed. Whatever we jot down or type, it's going no where just to let you know.

And I think that's just about it. Oh, a couple more things before I forget.

If we do ask -- a lot of times, I'll ask questions that may seem like common sense, I should know that, but I never want to put words in your mouth. So if you hear me ask a question that's common sense then that's the reason.

And also, if you do need a break at any time, please just say it. And if we are asking a question that doesn't make sense or we're not wording it correctly, just say what do you mean, or, you know, talk back, I mean, it's an open conversation. So I just didn't want you to feel like you couldn't ask questions back at us.

Ready to get started now?

MR. FARRENS: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Let's do this.

INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL FARRENS

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. What's your operating initials?

A. MD, Mike Delta.

Q. Okay. How old were you at the time of the accident?

A. Thirty-seven.

Q. Okay. And when'd you start working for the FAA?

A. April of 2016. I don't remember the exact date.

Q. That's fine. Was that the Academy?

A. Yeah.

Q. Where'd you go from the Academy?

A. Here.

Q. Been here ever since?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. So you must like it here?

A. Hm-hmm.

Q. Right. What area -- what are you qualified on here?

A. North area CPC.

Q. You're not a CIC?

A. CIC, OJTI as well.

Q. Oh, you're everything. That's great. Current on everything?

A. Yeah.

Q. Got any military?

A. No.

Q. Okay. So far so good, right. So, do you have any -- no, I

don't need that one.

Did you go to college?

A. Yeah.

Q. Get a degree?

A. Not quite. Got picked up off the street first.

Q. Oh, okay. Where'd you go to college, though?

A. UAA.

Q. Do you hold any aeronautical certificates?

A. No.

Q. All right. You have a current medical?

A. Yeah.

Q. Any restrictions?

A. Just glasses.

Q. Okay. Did you have them on at the time of the -- when you --

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. While you were on position?

A. While I was on position, yeah.

Q. Yes, okay. Who's your supervisor?

A. They just switched. Tony Brager.

Q. Gregor?

A. Brager.

Q. Can you spell that?

A. Yeah. B-r-a-g-e-r.

Q. All right.

A. I think.

Q. Hm-hmm. So what position were you working at the -- what position were you working that you got relieved from?
A. OJTI for 13R.
Q. 13R, okay. You work overtime?
A. Yeah. If it was a Thursday, it was an overtime shift.
Q. So you always work overtimes on Thursday?
A. It's my day off.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't.
Q. Yeah, true. So that day was your overtime shift. What's your normal work schedule?
A. Thursday, Friday off, and, then, swings from Saturday through Wednesday.
Q. And what are the swing shift, what are the times on them?
A. Saturday's 4:00 p.m. to midnight. Sunday's 2:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. And Monday through Wednesday is 1:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Q. Were you combined with any other position at that point?
A. Three, 9 and 13 were combined.
Q. And that's normal?
A. Yeah.
Q. Do you recall how long you'd been on, you'd been in the OJT position that session?
A. I think it was about 2 hours.
Q. Okay. Is that pretty normal?
A. Usually we do an hour and a half.

Q. How come you stayed longer that time?
A. I don't know. I wasn't in charge of the CIC or the supervisor desk. I don't remember who was on.
Q. Okay. So before the accident happened, while you were still on position, what do you -- what was the complexity of traffic, on a scale of one to five, while you were working it?
A. First hour and 20 was probably a three or a four and, then, it dropped down to a two.
Q. And how about the traffic level, one to five scale?
A. About the same. It was just --
Q. About the same?
A. Yeah.
Q. And you relieved -- you were relieved from the position about -- well, no, that's a wrong kind of question.
Who relieved you from the position?
A. I think it was BK, Ben Kendall.
Q. Did you do your pre-duty weather briefing that day?
A. Yeah.
Q. How'd you find that? Do you recall anything about it? No --
A. No.
Q. -- it's been a while.
Do you have your cell phone with you on the position?
A. No.
Q. Do you know where it was?
A. In the -- I mean, I either left it on the break room or it

was in the little box down by the -- outside of the control room.
Q. Okay. I know you weren't on position at the time, but did you file an ATSAP?
A. No.
Q. So I don't put words in your mouth, why didn't file an ATSAP?
A. I didn't have specifics of the accident.
Q. Okay. So were you given the opportunity to review the audio or listen to the, I mean, to listen to the audio or view the replay at all of the --
A. I wasn't offered it, but if I requested, I probably could.
Q. Oh, okay. Actually, I'm kind of glad -- well, I know you weren't on for the accident, but yeah, you should watch it. I mean, it's a -- yeah, it's good for learning. I'm sure you'll get refresher training. I mean, yeah, it's not something fun to watch, but it's -- yeah.

So, what we want to ask you, and we know you weren't there, but what do you recall as far as, and I know it's been a long time, do you recall anything about the weather that day, when you were relieved, what the situation was and what you passed down to the -- to BK?
A. I wasn't the one doing the briefing but --
Q. Okay. Do you recall what he did, or he or she?
A. He. My trainee briefed him on what we had seen in the weather so far on the PIREPs that had been gotten and just general airport traffic that we had seen.

Q. Okay. Do you -- was there anything weather wise going on that you can recall that was out of the ordinary?
A. No.
Q. Just normal every day traffic, nothing that stuck out while you were on?
A. No.
MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I got a couple more questions, but I am going to let my colleagues talk to you. Thank you. Casey.
MR. OGDEN: Yeah. Thanks, Betty. So I'm going to kind of start more general and, then, work more towards that session that you were working.
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. How do you maintain awareness as a trainer, just walk me through that as you're in position?
A. By -- let me see. I mean, keeping my scan of the scope up, checking the strips, especially if they're -- he's on the D-side. Listening to the tone of the trainee and their attitude, their body to see how, get an idea of how they're doing handling the situations, the traffic volume.
Q. Just for your awareness, I know it's been some time and this may not help much, but the session that I'm going to be referring to is going to be the training session from 23:03 to approximately 00:02, until you were relieved, just to add a little bit of context.
So during that session, do you recall any prompts or any

directive given from the operational supervisor or the operational manager specifically related to PIREPs?

A. I don't recall.

Q. Okay. Any direction, guidance or anything from the OS or OM during that session?

A. Not that I can remember.

Q. How often are the OSs or the OM that's on the shift interacting with you as a trainer while you were actively training?

A. It varies. I mean, it just depends on what's coming up.

If there's an outage, they'll let us know. If an outage is cancelled, they'll let us know. If there's some -- if there's a CWA or a SIGMET or an MIS, they'll come and let us know. If there's FLOW, they'll come and let us know.

There's a lot of different opportunities to interact, but it is completely variable on what the traffic is and what the weather is, and what's going on at the time.

Q. I see. So their interactions with you would be more about operational, what's going on, not something specific to training?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. In the past, has an OS or OM given any directive, like, hey, your trainee is doing X, Y, they need to be doing Z; or any type of interaction like that?

A. No.

Q. So getting more into that session, working with that trainee,

how often do you work with that trainee, are you their primary trainer?

A. I'm on his training team. I think I've -- I don't train him very often because, I mean, my schedule ends up with other trainees more so.

Q. Understood.

A. But, yeah, I wouldn't be able to recall how often I train him reference other people.

Q. Okay. What's your perception on how they're doing in training, just your general opinion?

A. I'm happy with his progression.

Q. I see. So progression kind of keys me in a little bit. Had they struggled in the past, are they doing better, or they're just progressing well?

A. They're just progressing well. That's just -- I mean, I don't expect them to be CPC material on Day 1.

And so it's a gradient, you know, from Day 1 until when they're ready to be certified so I'm happy with where they are in their progression for how many hours they have on position.

Q. Fantastic. In general, how are they with PIREPs solicitation and dissemination?

A. Good.

Q. Your expectations as a trainer, during that training session, if you recall, were they met, or were there areas of improvement?

A. From what I can recall, it was met.

Q. I'm going to ask some questions, and I don't want you to think that I'm being confrontational in any way, but watching the replay and listening to the audio recordings -- let me preface.

Do you recall any PIREPs in the area that had been solicited for Nome or any previous arrivals or departures around that area?

A. Yeah. I know we had gotten one at least in the first hour we were there.

Q. And you had gotten one for Nome or just a PIREP in general?

A. I can't recall exactly. I know that I was impressed by how he was -- by the PIREPs he had gotten in the first hour, he was telling other pilots about them. He was calling out precip that he saw on the scope.

Q. Understood. The reason I ask, there's a document that states that there was a PIREP gotten about 28 minutes prior to the event time. I don't see any documentation for it, people don't recall, but it sounds like there maybe was a PIREP, maybe not.

Do you recall a handwritten PIREP that maybe wasn't passed up or anything like that?

A. I can't recall.

Q. Okay. So looking at that session, there was a few arrivals, and the accident aircraft had actually departed and communicated with your training team.

The area they departed from was PIREP-able conditions. The arrivals into Nome, at the time, would warrant PIREPs. But looking at the PIREP log in AISR, I didn't see any PIREPs for that

session.

Do you recall if there was a reason, was there -- did you have adequate equipment and capability to record those PIREPs, or was it just simply missed?

A. Are you saying there was no PIREPs for that session or for that airport?

Q. For that airport, Nome specifically.

A. For Nome specifically?

Q. Hm-hmm.

A. I can't recall why we wouldn't have gotten one.

For Nome, we don't get PIREPs for arrivals because they don't cancel through us, they cancel IFR through Flight Service, and we don't talk to them on the ground after they've landed to get a PIREP on their conditions.

We only get PIREPs from departures off of Nome or if Flight Service was closed.

Q. Okay. So would it be your expectation from your experience that Flight Service would call you with the PIREP from your previous arrivals?

A. Only if there was a significant, like, they got, like, low-level windshear or icing on approach then they would call us and give us a heads up.

My expectation is that they would enter that in themselves just like we would if we got a PIREP into AISR or whatever it is.

Q. Okay. So while working that position, you wouldn't prompt an

arrival at a pre-determined point to pass those flight conditions to Flight Service?

A. Every once in a -- sometimes we will, say, request for the PIREP or give the PIREP upon your arrival to Flight Service, but it almost -- I don't know.

It's hit or miss on whether that information gets back to us not through AISR, like, not through that.

Q. Understood. In your previous experience, has Flight Service been typically good about relaying arrival PIREPs to you and if you hadn't gotten one, would you communicate to Flight Service, hey, we need a PIREP, we hadn't gotten one?

How would that process look and, in your experience, how has it been?

A. I'm not sure. There's no formal way that we would do that or structure for us to have that conversation with Flight Service regularly.

Q. I see. So that would be more of a -- I don't want to mess up the nomenclature, I don't work Center, but your assist would typically be communicating with Flight Service?

A. Yeah, the D-side would be.

Q. The D-side.

A. Radar associate.

Q. I see. Would you prompt the D-side, hey, we haven't gotten a PIREP, can you call, or would you do something like that, or something --

A. Yeah, that's something that I've done in the past, and I've seen done.
Q. Okay. And in that session, do you recall if that had happened, you or your trainee?
A. I don't recall on that one. I know that traffic slowed down at Nome on the second half of the session, I mean, just in general, it slowed down.
MR. OGDEN: Okay. Well, I appreciate it. I know those questions could be uncomfortable so thank you.
Thank you. I'm going to pass it along for now.
MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.
MR. BOUSU: All righty. I had a couple.
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. Prior to conducting the OJTI, did you guys have a pre-brief at all, do you guys ever go through a pre-brief before you start a session?
A. I can't recall on that day if we did. But, usually, it's usually just a couple of minutes of what my expectations are, or if, you know, I've seen a trend, addressing that trend.
But I don't recall on that day if I had or not.
Q. Okay. In the past when you've done those, is weather included in that at all, discussing adverse conditions or anything like that, is that what you usually --
A. That's one of the things I train my trainees on is doing their preview of the sector before they get the position to check

the weather that's displayed and just get an idea of how busy certain areas of the sector will be based on that.

Q. Okay. Earlier you had said volume and level of complexity was roughly a three to four out of five, correct?

A. Hm-hmm.

Q. And that was with that combination, the 3, 9 and 13?

A. Yeah.

Q. Was there a D-side in with you guys?

A. Yes.

Q. There was. Okay.

And, then, was there an OS or an OM on, or OS or CIC on at the time when you guys were working?

A. I don't recall.

Q. Don't recall?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you ever think that the sectors had -- needed to be split due to the volume or complexity?

A. No.

Q. No, okay. And, then, aside from the paper PIREPs you guys get, you don't have any other access to AISR or anything at the sector or anything, nothing aside just from the paper PIREPs, that's what you guys have for the --

A. Yeah.

MR. BOUSU: Okay. That's all for me.

MS. KOSCHIG: Karena.

MS. MARINAS: You had some good questions there. I might not have any more. Let's see.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. Do you ever check the AAID for -- as a reminder for the pre-duty weather brief, briefing? Wow, what's going on? I can't talk.

A. As in check the -- I'm not sure what you're asking?

Q. Is there a drop down on that, that you can check the pre-duty weather briefing slides?

A. Yeah. As in to refresh my memory on them, is that what you're asking?

Q. Yeah, do you ever use it if it's there?

A. I don't know. It's a few clicks to get into so if it's busy, almost never.

It's not easily accessible. It's not easily accessible in, when traffic is busy. Like, it's a simple path to get to, but, yeah, you have to wait for websites to load.

Q. Yeah. When you look at the pre-duty weather briefing before you start your shift, what are you looking for in that, or are you looking for anything in that?

A. Looking for areas that are potentially icing, turbulence, low-level turbulence especially. Areas that are going to be more IFR than VFR because that's where we're going to see more airport traffic.

Q. What is your guys' PIREP process, like, you get a PIREP at

the sector, what do you do with that?
A. Fill it out and hand it to either the OS or CIC.
Q. When you're CIC, what do you do with it?
A. I walk it back to Flight Data for them to enter it in.
Q. And, then, what happens with it?
A. They -- I can't speak for them. I assume they enter it into AISR and, then, they bring the PIREP back to either the sector or the supervisor desk and, then, that gets returned to the sector from there.
Q. What's your -- I mean, I think you kind of talked about this a little bit already, but what's a normal interaction with Flight Service in Nome for you if you're sitting at 3, 9, 13?
A. The calls that we usually make with them are either for them to call -- they call us to ask for a clearance off the ground, tell us there's a work in progress somewhere, or we're calling them with an inbound; or if we've called an inbound and a plane has cancelled IFR in the air with us, we'll call and cancel the inbound with them.

That's the most common interactions we have with them.

MS. MARINAS: That's all -- oh, wait. No, that's it. Thanks.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Travis.

MR. ARNOLD: Hi. You may have answered these questions. I'm going to phrase them maybe in the way that I understand them a little bit better.

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. Right off the bat, the lifecycle of the PIREP, you give the PIREP to the supervisor, the supervisor will input or either take it to Flight Data and, then, it comes back to the R-side or the work station, the scope, right?

A. Hm-hmm.

Q. How long would you generally estimate that you're without that PIREP will it's in its transition through the process?

A. It varies. I mean, it could be anywhere from a few minutes to sometimes it's up to 15 minutes or -- yeah.

Q. Sure. Do these PIREPs always make it back?

A. From my experience, yes.

Q. And, then, I want to go back to the pre-duty weather brief. Just your opinion really, how do you feel about the pre-duty weather brief?

A. It can be helpful. I don't want to say a lot of the time, at least some of the time, it's outdated and it's already up to 5 to 6 hours old by the time I'm watching it.

And, then, by the time I'm at the end of my shift, it's, then, 11 hours old if I'm working position. I don't know.

I find that looking at the current weather that we get from the different AWOSs and stuff, input into our FDP of for the weather at the different airports to be more helpful or what we see on the NEXRAD, if it's available.

Q. Sure. And I want to verify, reference your pre-duty weather

brief, you do have access to it in position, but it's more than a few clicks away, it's not very easily accessible?

A. It's not conveniently accessible. I'll rephrase that to be, it's not conveniently accessible. It's easy to get to, it's not convenient.

Q. And, then, without that being, without going through the different steps to get to that, is there any other way to remember what you had on the pre-duty weather brief, say, 4 hours before?

A. Not unless there's a CWA, MIS or SIGMET out referencing what was on there.

MR. ARNOLD: Okay. And, then -- you know, I think I'm done. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Does the CWSU, anybody from there, come down and talk to you about getting PIREPs or tell you that there's a change in weather, as a CIC there?

A. They bring -- they don't prompt us for PIREPs. They will bring CWAs, MISs, SIGMETs and updates to those items to the supervisor desk, whether it's an OS or a CIC. And, then, it'll get taken out and it'll get handed out to the controllers that it affects through that. I think twice a day, they brief the OM desk and supervisors on the weather trends for the day.

But other than that, there's -- they don't, they usually don't interact directly with controllers. There's a couple times

they have, but it's when there's been some abnormal thing going on.

Q. Oh, okay. So when the supervisor, OM, they do that briefing there, does your supervisor come back and tell you what happened there, I mean, what went on?

A. From my experience, if there's forecasted conditions that will affect the area, they'll come back and brief them and say, hey, this might be happening, we might have potential low-level windshear, low-level turbulence along the Aleutian chain or something like that, or, you know, just kind of give a quick oral, a verbal briefing.

Q. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That makes sense.

We get -- we saw the, they got the PSAT out there. Have you had any experience with the new system, they're going to put out for PIREPs, they call it PSAT?

A. No. I know they're implementing something. That's as much as I know.

Q. Oh, okay. It seems like it's going to be interesting, kind of can't wait to see how that turns out. It seems like a good development to be useful.

Geez, there was another question I was going to ask you. Oh.

We know you've been here quite a while and so you've got a lot of experience with what you don't have that you need. So if there was something here, and I'm stealing Casey's question, but if there was something here that if you didn't have to worry about

money or how the FAA got it or even doubt that the FAA would get it and you said we need this, this would make our lives easier as a controller, make things safer, what type of equipment or resource would you have available?

What could you think of that would help you do your job better, especially weather wise?

A. So directly related to weather, just not have as many outages on our NEXRAD systems, or we have in the state, potentially have more of them because I think there's only three in the 3, 9, 13.

There's one at Nome, there's one at Bethel, and there's one at King Salmon from what I remember. There's one at Fairbanks, and that's the only one in the rest of the North area. So the entirety of the North area which land mass wise is roughly two-thirds of the State of Alaska. There's four.

Q. Wow, yeah.

A. There is --I had suggested that, talking about convenience of the weather briefing and the forecasted turbulence, throwing that potentially up on one of the screens that's out on the floor and on a more up-to-date graphic than one that's hours old, just forecasted for that, you know.

Yeah, that's about -- more NEXRAD systems would be great, and keeping the ones that we have up and running, because there's so many times where we get PIREPs for icing, turbulence, thunderstorms where we just don't see anything on the scope, to be able to give them any warning about it.

Q. And it seems to be a theme that there's definitely needs to be more NEXRADs in --
A. Or some system that would accomplish the same thing.
Q. Exactly. Do you see a lot of outages with NEXRAD?
A. Yeah. I mean, I don't know if you'd looked at the sector, our outage list is a page and a half long on one side and a page long on the other side.
Q. Yeah. Okay. Do you know anything about ERAM, I mean, have you worked with ERAM before? I just wanted to see if --
A. At the Academy, and, then, we're getting it up here.
MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So I can't think of anything else. I don't want to steal anybody else's questions so go ahead.
MR. OGDEN: You're okay.
MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you.
MR. OGDEN: Yeah. Thank, Betty.
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. I know we talked a lot about PIREPs and just to kind of put a cap on it all, when you typically get a PIREP, so I know you had mentioned there is typically phases, but arrivals versus departures versus en-route, and describe your process for getting PIREPs?
A. If I've got a departure and I'm not sure what the weather is, I check the weather. If it's low enough, I'll get a PIREP then.
If I've got an arrival, I've already checked the weather because I've issued the NOTAMs and made sure that they've had the

weather. And if I note that the weather is below five and five or I've got other reports in the area, I'll get a PIREP once they land, if possible. That's what prompts me to.

Q. Understood. So when an aircraft, for example, going from one airport to another, that en-route phase of flight, would there be something that would drive you to get a PIREP; or would it be more so pilot reports, they just opt to tell you, hey, there's turbulence in this area and, then, you would disseminate it from there. How does that work?

A. In between airports, it's almost entirely pilot initiated. Whether that's them saying, hey, we have a PIREP, whether that's them saying we need deviations, we need a block, we'd like a different altitude. If we're able to accommodate their request and, then, you know, ask, like, hey, are you getting any icing or turbulence out there.

In my experience, pilots will usually not, will more often than not, not volunteer icing conditions or turbulence conditions. I've seen them ask for blocks or deviations or different altitudes and, then, we have to query and ask, hey, is that because of icing, is that because of turbulence. And they're, like, oh, yeah, we were getting this here, but they won't -- it's rare that they just volunteer that information.

Q. I see. I've heard it referred to a few different ways, but have you ever made, like, cold calls to a pilot that's en-route in an area where you suspect there could be icing?

A. I'll ask -- you know, we have some corridors where we'll check with, but -- yeah.

Usually, if they're flying in between one airport to another airport on a short stint, the cold call is used, I don't see that used very often.

Q. I see. The weather that you had worked with during that session, was that usual, unusual, if you recall?

A. It was usual. From what I recall, it was marginal VFR which is VFR at the airports but low enough where they're starting IFR approaches at least into one of, our two major hubs, Bethel, Nome. I know we had traffic at both of those during that time.

I know there were areas of VFR, nicer VFR outside of that. We had, from what I remember, a few planes cancel IFR going into Bethel and just go in VFR.

Had at least one depart Nome and cancel IFR, and I don't remember where they were going, but they, you know, proceeded to their destination VFR.

Q. So based on the pre-duty weather briefing that you had received that day, if you recall details, did your expectation of weather changed based on what you'd expect getting into your shift versus what you were seeing on the scope as it developed?

A. I don't recall. I mean, it's --

Q. I understand.

A. The -- yeah. The pre-duty weather briefing is sometimes helpful.

Q. I understand. What weather resources do you use to help you in your performance of regular ATC functions?
A. I mean, mostly just looking at the weather at the airports, sometimes checking the upper winds of planes on long legs of flight, if they're noticing that they're flying slower than usual or trying to find smoother air for them.

We had a lot of guys that fly from Anchorage to Dutch Harbor, and that's usually the spot where I'll check for upper winds to see, you know, if they're in turbulence or have a strong head wind.

But primarily, the weather reporting at the airports.
Q. I see. And I bet I could guess this answer, but I'll let you -- are there any common challenging weather scenarios here at ZAN?
A. In general or specific weather phenomenon?
Q. We'll go with both.
A. I mean, icing's always rough in the wintertime, thunderstorms in the summertime. We get them around Fairbanks and up on the Brooks Range which is another one where we don't have NEXRAD. So we'll -- that's just entirely on pilot reports. I don't have anything to see them up there.

Yeah, if we could just have a few things. I feel like I've already answered the question, what we could use at ZAN to help with weather.
Q. Yeah. Two more questions for me and, then, I'm out of your hair here.

Could you step me through or what you recall from your last training you received on weather here?

A. I mean, other than an LSC briefing or a, you know, crew brief, which we haven't had this year because of our new schedules, I can't recall any specific weather training.

We usually review, prior to a season, where certain weather phenomenon occurs, like, we'll review icing and recurrent. Or in pro training, we'll review icing, we'll review thunderstorms, kind of give a heads up.

We've gotten some briefing on volcanic activity because we have the volcano that's gotten some activity recently. So with that potential happening, you know, we get refreshers on, like, oh, hey, this is what to do with volcanic ash scenarios.

But I can't recall the date or when those occurred. That was just kind of generally what happens.

Q. I see. In your opinion, how is that training? Does it get your attention, or is it just something -- in my experience, most of this training was, like, all right, let me click through this so I can get on position and do what I need to do.

A. If it's timely, it's helpful. If it's not timely, then, it's kind of dumped.

Q. I see. Last question. To you, what is a significant PIREP?

A. Moderate, greater turbulence, or severe greater turbulence, volcanic ash. I'm trying to think of all the -- low-level windshear, severe icing, sorry, extreme icing. I don't remember

the exact -- that's all I can think off the top of my head. Thunderstorms along with that.

MR. OGDEN: That's all the questions I have. Thank you very much.

MR. FARRENS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.

MR. BOUSU: Sorry. I just have a couple of follow-up ones.

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. On a, like, really busy PIREP day where people are getting icing, people are getting bumped around on top a mountain wave, whatever, is it common practice for the OSs to put the PIREPs in, or are they running them up to Flight Data?

A. I can't say. It depends on who's working the desk, it's their discretion.

Q. So it's kind of dependent on who's ever running it, whether it's CIC or sups?

A. Hmm. Well, yeah, or some CICs put them in, some supervisors put them in, some don't.

Q. Okay. And you've been trained on how to put them and how to put them into AISR and everything?

A. I have. I've also got briefings after being trained on how to put them in that, on very specific things that we can and cannot put in them to have them be counted and be, essentially, attributed to Anchorage Center and, then, also, end up on SkyVector through AISR because there are errors that will happen

that AISR will accept it, but it won't be processed and go into SkyVector or onto whatever the next step.

And so rather than trying to keep track of all those myself, I just walk them back to Flight Data because they know how to do it correctly, and I don't necessarily remember every time.

That's the reason for me to walk them back there is because there's -- AISR won't kick back. AISR will accept almost anything, and there have been multiple reasons outlined of using a period here or a dash there or this word here where it actually won't process through AISR and whatever back end is to get through to, like, SkyVector or wherever it goes from there.

Q. Gotcha.

A. I just don't.

MR. BOUSU: Perfect. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Karena.

MS. MARINAS: Okay.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. How far out from Nome do you think normally pilots are letting you know that they are getting the AFIS, or are they letting you know?

A. It varies. We have planes that fly all the way from Anchorage to Nome so they might check in over Unalakleet with the AFIS. We have airports that are 45 miles away from Nome, and they check in 30 miles from Nome with the AFIS instead of the 120 that Unalakleet is.

There's no, yeah, there's no standard.

Q. That sounds like it can be pretty far out?

A. Yeah, it can be pretty far out. It's just when they either tune into it or call Flight Service to get it.

Q. Okay. Have you been noticing if there are a lot of GBT outages at Nome recently?

A. I think we had one for a couple, 2 or 3 weeks. I don't know. It's been a couple of weeks since it was out.

Not regularly at Nome. There's always one to four GBTs, it seems, out across the state, but I haven't had a Nome outage for a while. And, then, we had one for a couple of weeks.

Q. How does that affect the operation when it's out?

A. Planes are non-radar below roughly 4,000 feet.

So if they -- and also it depends on surrounding GBTs. There's a GBT at Elim which is about 60 miles east of Nome. And so if that one's out as well then they drop off radar even sooner. We won't see them on radar for most of the stretch between Unalakleet and Nome and depending on their altitude. So it's --

Q. Where'd you say that other one was?

A. At Elim.

Q. Elim?

A. There's a GBT at Elim which is an airport that is east of Nome.

Q. Okay. What's your general -- do you have any, like, general expectations of the Bering Air flights that are going from

Unalakleet to Nome on a regular basis?

Like, you know, as a controller, I know for certain flights that go into my airports, I get to know the pilots, I get to know kind of the way they operate, what to expect from them, when to expect things, and vice versa, they kind of know that with me.

Do you kind of have those things with the Bering Air flights between Unalakleet and Nome?

A. I mean, just Bering Air flights in general, I expect them -- they're familiar with the Nome area and the airports around Nome. They know that we need them to have the AFIS or the weather. If it's not an airport with an AFIS, we'll read them the NOTAMs.

From what I can tell, they're aware of our requirements for giving them approach clearances, and they'll volunteer that information if we haven't asked for it.

They let us know when they can make something work and when they can't, if we need to turn or climb or slow them down for whatever reason, they're pretty, they will let us know when they can't do that, it seems.

I mean, we've got, I mean, they've got a mix of Caravans, Beech 1700s, King Airs and now SkyCouriers.

Some will take flights over the water or take headings out over the water for, you know, sequencing going into Nome. And some will say, hey, no, I want to stay, you know, like, I'll take holding rather than take a vector out over the water because they don't want to go out over the water so they're, it gets -- my

understanding is that they're familiar with how we operate, and they'll let us know when they can't do something that we want them, that we're asking them to do.

Q. What do you think about their general knowledge of the weather on their flights?

A. I can't speak for them.

Q. All right.

A. Yeah. I don't know what their weather briefing process is, whether they get it before they depart, or if they're getting it from Dispatch in the air.

I know there's been times where they've, you know, they'll talk -- they've got their own frequency. They might be talking to each other on that to let them know about stuff, but I can't speak to their procedures.

MS. MARINAS: All right. Thanks.

MS. KOSCHIG: Travis.

MR. ARNOLD: I don't think I have one.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. I don't have any -- well, I just got one, but I'm going to around one more time.

No. No. No.

Okay. The last question. Is there any questions you thought we were going to ask that we didn't ask?

MR. FARRENS: I didn't know what to expect coming into this so no.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Anything else you would like to add, or

ask us questions?

MR. FARRENS: Not that I can think of. No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So that means you're ready to go?

MR. FARRENS: Cool.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So let's go ahead and end the interview at 16:10 Alaska Time.

(Whereupon, at 4:10 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Michael Farrens
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 26, 2025

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.

[redacted]

Christina H. Neilson
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: BRIAN MCCLOSKEY, Relieved 13R Trainee
Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Thursday,
February 27, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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KATHLEEN BANASZAK, Representative
(On behalf of Brian McCloskey)

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:08 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. The time now is 14:08 Alaska Time. Good afternoon. I just wanted to let you know, my name is Betty Koschig. I am with the NTSB. I've been there about 16 years, and I'm a senior air traffic control investigator. And can you please state your name?

MR. McCLOSKEY: It's Brian McCloskey.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Would you please spell your last name?

MR. McCLOSKEY: M-c-C-l-o-s-k-e-y.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. As I said earlier, to repeat it, we will be audio recording this interview, and I just want to make sure you understand that. And you do, correct?

MR. McCLOSKEY: Um-hum.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So with this, we will audio record it. The only people that will have that is the NTSB, and then we will send that to the transcriptionist so that they can transcribe it. We have a contract with them. They can't release the audio. We will not release the audio. So the audio is never going to be released, but the transcription itself will. So that will go into our factual report and come out. So just to let you know that. And like I said, we will send you a copy of it, and if you've got comments, you're more than welcome to email us back, and then let us know what your comments are, and we'll put them in a footnote and make sure they're added to that transcription.

MR. McCLOSKEY: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So I see you have a representative. Is this the person you would like to represent you?

MR. McCLOSKEY: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Could you please state your name?

MR. McDONALD: Elijah McDonald.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. The representative is there for you. If you want to like the room and talk to him or they're there for your support. So if you decide there's a question that you would like to ask him during this, you can leave the room and ask him. If you want to do it here, you can, but just remember, it's going to be on audio.

MR. McCLOSKEY: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: But what you could do is do that. We'll stop the interview. Then we'll restart it when you come in. And the same for if you need to take a break. It usually lasts about an hour. So -- but if you need to take a break at any time, we'll stop the interview, and then we'll restart it. So I don't want you to think we're just hard core, just here and we're not going to let you out of the room. But any of the questions that we ask are going to be directed to you. We won't be asking your representative any questions.

MR. McCLOSKEY: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So why we're here is to gather information on the accident that occurred, the Bering Air 445, that happened on

February 6th, 2025. Are you aware or familiar with that accident?

MR. McCLOSKEY: I am, yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great. But we are the investigative group for this, the NTSB group. And far as the NTSB, one of the things we do is we invite parties to join us on these investigations so we can get some subject matter expertise. In this situation, we have the FAA and we have NATCA here to help us. Casey and I are NTSB investigators. We pretty much know all the regulations, rules and anything else that we can get our hands on, but we haven't been on the display or working the glass or anything recent, but our group members have. So they help us in that aspect. So it makes a well rounded group.

So before I go any further though, I'm going to let my group introduce themselves. Casey.

MR. OGDEN: Thanks, Betty. My name is Casey Ogden. I'm an air safety investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. My background is primarily military. I did spend some time in the FAA before transitioning over to my role here.

MR. BOUSU: I'm Trevor Bousu, operations manager at Denver Center, 19 years in the agency, 4 years as a controller and 15 in management.

MS. KOSCHIG: Karena.

MS. MARINAS: Hi. Karena Marinas, I'm an aviation safety investigator and controller at LA Center.

MR. ARNOLD: Hi. Travis Arnold, Omaha TRACON, controller,

and I'm a NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So that's us. We're going to be taking this from now until this case is closed. So we'll be going through the factual report and everything. So we're all going to be sticking together on this one. That's kind of how we do all of our investigations with our groups.

Also just a little bit about the NTSB. We're an independent agency. There's only like 400 of us total, and -- but we're not part of the DOD, DOT, FAA or anybody else. And we have no regulatory powers or enforcement powers. There's nothing we can do to anybody. But where our power lies is safety recommendations. And so everything we do revolves around safety, finding out ways to increase safety, add, you know, if we look at equipment, we look at procedures. We look at every aspect of safety. So we're going to be picking your brain on that since you've been here. You know all the issues or all the enhancements that you would like to see here, and so those are some of the things plus just find out what you know about the accident or leading up to it. So, there's little various areas that we're going to be asking you questions about. So it's just not concentrating on one thing.

MR. McCLOSKEY: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So, like I said, we can expect to be here about an hour max, usually what it is. So what we're going to do, I'm going to ask you a bunch of questions, trying to get to know you a

little bit better professionally, your history, and then we're going to start talking about the accident and everything else, anything with safety revolving the facility.

And after I finish asking questions, then we'll go around the room and everybody else will have an opportunity to talk to you and learn from you. Any questions so far?

MR. McCLOSKEY: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So the kinds of questions we'll ask, we may ask questions do you recall this. If you don't recall it, just say I don't recall. It's a great answer. If you don't know something, I don't know is a great answer. We don't want you to try to make something up or guess on something. You're more than welcome to speculate. You're more than welcome to assume -- you know, give us your opinion on something. That's fine, but we're not, you know, that's up to if you want to do that, and we would like to have your opinion different things, but the speculative part, you can do that, and if it'll help us out, that will be great.

So, and we may also ask questions that may seem like you'll probably thing, oh, you should know that. We may know or think we know the answer, but we want to hear it from you. We don't want to put words in your mouth, but we don't want to make any assumptions.

MR. McCLOSKEY: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right, Casey. I know I'm forgetting one.

MR. OGDEN: Well, have you been interviewed about this event before now?

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. McCLOSKEY: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: That's the question I'm always forgetting.

MR. OGDEN: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, no problem.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So let's get started.

INTERVIEW OF BRIAN MCCLOSKEY

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. What's your operation initials?

A. Bravo Mike.

Q. All right. And how old were you at the time of the accident?

A. 32.

Q. Okay. And when did you start working for the FAA?

A. I was hired and started the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City I believe on August 12th, 2022.

Q. 2022, August 12th. And where did you go from here?

A. Straight here. It's my first facility.

Q. It's your only facility?

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. Great. How do you like it?

A. I love it.

Q. Okay.

A. Best job in the world.
Q. Yeah, exactly. This is a great place to work.
A. It is.
Q. I forgot to say one other thing because I was typing and I remembered. You might see us typing or writing, jotting things down. We're just doing that for our own memory so that we can go back if you say something, we can ask a question about it, so that we won't just have to keep asking you the same question over and over. And, so -- but this is going nowhere. We'll destroy these. These will not be part of our documentation. So just to let you know that. Any military time?
A. I do not.
Q. Okay. Do you have any college?
A. I do, yeah.
Q. Tell me about that. What do you have?
A. University of Georgia, graduated in 2016 with a finance degree.
Q. Great.
A. And obviously didn't use that.
Q. Because now you're got the perfect job?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Exactly. So is that where UGA is?
A. Yes, yes, that's us.
Q. Good. All right. So do you have any aeronautical certificates? Like a CTO, pilot's license?

A. Oh, no, no, no.
Q. Do you have a current medical?
A. No, it's -- I said before it was invalid. I just meant temporarily disqualified until I get cleared back to work.
Q. But at the time of the accident.
A. Yes, I did have a valid medical.
Q. Yes. And, did you have any restrictions at the time of the accident?
A. No, just a regular medical.
Q. Okay. And right now, it's just temporary because you had a procedure done, but you will be back --
A. Correct.
Q. -- to working. I just want to get that. Okay. So, who's your supervisor?
A. Tony Brager.
Q. Okay. What positions are you qualified on?
A. I am certified on all six sectors, so 3, 9, 13, 4, 15 and 16 for D sides, and I am halfway through training on the just sectors 3, 9 and 13 for the R sides.
Q. Great. Sounds like you're progressing very well. Are you current on all the positions that you're certified on?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you work overtime?
A. I do not, no.
Q. Okay. What was your work schedule the week of the accident?

Like the days of the week and the hours that you worked?
A. So my RDOs are Friday, Saturday. My Sunday shift is noon to 8 and then the remaining 4 days are 8 to 4.
Q. Great schedule.
A. It is a nice schedule. I got lucky with the schedule.
Q. Yes, you did. So on the day of the accident, were you working your normal schedule?
A. Yes. Yep, 8 to 4.
Q. Okay. And what position were you working at the time of the accident?
A. The 3, 9, 13, the sectors were combined on the R side. I was training on R side.
Q. Actually, I should probably rephrase that. You weren't working at the time of the accident. You had been relieved right before the accident. Is that correct?
A. Correct, yes.
Q. Okay. Because I phrased that wrong. How long -- do you recall how long you had been on position that session for training?
A. I mean it must have been -- if -- usually the session -- I think I did three sessions that day, an hour and a half each. I would say an hour and 25 minutes. I mean basically as I got relieved, from what I heard, it happened pretty shortly after that.
Q. Yeah, it was pretty short after that. Do you recall what the

volume of traffic was? Well, while you were working, do you recall what the volume of traffic was on a scale of 1 to 5?

A. I would say a 1.5, maybe a 2.

Q. Okay. And how about complexity?

A. I would say the same.

Q. Same. Okay. Did you conduct your pre-duty weather briefing that day?

A. I did, yes.

Q. Did you file a -- I know you weren't on position, but did you file an ATSAP?

A. I did not.

Q. Okay. So when the accident occurred, where were you at that time? I know you weren't on that position?

A. I must have been doing either -- I don't remember if I did my debrief. Maybe it was like an abbreviated debrief because I probably had to go home at 3:30 because I flexed in and -- I don't exactly recall. Maybe my trainer probably just kept it short. He said we'll kind of regroup when I see you next week.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah, because I only, I only found out about the accident when I came back to work on Sunday. And when I sat down to do my first session just on D side, and I was giving a position relief briefing, the R side, as I go by the way, there was an ALNOT for this aircraft, and when I looked at it, it had my handwriting on the script obviously --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- and I was like, oh, crap. Like I remember that guy. What

happened? And they're like, well, we don't really know. We know the plane went down and it's pretty much all we know.
Q. Oh, wow. That had to feel really --
A. Yeah, I was shocked to see that. So.
Q. Yeah. So let's talk a little bit more about that because you had talked to the pilot, correct?
A. Um-hum.
Q. So -- and I know it's not always easy to, you know, deal with an accident, but if you could give us -- even just when you spoke to him, while you spoke to him, it can impact different people in different ways. But I would like to get your -- tell us, during that session, when you started talking to him, anything leading up that pilot, also anything about the weather, anything that was going on in the area, other airplanes that you can recall, anything you can recall about that part of the session.
A. I mean we had a frequency on the ground at Unalakleet. So he calls me to request a clearance. It was a normal IFR clearance, gave him the clearance. "X" amount of minutes later, he departs, checks on, I radio contact him. A few more minutes later he leveled off at I believe 8,000. It might have been 10,000. I don't remember the exactly clearance. I gave him a pilot's discretion to 6,000, issued no mile altimeter, and then just said report your descent on 133.3 which is the known frequency, and advised Kilo, and that was the last time I ever talked to him.
Q. Okay.

A. And then obviously I was relieved a couple minutes later, and that's it.
Q. Yep. So, could you tell us a little bit about the position relief brief, what you passed down, anything that you can recall in that?
A. I mean you start with the outages. We have quite a long list at Anchorage Center. I don't recall every outage of that day. There's nothing I would describe as significant that was out. Yeah, the only thing that really stuck out was PIREPs. I remember giving Ben a PIREP out of Hooper Bay, there was trace rime icing, and I don't recall the altitude, gave him a PIREP out of Unalakleet. There was trace rime icing at 9,000, and then just bases and tops out of Nome.
Q. Okay.
A. There wasn't anything special. There wasn't any military going on. It was just a pretty regular -- a regular session.
Q. Yep. Do you recall anything about any other airplanes that were flying around in that area, not in Unalakleet, but in the Nome area at that point?
A. I don't recall specifically. It's all Bering Airs.
Q. Yeah.
A. The numbers all kind of run together.
Q. Yeah.
A. So nothing really sticks out to me.
Q. Okay. All right. I'm going to let Casey ask some questions.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, sure.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. So, how do you determine PIREPs are needed?

A. The requirement is a ceiling below 5,000 feet. So broken or overcast layer, and then a visibility less than 5, and those are the requirements.

Q. Okay. Understood.

A. There's other things, volcanic ash, but just the basic is 5 by 5.

Q. Right. Okay. During your session, so it looks like you were on for -- looking at the position logs for about 2 hours. It looks like you maybe had an eval of some type. Can you tell me about that? Let me look at the position log here. Maybe I'm misreading it, but --

A. I did an eval?

Q. It says training development certification or evaluation and this is the day of the event. So is it just coded incorrectly?

A. Yeah, I'm not sure what that even means.

Q. Okay. No problem. So, during that session that you were on, leading up to the position relief before the event, had anyone given you any input on PIREP solicitation or dissemination, whether it be your trainer or the operational supervisor?

A. I don't recall specifically me, but I know it's -- I mean it's stressed in the area all the time.

Q. I see. So anything throughout that session that you recall?

A. Not specifically, no.
Q. Okay. That trainer that you were working with, is that your primary trainer?
A. He's on my training team. Yeah, I would say he's the primary one, but he is on the training team.
Q. I see. So you work with him often?
A. I do, yeah.
Q. Okay. Did they provide any feedback after that training session that you recall? I heard you mention that it was likely quick.
A. I don't really recall. Probably the reason I don't recall is because it was so brief and it wasn't a lot going on --
Q. Right.
A. -- that stuck out that I screwed up or anything like that.
Q. I see.
A. So.
Q. Okay. What is a normal training debrief like, something that's not abbreviated on a day like that?
A. I mean it's really dependent on the trainee, right. If you don't mess anything up, there's not really much to debrief on. It's more highlights.
Q. Sure.
A. Yeah, I mean obviously they're there to make sure you don't do anything unsafe or if you do something that is still safe that's maybe not efficient or like that's not how they would have

done it, they kind of try to pick your brain, not like give you the answer. You need to learn the job on your own, but they're just trying to feel out your habits so to speak of what you would do.

Q. Gotcha. Okay. So talking about that session again prior to the position relief brief, you were asked about PIREPs, and you had mentioned some PIREPs, a PIREP at Hooper Bay, a PIREP out of Unalakleet, and then base and tops out of Nome. Can you give me some more information on those PIREPs? When they were, what they were related to, any extra information you can provide on any of those.

A. Say that question again.

Q. Can you give me more information on the three PIREPs you had mentioned during the position relief brief because you had mentioned a PIREP out of Hooper Bay and a PIREP out of Unalakleet and then you had mentioned base and tops out of Nome.

A. Yeah. I mean I just had aircraft either land at those airports or depart out of those airports. We look at the weather and see if a PIREP is required and just ask -- say flight conditions.

Q. Okay. So --

A. I can't -- I don't recall the exact times of the PIREPs or when I wrote them down.

Q. So in that session, just before the accident occurred, you had recorded a PIREP for Nome and a PIREP for Unalakleet?

A. I would say correct. Again, I don't recall the exact times, but yes.
Q. Okay. I'm going to say some aircraft call signs. You let me know if any of these sound familiar. Bering Air 920.
A. Do you know where he was going?
Q. He was going to Nome.
A. I mean they're all going to sound kind of --
Q. Sure.
A. -- familiar.
Q. Okay. I guess just in reference to that PIREP is why I'm asking. Ryan Air 40, Bering Air 1082.
A. Yeah. Those sound familiar, the Ryan Air 1082.
Q. Bering Air 1082, Ryan Air 40. Okay. And those PIREPs you're mentioning, you filled out a physical PIREP sheet. Did you provide that to the OS?
Q. I did, yeah.
A. Okay. That's all the questions I have for now.
MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. When you had taken the position, when you and the trainer got on, what PIREPs were at the sector? Do you remember?
A. I don't recall.
Q. Okay. Don't remember if there was a stack of them or anything like that?
A. I'm sure there was. It wasn't a great day weather-wise, but

I don't recall the number or where they were from.
Q. Okay. Did you guys -- I know Casey kind of talked on this a little bit. You said the debrief was pretty quick. Did you guys ever go back and kind of re -- kind of go over it, like take a little bit more time for it at all or was that just kind of because there wasn't anything there at that time?
A. Yeah, I would just say there's nothing really there, and then obviously like when I respoke with Mike the first time that week, we talked about the accident that happened. It kind of --
Q. Okay.
A. -- that kind of took precedent over the debrief.
Q. Gotcha.
A. He was just making sure like am I okay, do you remember that guy. So.
Q. Did your trainer ever talk to the -- was there a CIC or OS at the time?
A. In reference to --
Q. During your session, like when you were training, was there a CIC or OS on the desk do you remember? When I say OS, a supervisor.
A. I believe so.
Q. Do you remember which one, a CIC or a sup?
A. I don't recall.
Q. Okay. Did your trainer ever talk to whoever was on the desk to try to get you guys out earlier to do a debrief at all or --

A. No, I don't think so.
Q. Okay. I don't have anything else as of right now. Thank you.
BY MS. MARINAS:
Q. What do you recall the weather being like because you were working the dayshift that day, right. So what had the weather been like throughout most of the day?
A. I would say low-ish to marginal to IFR. Definitely PIREP situations. Yeah, not terrible but not great either. Kind of in the middle.
Q. Have you guys had any training or briefings on PIREP solicitation and dissemination in the last few months?
A. I mean it's stressed at, you know, we crew brief meetings. I mean it's stressed, you know, as you're like live training, right. If you needed to get a PIREP and somebody departs, it's like, hey, what's the weather at ABC airport? Obviously like, ah, I need to get a PIREP. You know, certain supervisors will walk around, hey, PIREPs, everybody get their PIREPs. So, I mean it's stressed at Anchorage Center.
Q. What do you expect to see on the scope when the NEXRAD is out?
A. You're not going to see any depicted weather.
Q. How often is NEXRAD out would you say?
A. I would say infrequently. It's -- we usually have it.
Q. What's your typical interactions with Nome Flight Service?

When would you typically talk to them?
A. Any arrivals we need to do, departures that we need to do. It's pretty -- it's obviously our busy -- I'd say our busiest airport or one of the busiest airports. So it's pretty frequent we're talking to them.
Q. Do you ever share weather information with them or do they with you?
A. Yeah. Well, we'll ask them to -- or ask an aircraft to forward a PIREP to Nome radio. That way they can give it to guys on the way out. It's -- there's I would say pretty good two-way communication with Nome when it comes to weather and PIREPs. They're probably our best Flight Service when it comes to things like that. They're pretty on top of it.
Q. How do you feel about -- when you get your weather debriefs and you learn about the forecast for the day, how easy was that? How do you -- how easy is it to remember?
A. So, there's a pretty big time gap from when they actually, you know, put the briefings together and everyone say it and then what's actually going on which obviously I'm going to look at the weather while I'm on -- I'm not going to try to remember something from 10 hours ago. It can change pretty rapidly, but I would say it gives a decent idea of the day, but it's not -- I'm not taking it to heart what the pre-brief says from 10 hours ago.
Q. Yeah. That's all I have. Thanks.
BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. Just a couple questions. Do you remember -- maybe you've answered this question. Do you remember if NEXRAD was out while you were on position?
A. I don't recall.
Q. Okay. A follow on to that, do you recall what the weather was like?
A. I couldn't give you an exact spot.
Q. And so I missed it if they asked it. Did you review the replay before talking to us?
A. So I -- not -- I wouldn't say like in an official capacity.
Q. Sure.
A. We had it played down in the lab, and I just watched it for maybe 10 seconds.
Q. Okay. We, as in who?
A. It was me and then one of the -- not like an OJTI trainer like on the floor. Jay, like one that works in the lab. He was just kind of like, hey, I don't know if you've seen this before, but like this is what it looked like, and the descent rate was, you know, 5,000 feet a minute or something like that.
Q. Sure.
A. So.
Q. Okay. Can we fast forward now -- or I'm sorry, go back to your debrief. You said it was abridged. I know your memory might be a little fuzzy. There was a lot happening. Your debrief, do you remember where the debrief may have taken place?

A. Yeah, it takes behind -- right behind the sup desk.
Q. Okay. A pretty close to the area?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Do you recall if a sup was interacting with you and maybe your OJTI during that debrief?
A. The only time a sup would -- I don't want to say the word interfere, but the only way they would say something is if you need to go home, and they're just reminding the trainer, hey, he goes home in 3 minutes like --
Q. Sure.
A. -- we can wrap it up or we can just -- or you could pick up next time he comes in.
Q. Okay.
A. But I don't recall that happening specifically.
Q. To the best of your memory, it was just you and your OJTI?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. You may have said it again. So I apologize. Were you in the debrief when the incident as we know, an accident occurred?
A. I don't recall exactly. I would, I would guess no because if it happened and I was still there, like we would have overheard that. I'm guess I would have overheard, hey, something's terribly wrong with the aircraft and it just descended 5,000 feet a minute, but I do not recall that. It was just when I came back to work on Sunday, it was a huge shock to me what had happened, because nobody told me anything.

Q. Okay. Speaking about PIREPs, PIREP solicitation. When you take a pre-duty weather brief, we've already discussed how they're very -- generally very old, maybe outdated in your mind. If you see something in the pre-duty weather brief, do you feel triggered to solicit PIREPs for forecasted areas? Is that something that you think about?
A. Like I was saying before, it's more like you're just getting like a general idea like, all right, is it a good weather day, not a great weather day.
Q. Sure.
A. Is there icing some places? But, it's old but obviously you have that in your mind like, okay, this might not be a good day, but you're checking the weather at the airports anyway. It's not like --
Q. Sure.
A. -- it's not a surprise that it's bad weather somewhere.
Q. Is there a mechanism, a tool that help you -- helps remind you that maybe you may need to solicit PIREPs for forecasted areas specifically -- I don't want to focus, not necessarily maybe in the arrival or departure phase, but maybe en route, specifically -- what I'll call low level enroute?
A. I would say like half the time the pilots will just tell us, they'll say, hey, I'm in the tops here. I'm getting a little icing or whatever they say, and they'll request something. Other times you can kind of infer, and they're like, hey, do you mind if

I get a block altitude. Okay. Are you getting any icing or turbulence or are you just in the tops.

Q. Sure.

A. It's kind of a back and forth.

Q. So you would say that a lot of that is you're being prompted by requests from the pilot generally speaking.

A. Yeah, I would say it's 50/50 or something cluing you in that it could be weather related.

Q. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Sorry. I meant to ask you earlier if you got to hear the replay. Thank you, there.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. But would you be interested in listening to the replay, the audio and everything?

A. Like from --

Q. From the time you were talking all the way through to the end?

A. I listened -- I did listen to just me talking and then I think I listened to like a minute or 2, but I would be interested.

Q. I think they should be able to let you listen to that. I think you should. I mean it's something you should listen to. So, but I think you're -- when you go in with the FAA, I'll let them know that you would like to listen to that. Perhaps they'll play it there or either someone will let you listen to that. I think it's a good thing for you to do that. I know it's not

always something that people want to listen to, when you're involved with it, but it's something, you know, to learn from. Anyway, I do have -- let's see. I've got some other questions but I'm going to hold off on those and I'll let Casey go.

MR. OGDEN: Sure.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. So this next question, it'll have a couple different scenarios. I just want you know when you would typically get a PIREP in these given situations. You have an aircraft, they're going to -- we'll say Nome, is a great example. PIREPs are required at Nome. They have reached the multiple areas where it was required. When would you get a PIREP? How would you do that? What does that technique look like for you?

A. So let's say if somebody departs, obviously they check on. Radar contact, you pull up the weather. It let's us use the first guy out during the day or in an hour or 2, it's the first guy out, pull up the weather. Okay. I need a PIREP, I'll say flight conditions. Same thing if it was in the reverse. If somebody's coming into Nome, nobody's been in there in a while. You can't really tell them you don't have any pertinent information to tell them. Just say, hey, when you land, forward a PIREP to Nome radio. So we're just trying to get info on the way, info on the way in, keep everybody in the loop.

Q. Understood. So if they pass those flight conditions to Nome, how would you know what those conditions were at that point?

A. I mean you could call -- you can call and ask NOAA, or just say, hey, I mean relay what they told you. Kind of, it's just on the way out, you could just reask them even though, even though he might have got it. You can reask them just in case 30, 40 minutes down the line another person -- another aircraft comes in. You're just trying not to keep -- you're just trying not to create like a gap in the information.

Q. I see. Okay. The weather you encountered that day throughout your rotations, is that usual, unusual?

A. I would say pretty usual. Marginal conditions are pretty marginal or pretty frequent in Alaska

Q. Makes sense. General estimate, 25 percent of the time, 50 percent of the time, 75 percent of the time. How often do you recall icing forecasts

A. Like you're saying how often do icing forecasts occur?

Q. Um-hum. For the areas that you're responsible for.

A. I would say like a third of the time.

Q. Okay. I see. What a flight is the first one to fly into an area in a while, does something prompt you to request a PIREP from them?

A. Yeah, you're just pulling up the weather for the airport.

Q. I see. Okay. And then more so talking about that session, did you receive any PIREPs from any other sectors? Did anyone come up and give you any additional PIREP information?

A. No.

Q. Okay.
A. The only time you receive a PIREP from another sector is if the area that the weather occurred. Let's say that's your sector, this is my sector and it occurred like right there, right, you should tell the other sector because it's kind of in their area as well.
Q. I see. So if you were going to be potentially affected by a PIREP, they would pass that?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Gotcha. Can you tell me about what weather resources you use to help you perform your ATC functions?
A. What do you mean by weather resources?
Q. It could be looking up a METAR. It could be looking at TAF. It could be looking at a weather display in the area. What do you personally use to build your weather awareness?
A. I'm looking at the METAR probably 95 percent of the time. I mean every now and again, I'll pull up like the actual weather cams from the airport just to get a better idea of like what that looks like. It's more -- the only time I've really ever done that is for training purposes and my trainer will say like this is what this actually looks like, what they're flying into. It's mainly the METAR.
Q. Okay. To you, what's a significant PIREP?
A. I mean severe, severe icing, yeah, moderate to severe icing, turbulence, volcanic ash. I don't remember anything other than

that.
Q. Yeah, that's great. No, that's good. If you need weather support while you're on position, how would you get that?
A. What do you mean weather support?
Q. Say, for example, I keep bring up Nome. It's just an easy one in my mind but, hey, I'd like to know more about the weather over in Nome. How would you get that?
A. I'd probably just ask my supervisor and see if he can figure out --
Q. Perfect.
A. -- what I can get.
Q. Yep. Okay. All right. And then kind of another one. Can you step me through any of the most recent weather training you received in the past year, anything that stood out to you?
A. I mean I would say like the weather training, it's not like a one, it's not like a one time thing. It's continuous when you're training. Like I said, when you have the requirements, you get PIREPs. We try to paint the best picture for the pilots that we can. Also PIREPs and when to get them have been stressed since like day 1 of the Academy. Like even before coming here and plugging in, I have an idea of what a PIREP is and why we need them.
Q. Okay. Last question from me. Money is no object. You can have whatever you would like for the facility. What equipment would you like to see whether it be weather related equipment,

just general equipment, staffing, anything, anything come to mind?
A. I mean more staffing, a raise and if the GBTs could work at all of our airports, that would be nice.
Q. Okay. You're not the first one to say that.
A. Okay.
Q. So, that's good information. Okay. I think that's all the questions for me.
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. Just two quick follow-up ones. When you working in your training session, did you guys have a D side at all?
A. Yes. I do not recall who it was.
Q. Okay. And then you had mentioned to Casey that when you get a PIREP from an adjacent sector, they're either calling you or you're calling them. What are you doing with that information when they call you? Let's say they call you with the PIREP. What are you doing with that information they give you?
A. Writing it down verbatim.
Q. On an official PIREP form or how does that information get passed?
A. Yeah, on an official form.
Q. On an official form. Okay. That's all I had. Thank you.
BY MS. MARINAS:
Q. Do you have any way to see PIREPs that have been entered into the system already?
A. There is a way. I do not remember how to do it.

Q. Okay.
A. But there -- I don't remember the specific website. It's on a little bit of a delay, like a 15, 20 minute delay. I have been shown it before but I do not remember the website.
Q. That's -- and it's access?
A. It's on our, it's on our monitor.
Q. AAID?
A. The AAID, yeah. I don't remember the website.
Q. Okay. So you -- so if, you know, you ask the pilot which I totally agree is a good practice because they're on approach to give the -- give a PIREP to Flight Service, unless Flight Service calls you and relays that to you, you don't really have easy access to it except for looking it up on the AAID, right?
A. Sure, correct.
Q. Actually a follow up to that. So do -- does Flight Service call you ever with those PIREPs? I know you only have a --
A. Maybe like once or twice, but we're just re-getting it from the pilot as well. Like we want to make sure they get it before they even depart. We want to have Flight Service basically tell them what they're about to potentially encounter, and then when they check on, we want that information again. So just a constant flow of information.
Q. Right. But for the ones on the approaches, after they land, they give their PIREP to Flight Service like you've asked them. Does Flight Service ever call you back and give you that feedback?

A. I'm sure it's happened once or twice. I can't remember an exact time that they've done that.
Q. Okay. That's all.
MR. ARNOLD: I don't have any questions.
MS. KOSCHIG: I have -- well, I've got a couple. I'm going to save those until last.
MR. OGDEN: I'll awkwardly jump in if anything comes up. I think I'm good.
MR. BOUSU: I'm good.
MS. KOSCHIG: Good.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. So a couple of questions I have. First of all, do you have anything you'd like to add to any of the questions that we asked?
A. No.
Q. And the last question is, is there anything we didn't ask you that you thought we were going to ask you?
A. No, I knew that most of it was going to focus on PIREPs and weather. So --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- nothing I didn't expect.
Q. Oh, okay. Great. So we do appreciate you coming in here, and it's been great to talk to you about this. So, yeah, your time is very valuable to us, and the information you provided is great.
A. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: So we're going to ahead and stop the interview right now. The time now is 1456.

(Whereupon, at 2:56 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Brian McCloskey
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 27, 2025

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.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: DANIEL WATTS, Operations Manager
Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,
February 26, 2025

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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National Air Traffic Controllers Association

KATHLEEN BANASZAK, Representative
(On behalf of Daniel Watts)

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:08 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. The time now is 11:08 Alaska Time. Good morning again. My name is Betty Koschig. I'm a senior air traffic control investigator at the NTSB. I've been there for about 16 years, and before that, I had military time as a controller. What is your name?

MR. WATTS: First name is Daniel, standard spelling, middle initial J, last name Watts, W-a-t-t-s.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And so before we get started with the interview process, I just wanted to verify that you are aware that this is being audio recorded?

MR. WATTS: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So what we will do, we will make a -- we will have the audio sent out to have a transcription made, and we have a company that does this and we have an agreement with them. They will not share that audio with anyone. We do not share the audio with anyone. I'm the only one that's going to have that audio, or the NTSB will have the audio, but it will not be put in any public release. We do not release the audio.

MR. WATTS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So that you know that.

MR. WATTS: All right.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And if you did say you would like to have a copy of it, we'll make sure you'll get a copy.

MR. WATTS: I would, yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Of the transcription. So I do see that you have a representative with you. Is this the person you would like to have?

MR. WATTS: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Would you please state your name please?

MS. BANASZAK: Katie Banaszak, Office of the Chief Counsel at the FAA.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Thank you. So why we're here today is to conduct an air traffic control investigation of the fatal accident of Bering Air 445 that occurred on February 6th, 2025.

So we go out on investigations. What we do is we also invite parties to our group, and in this setting, we have subject matter experts from the FAA and from NATCA. And this is our NTSB group for this, and we will be going through this process all the way through the end until it's published.

So I will let everyone introduce themselves. I'll start out with my colleague.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah. Thanks, Betty. Casey Ogden. My background is primarily military. I spent about 8 years in the Air Force, transitioned over to the FAA, did some short time before transitioning my role as an aviation safety investigator with the Board.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.

MR. BOUSU: Good morning. My name is Trevor Bousu. I'm

operations manager at Denver Center, 19 years in the agency, 4 years as a controller and 15 in management.

MR. WATTS: Hey.

MS. MARINAS: Karena Marinas, I'm a controller at LA Center and NATCA air safety investigator.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold, Omaha TRACON, controller, and I'm a NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So that's our group.

MR. WATTS: All right.

MS. KOSCHIG: So a little bit about us first as the NTSB. We're an independent agency. We responsible for determining probable causes of accidents and promoting transportation safety. We are not part of the DOD, the DOT, the FAA or anyone else. We do not have any regulatory authority at all. I guess the major product that we provide are safety recommendations, and those are what really are our meat and potatoes so to say. Those are the things that we will recommend to agencies, groups, organizations, whatever it is that needs safety enhancements.

So we look at safety issues on all different aspects from procedures to equipment to everything, anything related to ATC. So that's why we bounce around on different types of questions.

MR. WATTS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So, but what we're here to do, our main focus is to gather the facts. We want to learn as much as we can about what happened with the accident from an air traffic

control stance, and we also want to learn more about the management and how things operate and what you make available to the controllers and all that sort of thing. So it helps us to understand the process all the way down.

All right. So, I think that -- let's see. So, how we're going to do this, what to expect today, normally these only last about an hour. I'm not expecting any more than, but sometimes I'll rattle along, but just for your expectation.

So we're going to start out -- what I'm going to do is start out asking a little bit about you, your history with air traffic, and what you do here. And, then we're going to see what you know about the incident, if you were involved, any of that, and what evolved around that. And, so I will start out with all the questions, and then we will go around the room, each one of us filling in holes and finding, you know, things that we, you know, so we can make sure we have the full story. Like our said, our SMEs really help us to fill in --

MR. WATTS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- information. You might see us jotting down stuff or typing. We're taking notes just so that we can -- if we have a question, we can go back to review it. But these notes that we take, we will destroy. They are going nowhere. The transcript that we get off the audio is going to be what we use in our docket which will go out to the public just so you know that.

So how we form our questions sometimes, we may ask questions

that you'll probably think, well, you should know that answer. We just don't want to put answers in your mouth. So if it sounds like, oh, that's a common sense question, it's because we don't want to answer for you. We want you to give us the answer.

If it's something you don't know, you don't know it. If there's something that we're asking you to recall, and you don't recall it --

MR. WATTS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- that's a perfect answer. So that's the basic structure of what we're going to do today. Do you have any questions about any of that?

MR. WATTS: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Oh, if you do need to take a break, just let us know.

MR. WATTS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: And, we can stop the interview and then restart it. It's no problem.

MR. WATTS: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF DANIEL WATTS

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So let's start out with what are your operating initials?

A. Delta Whiskey.

Q. And what was your age at the time of the accident? You're thinking that one.

A. 52.

Q. Okay. And what is your job title here?
A. Operations manager.
Q. When did you start working for the FAA?
A. September 14th, 1997.
Q. And was that the Academy?
A. No, that was in Sioux Falls Tower And Approach.
Q. And where did you go from there?
A. Worked in Sioux Falls for a couple years as a CPC or FPL and then transferred to Fairbanks Tower and Approach.
Q. How long were you there?
A. I knew you were going to ask me that. It was like 1999 to '03 I believe.
Q. Okay. And then where did you go?
A. I transferred here as a controller.
Q. Okay. And how long were you here as a controller?
A. I've been here since '03, '04, somewhere in there.
Q. Oh.
A. Yeah,
Q. So you've been --
A. I've been here ever since then.
Q. Oh, okay. So when did you become -- so you were a controller. Did you go to OS and then to OM or --
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Do you recall when you became an OS?
A. So I was a controller from 1997 to 2007.

Q. Okay.
A. And I became an ops supervisor in '07 until October of 2013.
Q. Okay.
A. I've been an operations manager since October 2013 to present day.
Q. Okay.
A. In that timeframe, I was the ATSAP ERC en route management rep from October of 2017 until April of 2020 for the Western Service Area north. I was a collaboration facilitator from January of 2021 until February of 2023 for the Western Service Area north.
Q. Okay.
A. And I was the air traffic manager at Anchorage TRACON on a temporary detail from April of 2023 until September of '23.
Q. So how did you like that temp ATM job?
A. It was fun, yeah. I enjoyed it.
Q. Oh, good. So do you have any military time?
A. I do not.
Q. Okay. So you started off in Sioux Falls. How were you hired? What program?
A. I went to the Air Traffic College Initiative Program at University of Alaska - Anchorage.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. And was a direct hire.
Q. Um-hum. All right. Did you attend -- you went there. So

did you get a degree?
A. I did. I got an associate's of air traffic control.
Q. All right. And do you have any aeronautical certificates?
A. I'm not a certificated pilot.
Q. Okay. And you don't have a CTO, correct?
A. I do have a CTO.
Q. Oh, you do.
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Do you have a current medical?
A. I do not.
Q. Okay. And you're not required to have it, are you?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Who's your supervisor?
A. Neale Sheneman.
Q. Could you spell that last name?
A. S-h-e-n-e-m-a-n, and Neale is spelled N-e-a-l-e. It has an E on the end.
Q. Oh, okay. So when you were here as a CPC, were you qualified on -- what areas were you qualified on?
A. I've been area rated in the south area as a controller, south area as operations supervisor, north area as an operations supervisor. Yeah, that's it.
Q. Okay. Great. Do you work overtime?
A. I'm not paid overtime. I work credit in comp. Yeah. So I work beyond the 8 hour shift, yes.

Q. So what's your normal schedule?
A. Monday through Friday, and there's Saturday, Sunday RDOs. So I work Monday through Friday. Typically I work dayshifts, but due to our staffing, I'm currently suffering through three swings followed by 2 days.
Q. For everything, okay. Were you doing swing shift the week of the accident?
A. I was.
Q. Okay. So what --
A. I was on a dayshift that day though, 9 to 5.
Q. Okay. So that was your normal --
A. My normally assigned shift, yes.
Q. And you were working the OM position at the time?
A. I was not.
Q. Oh, where were you working?
A. I was on administrative duties outside of the control room.
Q. Ah. Okay. Had you worked on the OM position that day?
A. I did.
Q. Do you recall what hours?
A. Zulu time would 1755 Zulu to 2259 Zulu.
Q. Okay. So you had only been off like an hour or so before --
A. Well, we have two positions. We have OM and then OM2. I was out of the control room for approximately 30 minutes at time 0030 Zulu. So that would have been Zulu date of February 7th.
Q. Um-hum.

A. I was signed back onto the OM2 position.
Q. Okay. That was like 10 minutes after the accident happened.
A. It was, yeah. So I was out of the control room looking at this what appears to be 1 hour and 30 minutes roughly.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. That's great to know. So were you on position the rest of the shift after that?
A. I ended up being here beyond the end of my shift, yes.
Q. Okay. Do you recall how long after?
A. I don't recall the time that I signed out that day, but I was signed off of the OM2 position at 0305 Zulu.
Q. Okay. So when you go on position, are you required to do the pre-duty weather briefing?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Did you do it for that day?
A. Yes, I -- we always do the pre-duty weather briefing.
Q. Okay.
A. It's different than what the controllers do, but yes.
Q. Okay. So do you get -- do you do a briefing with the CWSU individually or as an OM, would you --
A. No, it's from the other OM that you're relieving.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. Yeah. It's on our checklist.
Q. Oh, okay. I'm just looking through some of these, what I

need to ask. So, like I said, I might ask questions that seem a little dumb.

A. Sure.

Q. Were you given the opportunity to review the audio and the replay?

A. I was.

Q. Okay. And when was the first time you saw it?

A. The --

Q. The replay?

A. The actual radar replay?

Q. Right.

A. It was later that same day. No, I take that back. It was the following morning. So I watched the actual radar replay. I listened to the audio the day of the event. I watched the replay the next day.

Q. Okay. And how were you informed that the accident had happened?

A. So like I said, I was outside of the control room. I came back in to notify the OM that was on duty that I was going to take 2 hours of leave.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. He had a look on his face. I said what is going on? And he informed me that they had lost radar and radio on an aircraft east of Nome at which point I basically took over.

Q. Okay. Did you walk down through the area?

A. I did.
Q. Okay.
A. Just for a moment.
Q. Okay.
A. I walked into the area to see if the data block was still displayed on the screen.
Q. Okay. So, I'm kind of done with all the admin questions. I'd really like to find out more, like we were just talking about. So after you walked down and -- just to see if the data block was still there, so what did you do after that?
A. Came back to the watch desk. I asked the OM if he had put an ALNOT out. He said they were working on it, and that they hadn't reached the 30 minutes window.
Q. Um-hum.
A. I walked over to Flight Data, I said put the ALNOT out now for Bering Air 445. I came back to the watch desk and had a conversation with Chad and started the -- we have a checklist for an aircraft accident. So I started that.
Q. Okay. Do you recall if the controller -- does the -- the OS, there was an OS on duty that day as well, correct, for that area?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. Would the OS be the one -- like I said, I'm going to ask you questions that may seem a little dumb.
A. Sure.
Q. But would the OS be the one to relieve or have that

controller relieved?
A. That would be one of the duties the OS would do, correct.
Q. And would the OS be the one also to -- would they be the one to make the determination if drug testing needed to be done?
A. No, supervisors don't make that determination.
Q. Okay. Who makes that determination?
A. The air traffic manager.
Q. Okay. That's what I wanted to know.
A. Okay.
Q. I know I've got a lot more questions but I do want to let my colleagues -- I don't want to just keep asking. I would like to give them a chance to ask you some questions.
MS. KOSCHIG: So, Casey.
MR. OGDEN: Yeah.
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. So general OM stuff. Can you tell me how you maintain awareness through a rotation?
A. Well, when we first come on shift, basically you're taking a look around and you're checking the ARC. You're looking at web schedules, seeing how many people are here, see what's going on with TMU, if they're slow, things like that. Military missions, just get a general awareness of what's going on. Then we go through the, you know, you have a conversation with the OM that you're relieving, and then we start the recorded PRB and we go through the checklist, check each item off and so on.

Q. So, and forgive me. I've never worked in a center.
A. Okay.
Q. But as an OM, are you monitoring frequencies? Are you going to sectors? How does that work?
A. Not normally monitoring frequencies. We do have a display, a radar display right behind us that we can move around throughout the airspace, right, and look at different things.
Q. Um-hum.
A. But not normally monitoring the frequencies, you know.
Q. I see. So looking at this event, there appears to be about a 2 hour gap of PIREPs around Nome. Do you recall if there was input given to the north area OS or anyone in that sector to get more PIREPs?
A. Two hour window before or after?
Q. Two hours within -- we'll go an hour before -- two hours before would be most pertinent?
A. I don't recall. I mean I was out of the control room for a portion of that. So.
Q. Right. But before you stepped out, no input that you recall?
A. Not that I recall.
Q. Okay. Can you talk to me about your technique for getting PIREPs. How do you check to see that PIREPs are needed? How would you get them if you did need them? Just walk me through that process.
A. So we have -- there's multiple ways, right. So CWSU can put

out a product to CWA or SIGMET or anything like that. If those are out, obviously those are disseminated to the area via the supervisor, and then the supervisor gives those to the sectors. They also have a tool, the PSAT rule, PIREP situational awareness tool that we can -- that we have at the OMIC desk, and we can quickly look and see. It filters -- it's a product in production right now. So it filters based on the weather currently at the field, not forecasted. So we had to be kind of careful there. So you have that, and it'll also color code like how old the last PIREP was. So we utilize that. Obviously if I look up the weather for -- pick an airport, right. If it's below 5,000, all right, that is an indicator, too. Supervisors have the same tools available. They're monitoring the frequencies. They're more down in the weeds if you will. For an OM, to that, that's kind of way down in there, but we're kind of giving that 10,000 foot look of, hey, we need to, you know, solicit PIREPs out here for wide conditions in the ocean or over the Alaska Panhandle, areas of Nome, typical mechanical turbulence areas.

Q. Gotcha.

A. Flat ocean, mountains coming right out of the ocean. So that's kind of what we're doing at the OM desk.

Q. Absolutely. Looking more to that day, the NEXRAD that was out during the time of the accident, is that out frequently, infrequently? How does that typically work here?

A. I wouldn't say that they're out frequently. So Alaska is

kind of a unique area, right. So some of the sites are more remote, and the weather at those sites may not allow technicians to travel. So we will get odd requests, not saying that in this instance, it was an odd request for knowing NEXRAD to be out, but any of our equipment, frequencies, radar sites. As you're aware, Alaska is pretty mountainous, right. So they'll put the radar literally on top of a mountain, and those top cams will get weathered in. They can't get up there, whatever. NEXRAD, the same way. They'll put it on high country, and that area may be weathered in. So it wasn't really out of the ordinary for Nome's NEXRAD in this case to be out.

Q. Okay. And who -- it's my understanding that NEXRAD was out for maintenance of some type. Who would be the approval authority to release that radar to maintenance.

A. The OM.

Q. Okay. Understood.

A. So the way that works is, yes, the OM releases it but we coordinate with the area. So I call the supervisor, you know, some time prior to that, usually an hour or two prior, maintenance request for Nome NEXRAD from 2100 to 0200. Are you good with that? Yep, we're good. And then I'll release it to maintenance and track it.

Q. Right. Gotcha. Okay. So speaking about the event itself, you've had some time to review. I understand you watched the replay.

A. Um-hum.
Q. Somewhat recently. Do you recall the details of it?
A. Yeah. Yes and no.
Q. Does anything stand out to you from watching that replay?
A. No. I mean the last, the last hits on it, right, he's in a -- the aircraft appears to be in a left spiral going down at a pretty fast rate. Yeah, that's about all I really recall about it.
Q. As the OM, would there be any suggestions you would have to control staff reference, the entire sequence of events from the time it departed to the mishap time, whether it be PIREPs, dissemination, solicitation, anything?
A. Hindsight is always 20/20.
Q. Right.
A. But you cannot predict when these things are going to happen. We hope to be proactive and ahead of things, and as air traffic controllers, we try to be proactive, right, but -- so my opinion on that would be somewhat slanted, right, I think at this point in hindsight.
Q. Right.
A. At that day during that event --
Q. Okay.
A. -- it was a normal routine flight from Unalakleet to Nome.
Q. Understood. Just one more question in that area. There was a -- say the pilot was given an option, right. There had been a

notification of runway 10 and 2-8 was closed. The controller offered you can slow down. I would imagine the other option would be hold. Is that technique trained on the floor? Is it in the training room? How does that technique come about?

A. As far as?

Q. The suggestion to slow down versus hold or any other instruction.

A. I think that's controller judgment prerogative. There will be times where I'm communicating with the pilot, and I'm going to tell him. The runway's closed right now for snow removal. Here are some options or in this case, what the controller told him. But that didn't seem out of the ordinary. Was the phraseology per the book? No. But he's also clearly communicating what's going on at the airport. So.

Q. Understood. Okay. Well, I'm going to pass it along. I appreciate it, Dan. Thank you.

A. Right.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. Thanks, Daniel.

A. Yep.

Q. The area configuration --

A. You can call me Dan or DW. That's fine.

Q. Okay, Daniel. All right. Thanks, Dan. The resource management, area configuration of the area at the time of the

accident, was it your expectations for that time of day, time of year?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Was there anything that you would have, I guess in hindsight, like to have seen with that configuration or --
A. That's kind of getting into the -- I'm old school.
Q. Yeah.
A. And that's a large area to be watching. So, I prefer sectors to be split. Again, I'm old school.
Q. And you've been an OS in that area?
A. I was.
Q. Can you tell us how you -- tell me how you kind of ran that area when you were down there?
A. Same way it runs in theory now. I outlined to my supervisors what my staffing expectations are. I don't micromanage them and say, you know, you have to have this sector split at this time, but here's my staffing expectation, and that's where the supervisors again they're monitoring it, right. They're in the area. They need to determine workload, traffic, density, et cetera --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- and split it accordingly. This time of year, that's a normal configuration.
Q. Do you conduct walk throughs the area?
A. I do.

Q. How often?
A. Twice an hour.
Q. Okay. And then you had said that you had gone to Flight Data and said to put out the ALNOT immediately?
A. Um-hum. Correct.
Q. What was the reason for kind of doing that?
A. I knew that the airplane had crashed.
Q. Okay. Good. And then tell me a little bit about IPM for the OSes? How does that look here at Anchorage?
A. Well, there's -- well, obviously we do PRCs, right. We write PRCs up. I just wrote one today for a supervisor. We also -- I'm big on coaching and mentoring, you know. So I will pull somebody aside and have that coaching/mentoring conversation. Some things need to be documented, some don't. So, yeah.
Q. You said that there were an OM and an OM2. Is there a difference in those positions when you're signing on? Can you explain if there is?
A. So, yeah. So OM is normally the person working the watch desk. OM2 would, for lack of a better term, the D side if you would, you're assisting them.
Q. Yeah.
A. You may be on an OM2, and pardon me, down in your area, you know --
Q. Okay.
A. -- having a conversation with the sup or whatever, but if we

have two OMs that in the control room, we needed a way to be able to document that time. So we developed the OM2 position.

Q. Is the OM the only one signed onto the dashboard?

A. Correct. The OM is signed onto the dashboard.

Q. That's all I've got.

A. Okay.

Q. Thanks, Dan. Appreciate it.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you. Karena.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. We've got, you know, we got to witness you guys at standup this morning.

A. Yep.

Q. So after the standup, what typically do you expect the sups to do that information when they go out to their areas?

A. Supervisors I expect to take the information and then any special information that we give them, i.e. military missions, et cetera, and use that to develop their daily staffing plan if you will. If we know that there's going to be, you know, like today. There's the rocket launch is out in the ocean, right. Traffic's probably going to be slower. They're going to go down into the Oakland airspace. So maybe today's a better day to supplement the lab or do SDT or whatever else we're going to do, right. So we give them that information so that they can formulate their daily plan.

Q. What kind of regular, like recurrent training, briefings, do

you guys take part in as OMs?
A. Well, we have to do our annual recurrent as an OM. You do that. Some of us will go to crew brief. So like myself, I'll go into crew brief, work the LSC's meeting. I will go sit in crew brief. Sometimes those can get a little contentious with questions. So it kind of helps lower the temperature on some of those with the OM in there just to be able to say, hey, this is why we're doing this. This is why we're having this conversation, to provide the why. So we'll do that, but training, recurrent training, some of us are involved in the crew briefs and then -- yeah, I mean obviously we don't maintain currency or medical. So we don't have to do that type of training.
Q. I love that you go into the crew briefings and stuff. It sounds like that's a personal preference for you, maybe not --
A. There's two of us --
Q. There's two of you.
A. -- that generally --
Q. Only two OMs period or --
A. No, there's five OMs.
Q. Oh, there's five OMs but there's two of you that will do that?
A. Correct. There's five OMs. One of them is upstairs on detail as a training administrator. I believe you talked to him, Jeremy Paskett. He's actually an OM here.
Q. Okay.

A. His job record is OM. And then there's four of us downstairs.
Q. Okay. You talked a little bit about how the outages work, the ORM plan there.
A. Um-hum.
Q. How are those logged?
A. So we have an Anchorage Center only system. It's called the green screen. So we log outages in the green screen, and then we print -- part of your checklist as an OM is to review the green screen, make sure it's accurate, print fresh outages for the areas and the sectors. So at a minimum of twice a day -- well, three times a day if you include the mid shift, new outages are printed and provided out, and we review the green screen to make sure it's accurate. The SOC also on their mid shift checklist reviews the green screen to ensure what we're showing is what they're showing also.
Q. Okay. What kind of feedback do you get from training in QC that helps you as an OM and/or helps you like rate supervisors? Is there anything?
A. Yeah, there's a litany of emails that come down from the training department. A lot of emails that I'm cc'd on from supervisors to the training department reference SET or SDT, the sups, that's what my expectation is. You know your people. You know their schedule. Work that out with me, but CC me so I have an awareness. We also have standup twice a day. We get direct

information from the training department. If somebody is -- we have a specialist here, Rosalie, she does a great job of keeping us to date -- the OMs up to date on ELMS, things like that, like, hey, she sends out a spreadsheet. These are the people in your area that need to do it. Yeah, it's -- a lot of it is email.

Q. Okay. What kind of feedback do you have the opportunity to give to training in QC to help the facility out --

A. A lot of open door policy here. So like if I see a trend, something that's causing me concern, I'll have the conversation with Jeff Harris who's QC or I'll have the conversation with Jeremy Paskett, you know. I sent up some information just recently that, hey, let's make sure we add this to recurrent training because it seems like we need to brush up on this. It was safety alert phraseology. So.

Q. What do you train for solicitation PIREPs?

A. What do I train --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- explain that.

Q. You said that you like coaching and mentoring. Do you do any coaching or mentoring around solicitation and submission of PIREPs?

A. I do. I'm surprised people haven't come up and used my name in vain. Maybe they have. I don't know. But, yeah, I generally will walk down to an area and say, hey, we haven't had a PIREP here or there, whatever. Get me some PIREPs, ride reports, high

area. We get a lot of turbulence out of the Aleutian Chain, high altitude stuff. So I'll ask for PIREPs on that area, too. So generally I just walk down and say something to the sup or if it's a controller that's been here for quite a while that I know, I'll just ask him.

Q. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

A. All right.

MS. KOSCHIG: Travis.

MR. ARNOLD: I don't have anything at this time.

MR. WATTS: Okay.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. I've got one question right now. You did mention that there's a total of five OMs but, of course, only four on the floor.

A. Um-hum.

Q. Do you happen to know -- well, how many -- do you know how many controllers you have total or -- I mean because I know it's out of your --

A. Ballpark, 100 -- I would say probably 130, 140 including the trainees, somewhere in there.

Q. Okay. And do you feel that the staffing is fairly good here or how would you characterize your number of employees that are here? Do you have the ability to get the position open and staffed and --

A. We could always use more.

Q. Yeah.
A. Are we adequately staffed? Yes. Are we a seasonal facility? Very much so. So there are times where we will run overtime in the summer, you know. We'll run over time for these massive military training missions that come up. So those are known times that we're going to use overtime. But for the most part, yeah, I think we're adequately staffed.
Q. That's good.
A. Yeah.
Q. I still have one more question but I'm going to pass it around the room.
A. Yeah.
MS. KOSCHIG: Casey.
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. So I was thinking about the NEXRAD outage, and you said you communicate with the OS and make sure this is good with him. Is there any other communication that goes out, for example, to the CWSU?
A. On NEXRAD outages?
Q. Um-hum.
A. Not normally.
Q. Okay.
A. Do you know how many NEXRADs Alaska has?
Q. I would imagine a lot.
A. You would think so. Do you know though?

Q. No.
MS. KOSCHIG: How many?
MR. WATTS: Seven.
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. A lot less than I thought.
A. Land mass is 1/3 of the United States. We have seven NEXRADs.
Q. Okay.
A. So there's large, large gaps I coverage of NEXRAD sets.
Q. So is --
A. NEXRAD's a great tool, but it's not something that we rely on in this center as they may in other centers just because of the huge gaps in coverage.
Q. I see.
A. Imagine Seattle Center, LA Center, Salt Lake, Denver and the western part of Minneapolis only having seven NEXRAD sites.
Q. Right.
A. Yeah. So if you have a big bucket of money, we'll take some more NEXRADs.
Q. Yeah.
MS. KOSCHIG: We'll put that on the list.
MR. WATTS: Okay.
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. That was going to be the next question. If you had a magic wand and could get any weather related product, what would it be?

Some more NEXRAD radars. Anything else?
A. ERAM to modernize what we're doing down there. We have the ATOP platform out in the ocean which is a great, great tool. CPLC is fantastic, you know, you can communicate with aircraft way beyond radar and radio coverage but, yeah, we need to join the modern century and get ERAM implemented in this building.
Q. Right.
A. We're still writing on strips, double ended pen.
MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.
MR. WATTS: Yeah. It's different. It is different. That's what we'll call it. But NEXRAD, ADS-B coverage, expanded ADS-B would be wonderful. When I started in the south area, you couldn't see aircraft below in most places 10,000. If you could see them 8 and 7, you thought that was great. Now, you can see them all the way to the ground. Fantastic. Let's get that expanded.
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. It might seem like a silly question. I think I know some of it, but are there any challenging weather scenarios here at ZAN?
A. Yeah, it's Alaska. It snows 12 months out of the year up here. So you're going to -- you could work an airplane, takes off out of Anchorage going to the North Slope where the oil fields are, that aircraft will take off out of Anchorage, bright blue, sunny sky, fly through the middle of the land mass by Fairbanks, encounter thunderstorms and towering cumulus, cross the Brooks

Range going north and encounter snow, and land in a blizzard. So, and that's in June. So I mean it's -- the weather is a challenge up here.

Q. I see. Have you ever seen the CWSU walk down to provide a position or supervisor tactical weather support?

A. Supervisors, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Normally we don't want them going out to the sector.

Q. I see. Is there a reason?

A. Distraction.

Q. Gotcha. And what is pertinent weather to you? What would be significant?

A. What would be significant? Turbulence of moderate or greater intensity, icing, precipitation depending on the temperature, and the altitude that they're encountering that. Towering cumulus. We do get hail here, too. That's another joy of here. Lightning.

Q. Yeah.

A. Volcanic activity.

Q. Okay. That's all the questions I have. I appreciate it.

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. I guess going down to the equipment, any systems or equipment that you wish you had at the OM desk to help you with, kind of your oversight resource management?

A. No, I think that the suite of tools that we have at the OM desk is more than adequate for what we are doing.

Q. Anything you wish the OSes had?
A. You know, I wish each area had -- and we're working on this. We actually have the equipment to get that PSAT, the situational awareness tool, more real time. We ask the controllers -- let me rephrase that. We expect the controllers to do their pre-duty weather briefing at the start of their shift. Some of the shifts are 10 hours long. What is the retention after three goes on a sector? So having something a little more real time and the controllers don't need to know that there's an occluded weather front approaching at this point in this many millibars right. They need to know what is the forecasted turbulence, icing, the pertinent stuff to separate airplanes. So boil it down, get it to the condensed version and display it in the areas so it's real time. And we're working on that. We have the funding. We've procedure the screen and the laptops and things like that to get that displayed.
Q. That's all I have. Thank you.
MS. KOSCHIG: Karena.
MS. MARINAS: I think I'm good.
MS. KOSCHIG: All right.
MR. ARNOLD: So am I.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. Okay. So the last question I'll ask is is there any question that we didn't ask you that you thought we were going to ask you?
A. You asked me how old I was. That was awkward. I'm an old

man.

Q. You know nothing about getting old.

A. I'm eligible. I've been there for a couple of years. Anyway, no.

Q. No. Okay. So any questions though for us?

A. Not that I can think of.

Q. All right. So are you ready to end this?

A. Sure.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So let's end the interview. It is 11:54 Alaska Time.

MR. WATTS: Okay.

(Whereupon, at 11:54 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Daniel Watts
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 26, 2025

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.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: NATHAN McDONALD, Operations Supervisor
Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,
February 26, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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(On behalf of Nathan McDonald)

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I N T E R V I E W

(5:33 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: And time now is 1733 Alaska time. And welcome. Just a little introduction of who I am and who the team will be. I'll start out in that point. I am Betty Koschig and I am a Senior Traffic Controller Investigator with the NTSB.

I've been there about 16 years and my experience as an air traffic controller was as military. So what's your name?

MR. McDONALD: Nathan McDonald.

MS. KOCHIG: Okay. And can spell your last name?

MR. McDONALD: M-C-D-O-N-A-L-D.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great.

MR. McDONALD: No relation.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And just as a reminder, just make sure you understand that we are going to be audio recording this interview and are you aware of that?

MR. McDONALD: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. As I said earlier, we will get a transcript of this. The only, the NTSB will keep the audio. We will send the audio to our contractor who has a, you know, they've got a deal with us not to share the audio.

So that's the only place that audio goes. It is us and them, and they will make the transcription, they will send us the transcription back and we will look through the transcription for, you know, misspellings, acronyms, things like that. And then we

will send you the transcript.

If you find something in there that you would like to clarify or if you stated something and you're like oh, I didn't mean it that way, any clarification that's fine, we can put it as a footnote that you had, you know, you want to make a comment about something, but we can't change the transcription itself.

MR. McDONALD: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: But we can add your comments so that's good that you, you know, that's one of the reasons why we like to send the transcript because we want to make sure you have your input as well. All right. So we do have your email.

Good to go there. I see that you have a representative. Is this the person you would like to represent you?

MR. McDONALD: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay perfect. And would you please state your name?

MS. BANASZAK: Katie Banaszak with the Office of Chief Counsel with the Federal Aviation Administration.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you. So during the interview, we're going to be asking a lot of questions. But all the questions are going to be for you. If you do need to talk to your representative any time, you could do right there, but since it is being recorded, if you'd like to step out we can stop the recording and you are more than welcome to have a conversation and once you come back in, then we'll commence again.

And in that same tone, if you need to take a break, just let us know. We'll stop and you come back in, we'll start again. I don't think you'll, you know, we'll be in here longer than an hour. Usually this takes about an hour and, but if any of that time you need to get up --

MR. McDONALD: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- that's fine. I see you got your water so we're good.

MR. McDONALD: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: So why are we here? We are here to conduct an air traffic control investigation of the fatal accident of Bering 445 that occurred on February 6th, 2025. Are you familiar with that accident?

MR. McDONALD: I believe so.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So we'll talk a little bit more about it later. But in the setting you see, well, we've got NTSB, but we also have other people in here. This is the NTSB group. As NTSB, we always invite party members to be a part of our group because we need subject-matter experts.

We don't want to concentrate just on the NTBS's input. We have the industry here so FAA, SME and NATCA SMEs, all air traffic control. So I'm going to let everyone introduce themselves. I'll start with Casey.

MR. OGDEN: Thanks, yes. Casey Ogden, I'm an Air Safety Investigator at the National Transportation Safety Board. My

background is primarily military. I did some short time in the FAA before transitioning to this role.

MR. McDONALD: Okay.

MR. BOUSU: Trevor Bousu, Operations Manager, Denver Center, 19 years in the agency, four years as a controller and 15 years in management.

MS. MARINAS: Hi, Karena Marinas, I'm a controller at Los Angeles Center and a NATCA Air Safety Investigator.

MR. ARNOLD: I'm Travis Arnold. Controller at Omaha TRACON and I'm also a NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. We're the NTSB team on this so we are going to be taking this from the interview process all the way to the end when it's published. Mainly the group will be working on the factual report as we go through and once it gets released, I mean everyone's still going to be involved with it.

So that's what all of us are doing here. But a little bit about the NTSB. Have you done one of these investigations before?

MR. McDONALD: I have not.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh. Okay. So well welcome. The NTSB, we're an independent federal agency that's responsible for determining the probable cause of any accident and incidents that and for promoting aviation safety.

We're not part of the DoD, DOT, FAA or any of those three letters. We, and we are not a regulatory agency. The major products that NTSB produces are safety recommendations. Our chain

of command is pretty short.

We go from our agency, our Chair, up to Congress. So it's a very short climb, but that's so that we can, we have those type of, we can get those recommendations pushed through because they go through not just the FAA, any agency, organization, whatever, if there's safety improvements need to be made.

So but we have no power other than that. Those are, it's a big responsibility to have for this. But here we are in the fact-gathering stage. And that's the reason we're talking to you. We want to gather facts, learn more about the facility, learn more about your role here in the, at the center.

Learn more about what products you have, what equipment, what works, what doesn't work, what you'd like to see here, what would increase safety, what would make your job easier and safer for the aviation community. So we're going to ask a whole gambit of questions.

Like I said, this will last about an hour and how this is going to work is, of course, I'm started off talking, but I will let everybody else get their chance, but we'll go around the room and let everybody ask questions so we all become part of the, of the question, asking questions rather.

All right so you may see just jotting down stuff and or typing. This is just for our notes during the interview so that we can look back up and say, oh, I need to ask a question about this or that so that we don't forget it.

And, but these notes, they will be destroyed. These will go nowhere, not to the public, nowhere because they are just for our own personal reference during this interview. All right? So question, how we're going to ask some questions, we're going to ask questions that you may not know the answer.

I don't know is a perfect answer if you don't know it. If you don't recall something, you don't recall it. Good, great answer. We may ask you questions that seem a little bit like well it's a common sense that we should know it.

But we just don't want to put information or nothing in your mouth. We want to hear it from you. So it may sound like sometimes we're, we just don't know what we're talking about, but it's actually we just want to hear it from you.

MR. McDONALD: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So that's the basic structure of how we work here. Questions about any of that?

MR. McDONALD: Not yet.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right then let's get started.

MR. McDONALD: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So I'm going to go over a little bit of asking about you so we can learn some more about you and where you've been and all that.

MR. McDONALD: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF NATHAN McDONALD

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So what are your operating initials?
A. Golf Mike.
Q. And how old were you at the time of the accident?
A. I was 36 years old I believe.
Q. Okay. And what is your job title here?
A. Operation Supervisor.
Q. Okay. So let's go down that road. When did you start working for the FAA?
A. I believe it was March of 2016.
Q. Was that the academy?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay where did you go from there?
A. Fairbanks, approach and tower and then Willow Run and then Bismark and then now here.
Q. Okay when did you get here?
A. October of 2022.
Q. Okay at Fairbanks you were a CPC?
A. Developmental.
Q. Developmental. Willow Run?
A. Yes.
Q. Same thing?
A. CPC.
Q. CPC. Bismark?
A. OS.
Q. Okay.

A. Operating Supervisor.
Q. All right. And then OS here?
A. Correct.
Q. All right. Do you have to go through the qualification process here at all on the positions?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. What position did you qualify on?
A. Sector 4 R and D.
Q. Okay. All right. Any military?
A. No.
Q. All right. Have college?
A. Yes.
Q. Degree?
A. Yes.
Q. What type of degree do you have?
A. An associate's.
Q. In what field or is it general?
A. Applied Science, Air Traffic Control.
Q. Oh, great. Where'd you get that one?
A. UAA here.
Q. Oh. Seems like a great university.
A. I enjoyed it.
Q. Yes. Do you have any well you did work at a tower so do you have a CTO?
A. Correct.

Q. All right. Do you have any other nautical certificates?
A. No.
Q. Pilot's license?
A. No.
Q. Okay. UAS license?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Do you have a current medical?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Any restrictions?
A. No.
Q. All right. Who's your supervisor?
A. Buck Wicks.
Q. Spell that last name please.
A. W-I-C-K-S.
Q. All right. Do you stay current on your positions?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. You work overtime?
A. Yes.
Q. About how many hours, what's your overtime schedule kind of like?
A. It's not regular.
Q. Okay. About a month --
A. Not often.
Q. -- how many hours probably?
A. Maybe eight.

Q. Oh. So is that a good average?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. What's your work schedule? Like days of the week and hours?
A. Have Monday, Tuesday RDOs so typically Wednesday and Thursday is our 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Friday being a mid-day 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or noon to 8:00 p.m. Saturday is typically being 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sundays being either a 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or a 5:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Q. Okay great. Do you recall if that was your, excuse me, normal shift for that day? Excuse me.
A. As in my regular start time?
Q. Yes.
A. Yes, I believe it was.
Q. Okay. And here's one of those questions. What position were you working at the time of the accident?
A. The supervisor's desk.
Q. Okay. So the supervisor's desk in an area?
A. The north area.
Q. You weren't at the -- in the north area?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. So you were actually signed on during the time of the accident?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Do you recall how long you had been on the position or

signed on when the accident occurred? Excuse me.
A. Approximately 20 minutes I believe.
Q. Okay. What had you been doing before that?
A. I was in a meeting with my ATM and XO and in another meeting with the Training Administrator.
Q. Oh, okay. Do you recall what the complexity of the traffic was that day rated one to five?
A. Oh with five being the most complex?
Q. Yes.
A. Two and a half.
Q. Okay.
A. Three-ish.
Q. And how about the level of traffic, number of aircraft?
A. As in volume?
Q. Volume. Yes, as far as, yes, one to five.
A. Two.
Q. Okay. So did you conduct a pre-duty weather briefing?
A. I believe so, yes.
Q. Okay. How do you find those? Are they helpful?
A. In a broad sense, yes.
Q. What would you like to have changed about them?
A. I think potentially like the currency. Alaska is a large state. Weather can be very different from local areas and it can change rapidly.
Q. That seems to be a, we hear quite a bit at different

facilities.
A. Yes.
Q. Do you have your cell phone with you at the supervisor's desk?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Do you recall anything going on that was distracting in the area at that time?
A. I don't believe so.
Q. All right. Did you file an ATSAP?
A. I did not.
Q. Okay. Is there any reason, may I ask, why you didn't?
A. It didn't occur to me at the time.
Q. Okay. Do you, how many people working the area at that time and what positions if you recall?
A. To the best of my memory, I think there was five controllers, four CPCs and one CPC IT. Correction, I think there was one developmental on there working the D side.
Q. Okay. And were you given the opportunity to review the replay and listen to the audio? Of the --
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And when did you do that?
A. I believe it was the following Saturday or Sunday.
Q. Okay. All right. So now, okay, those are those initial questions. I just like got through so now I want to talk a little bit about let's go to the accident and the time that happened. So

let's back up a little bit and start with your shift that day.

Tell us what time you came on, what you did, what, you know, I know you said you went to some meetings and all that, but give us a little run down on the build up to the time that you signed on to the operational suit and then leading up to the accident and afterwards so we have a full picture please.

A. So like time like when I got to work, --

Q. Yes.

A. -- signed into my shift and what I did until I take the desk. Is that correct?

Q. Yes, please.

A. I signed in a little bit before 2 o'clock. I talked with I believe it was another supervisor. It was on the supervisor's desk at that time, just checked in with him. Told him that I needed to go attend some meetings, told him when I should be back.

And then I proceeded to go upstairs and talk with my manager and chairing administrator.

Q. And then you signed, you came --

A. Yes, and I completed those meetings and then approximately I believe it was around 3 o'clock I took a briefing from a CIC to take the supervisor's desk.

Q. All right then what happened after that? Yes, so when did you find out that something was going on?

A. Something was going on?

Q. Yes.

A. The R side had just come off. I was, they had been training on there so I was kind of listening and talking with the trainer and the developmental had just come off training just to see how the training session had gone.

And talk about the plan when they would come back to train. I had my earpiece in and I was monitoring all the sectors. I was discussing that and I never, the OJTI delivering training to the D side on Section 13D leaned back and said Nate, you know, requesting my attention.

I came over and he explained the situation how they believe the NOME GBT might have been out, how they lost radar simultaneously on the Bering aircraft who is 445 and then another one to the north and he, so it was kind of peculiar because they did re-acquire radar like out of the north.

They never got radar back on the guy to the east. And to the guy to the east it was, they lost radar and lost radio frequencies communication with them simultaneously.

Q. So what were your actions after that?

A. After that, I went and informed the OM desk of the situation, how we lost radar and radio frequency with the aircraft and then I went and I tried reaching out, contacting Bering Air dispatch to see if maybe they were still in communication with the aircraft if he had cancelled, IFR and was proceeding to be IFR without telling us.

Q. What did they have to say?

A. They said they didn't have, they hadn't heard from them.
Q. Did they give you any, so they hadn't heard from them. Did they, do you know if they followed them with some kind of --
A. I believe they have --
Q. -- system?
A. -- some kind of a tracking system, but I'm not sure exactly what they use.
Q. Okay.
A. Or the frequency with which it updates.
Q. Right. So you got off the phone with them and then what happened?
A. I went back over to the controllers just to touch base, see if they had re-established communications with them. I believe they tried using a couple of other aircraft in the area to try to relay air to air to see if they could contact the Bering Air aircraft. That was unsuccessful. We were trying to find other ways to keep in contact with the aircraft.
Q. Okay. And nothing was successful. And do you recall anybody reaching out to Flight Service or, yes, Flight Service?
A. I don't recall.
Q. Okay. All right so it's how long had it been before, okay so after that, what did you do? I mean after you, it's been unsuccessful, your radar controller's still on the position. Correct?
A. Yes.

Q. So now what was going on? What was he doing? What was going through your mind and your reactions at that point?
A. I was trying to brainstorm other ways that we could get in contact with them. What would be going on? We had another controller come out approximately 3:30 p.m. who was supposed to take the position and stated they were uncomfortable taking the position at that time.
Requested not to so I was trying to re-arrange the schedule to, you know, provide adequate staffing in the rotation to the controllers.
Q. Okay.
A. And I was also relaying with the OM the efforts that the controllers had been doing trying to reach out to the aircraft, trying to keep them apprised of the situation.
Q. All right and so after that and well, what was some of the, what actions did you, okay, so you said that you had somebody there to take over the radar position?
A. Yes, they --
Q. And they, he wasn't comfortable doing it?
A. Yes.
Q. He or she?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So the R controller is still there. At that point, had you, did you think there was still some type of outage because you said the GPD, GBT, there was both of them fell off? I mean,

at that point were you suspecting that it was an accident or what were you thinking at that point?

A. I remember thinking it was an unusual situation.

Q. Yes.

A. I don't think I was believe, thought it was an accident yet.

Q. Right. Okay so tell us about how, when did the ALNOT come up where there was, did you decide that the ALNOT should be issued or how did that come about? There was an ALNOT that was issued. Correct?

A. I believe so, yes.

Q. Okay. Did you have anything to do with that getting that initiated or tell me your part in that, if any.

A. I think my part was notifying the OM.

Q. Okay.

A. I believe I, after the situation, I think I remember, you know, talking with the OM, him stating that he went just over to flight data and gave them the information and they already started prepping an ALNOT just so it would be ready to go if we decided, you know, we did need to issue one. So that would minimize the delay in issuing one.

Q. Okay. And the D controller, the D side would -- they were on there. Did you have them taken off position or what happened with that?

A. Not immediately.

Q. Okay. Is there, is that, tell me why you didn't immediately

and what the process, what your thought process was behind it?
A. My thought process was, again, I was not considering it an accident.
Q. Yes.
A. I just believed it as being an unusual circumstance and like they'd been trying multiple things and it was a CPC-IT in training who showed more experience than a typical developmental. I didn't judge their attitudes or tendencies to be over stress or unable to handle the situation.
And I thought it would be better to maintain some kind of continuity with the situations. They knew what they had tried and what they hadn't tried and what information had been gathered at that time. That was my thought process with that.
Q. Okay that sounds, yes. Okay so when did you, okay so I know originally the relief did not want to take the position, so did you get someone else to come in and relieve or was that same person and just a little later?
A. I got a different controller to come in.
Q. Okay.
A. I don't recall.
Q. Okay.
A. Exact timeframe of when the relief came.
Q. Okay. So everybody, so then you've eventually did you get the D controllers relieved or it was just a normal session that was ending or how did that work? Because I guess I'm trying to

understand when the situation became that you started to realize it could be an accident and you need to move forward with it?

Or did that occur at all then? Because I know it's an unusual situation and --

A. Sorry, so what is the question?

Q. Yes, so I'm trying to, when did you decide to take the or did you decide to take the D side out because of the unusual situation or because you still at that point hadn't, it hadn't keyed in yet that it could be an accident? And I get that.

But did you just let the session, you know, was it the end of the normal session that they left the normal relief or did you put in another relief to replace them because of what was going on? Or do you recall?

A. I don't recall.

Q. Okay. Makes sense so. So how long did you work after that? I mean how long were you still on position after?

A. For the rest of my shift.

Q. Okay. So you remained on there for several more hours?

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. I'm going to let somebody else start asking some questions because I'm going, yes. So, Casey, please.

MR. OGDEN: Yes, thanks, Betty.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Can you talk to me about how you maintain awareness as the operational supervisor of the north area?

A. In what manner?
Q. So you had mentioned you were monitoring all of the sectors. Right? How do you ensure that PIREPs are being solicited and disseminated as required? How are you keying in on, like you said, this unusual situation? How are you maintaining that awareness of what's going on throughout the shift?
A. I will, my personal practice monitoring all the sectors and I'll go out and sit. There's typically a radar scope that we can, we'll break off for large force military exercises, but typically throughout it's not utilized.

So I'll sit there and it's in the area closer to the controllers and I'll monitor traffic situations there. Or if I feel like there's one sector that is more, has the potential for becoming more of a difficult or needing more support, I will key on and just listen to those frequencies.

And I'll, you know, walk through the area, you know, or, you know, looking over the controllers' shoulders to see what kind of strips they have, what the traffic load looks like, what kind of workload they have to do.

As far as observing for PIREPs, I'll have weather.gov/zan up on the computer and it shows me kind of the weather briefing forecast. It will show me any SIGMETs or CWBAs for the area and also like show pop-up PIREPs in the area.

So it will show me which ones are kind of current or accurate when they've been. I also have SkyVector up as well. It shows

PIREPs as well on there so I can utilize that. And then I'll walk by to see, you know, what airports controllers are having aircraft flying in and out of and what the weather are because I'll have the weather METARs there on the FDP see if there's any inbounds or outbounds that correlate with needing a PIREP and encourage the controllers to get one.

Q. I see. On the, when you took the position, you had a position relief briefing?

A. Correct.

Q. And in that relief briefing, was there any mention of a requirement or a need of PIREPs for that area?

A. For what area?

Q. I'm sorry, north. Like sector 13-9.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Any of the working areas that you're responsible for monitoring?

A. No. Not that I recall.

Q. Okay.

A. I believe typically there's always some airports in the north area that fall under the criteria of for a PIREP. I don't recall them saying this area has needed one. I have gotten relief briefings talking about what the PIREPs have been like the area, but I don't recall that specific briefing if there was an overview of the PIREPs.

Q. Okay. Had you given any prompts to the control staff to get a PIREP? It's my understanding that it had been a bit of a delay between the last PIREP and then around the event time.
A. Not at that time, no.
Q. Okay. Are you aware of the PSAT tool? I believe I'm saying that correctly.
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Was that in use on the day of the event?
A. I don't recall having that up.
Q. Okay. Have you been given direct guidance on how that tool is used, how, what your expectation is as an OS and how to go about that program or is it just still in development?
A. I've been given training and how it operates and how it works.
Q. So is it an expectation that you use it or it's just you're getting general training at this time?
A. I believe just general training at this time.
Q. Okay. Looking at this event, it's a unique event. Right? You talked about GBT, maybe there was an outage there and some other actions that were going on. Is there anything about this event that did meet or did not meet your expectations as the OS?
A. Are we talking regards in like in the situation with it happening live or reflecting upon it?
Q. Both.
A. At the time, not that I recall. I do believe after listening

to the recording I believe the low altitude alert could have been issued in a more timely manner. I don't believe it was exactly correct phraseology per the .65, but I believe all of the elements were in the alert.

Q. Okay. There's one instance throughout that sequence of events where the R-13 controller had advised of a runway closure at NOME and they gave a suggestion of slowing down. Do you have any comment about that decision and how that came about?

A. I don't.

Q. Okay. Is that typical you would see that for the airport? Is that controller, do you see that frequently?

A. Airports will close runways for storm removal and PIDS will inquire about if storm removal has occurred at an airport. We do our best to try to relay that information to the pilots so they can make their decisions.

Q. I see. So it could be sometimes operationally advantageous to have an aircraft slow down versus maybe hold over an airport? Would that be a factual statement?

A. Say that again, please.

Q. Would it be sometimes advantageous to have an aircraft slow down versus holding over an airport? I'm just trying to better understand that decision?

A. I believe if that was the pilot's wish, to do that then, yes.

Q. Okay. And tell me what is a significant PIREP to you?

A. A significant PIREP?

Q. Yes.
A. Anything with moderate icing or more or moderate turbulence or more, a low over wind shear, volcanic ash, poor braking actions on the runway, thunderstorms so.
Q. Understood. Okay just a couple of more from me. PIREPs, expectations supervisor, we have an aircraft depart an area where PIREPs would be required for flying enroute to an airport where PIREPs would also be required.

At what phase of the flight would you expect a controller to request a PIREP?
A. As soon as operationally advantageous while not interfering with the critical phase of flight.
Q. I see. So in this scenario, the departure PIREP required the enroute phase of flight we'll say that there's a condition what would require a PIREP and then the arrival airport meets criteria for PIREPs.

Would you expect the controller to get three PIREPs, one for the departure, one for the enroute phase and one for the arrival phase if feasible? Or one would suffice?
A. So just to clarify, you're saying the aircraft departs an airport?
Q. Yes.
A. One meet PIREP criteria, the enroute environment meets PIREP criteria and the arrival airport meets the PIREP criteria?
Q. Yes.

A. Ideally, they would be, you know, getting a PIREP for all situations.
Q. Okay. Understood. I apologize. I want to loop back to something you had mentioned about expectations. The low altitude alert you believe could have been issued in a more timely manner. Did you do any performance record counseling in relation to this event with any of the controllers?
A. Are you asking if I did any performance conversations with any of the controllers with this event?
Q. Yes.
A. No, I did not. They were not my controllers.
Q. Understood. Had you communicated anything you had observed to their operational supervisor for PIREP or anything like that?
A. Myself personally, no.
Q. Okay.
A. I know their supervisor. Heard the playback and replay of the event.
Q. Got you. Understood. Okay. That's all the questions I have for now. I really appreciate it. Thank you.
A. Thank you.
MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor?
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. All right. Howdy. When you had taken the desk after your meetings, right around you said about 3 o'clock local is that right?

A. Correct.
Q. Was the area staffing in configuration to what you would expect it to be? Any issues with that taking the area?
A. There was a controller that was issued an incorrect be back.
Q. Okay.
A. So our site trainees had gone longer than intended.
Q. And was that controller paged back?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. There a configuration with the I believe there were two R sides with 3, 19 and 13, again, fairly common for that type of situation or for that type of day and everything?
A. For that type of traffic, yes.
Q. Okay. There wasn't any thought to splitting anything or anything like that? It was just normal traffic?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. How long have you been a sup at ZAN?
A. Since October of 2022 I believe.
Q. Okay. Did you get any familiarization or training at CWSU prior to getting certified and what did that look like?
A. I believe I spent, I can't remember the timeframe, but I spent some time with the CWSU getting familiar with the operations, their procedures, products they issued, essentially their responsibilities they fulfill.
Q. Was there any formal like checklist or anything like that you guys had to do?

A. I believe some.
Q. Was there?
A. Yes.
Q. When you had taken the desk, was the CIC using the PIREP worksheet to document the PIREPs in the area at the time?
A. What PIREP worksheet?
Q. In your SOP and it says the OS or CA or CIC may use the PIREP worksheet to document PIREPs. Is that utilized or you guys not really use that?
A. Not that I'm aware of.
Q. Okay. What do you guys use to ensure that PIREPs are being solicited?
A. Like I said, up and coming is the PSAT tool.
Q. Okay.
A. And then I personally help use like I said the Weather.gov/zan.
Q. Okay.
A. And then SkyVector. And then also walking out and observing the sectors.
Q. Okay.
A. Typically once a controller gets a PIREP, they'll state PIREP, I'll collect the PIREPs, walk to Flight Data, then enter them to AISR and then walk them back and I'll deliver them to the sectors.
Q. Okay. How long does that process take when you bring them to

Flight Data, take them back and then get them back to be able to get to the sector?
A. Are you asking the timeframe once the controller gets the PIREP --
Q. Yes.
A. -- until it's entered and back in their hands?
Q. Yes. Kind of I guess life cycle is the term we're kind of using so.
A. I believe three to four, five minutes.
Q. Okay. And then when the controller that came back to initially relieve the R-13 controllers said they were uncomfortable with it, did they explain how or what they were uncomfortable with without taking the sector at all?
A. They didn't state specifics, just made a general statement with the aircraft trying to, you know, lost coms trying to get in contact with them.
Q. Did that impact operations of your staffing at all very much or not really?
A. Not necessarily.
Q. Okay. Okay that's all I have. Thank you.
MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Karena?
BY MS. MARINAS:
Q. How do you track the requirements for PIREPs when there's, you know, icing, thunderstorms, things like that forecasted in the area? Is there any kind of visual provided to the controllers or

anything to kind of remind everyone in the area that that's being forecasted? And you should be solicited?
A. So you're asking any areas where there's not a METAR serving the airport that would require PIREPs?
Q. No, I'm just asking if there's any, so are you saying the METARs are the way that, you know, that the controllers might be prompted to feel they need to solicit for PIREPs? Or is there anything else?
A. Potentially I believe we'll get CWAs, area or SIGMETS or the PWD weather brief. We'll give controllers an awareness of forecasts or weather.
Q. Okay. How do you feel overall about your area of solicitation of and dissemination of PIREPs? In general, not specific to this incident.
A. I feel there's definitely room for improvement.
Q. Why?
A. Just the duration sometimes where we go without a PIREP maybe, you know, due to the lack of an aircraft going in or out or like the changing weather environments of the area.
Q. Okay. So not -- I don't really understand the part about the aircraft going in or out. That's kind of out of everybody's control. Right?
A. Yes.
Q. Am I misunderstanding what that means?
A. As far as we, some areas the weather will be poor, we just,

some aircraft just don't fly to that area for prolonged amounts of time.

Q. Okay. Do you recall seeing any precipitation depicted on the 3, 13,9 that day?

A. I don't recall.

Q. What, if anything, would you expect to see at the sector if NEXRAD is out?

A. What do you mean?

Q. Would you see anything of the sector if NEXRAD is out? If you get a notification like you did that day, that NEXRAD had an outage?

A. It would be on the outage sheet of the sector.

Q. Just outage sheet of the sector. Okay, that's fine so when you go to the standup 7:30 a.m. in the morning each day, what information do you get there and what do you do with it?

A. I'll get a pre-duty weather brief. I'll go over that. And I go out and disseminate it to the areas saying hey there are potential icing, turbulence or whatever has been forecasted that day for what areas and what to be aware of and share the information with the controllers per the sector for what was delivered in the brief.

Q. Do you do that just to the sectors that it's affected or is it kind of you just say it in the area? How does that work?

A. The best of my ability is to the sector it's affected.

Q. When you took the briefing from the CIC, what did they say

about weather in the area so far that day?
A. I don't recall.
Q. Okay. That's it for me.
MS. KOSCHIG: Travis?
BY MR. ARNOLD:
Q. Yes. I just want to clarify what you said earlier. After you took the supervisor position from the CIC that took the desk, you had the R side trainee relieved, but with the call back page. Right? Is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. And then you were listening in to the plan that the OJTI and the trainee were discussing after they got out of position. Is that correct?
A. I was asking them how the training scenario went. What he learned, what they were discussing. And just generally listening to the topics they were discussing.
Q. Sure. Was, during that conversation, was that the time that the accident or as we know it to be, the accident occurred?
A. I believe so.
Q. Do you recall hearing the MSAW go off?
A. I do.
Q. Okay. I believe you said that the D side OJTI is who alerted you to come over because there was kind of something going on. Right? Was the MSAW what alerted you at, I just want to clarify, was the MSAW going off what alerted you to the position or maybe

the low altitude alert or was it the OJTI? Can you clarify what got your attention --

A. My attention there?

Q. Right.

A. So I heard the MSAW going off. I remember looking over at the sector to see, make sure the controllers were engaged, you know, facing their scopes, you know, engaged with traffic. Then shortly thereafter the OJTI on the D side alerted me could I come over.

Q. Sure. Okay. One other kind of gee-whiz question, we had heard from other interviews that there may have been somebody else monitoring in the area, possibly a trainee. We don't have very good direction on that.

To the best of your knowledge, do you recall there being anybody else in the area monitoring, kind of watching what was going on?

A. I don't recall.

Q. Okay. Thanks.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. I'm going to pass right now. I'm going, I've got some questions, but I'm going to let my colleagues ask some before I go on.

MR. McDONALD: Yes.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. I understand it's been a while and I wouldn't be able to recall a lot. But weather in that area for the day? Is that

usual, unusual, anything stand out about it?
A. I don't recall.
Q. I see. How often is icing forecasted for your area? And we'll go with a general 25 percent of the time, 50 percent of the time, 75 percent of the time every day?
A. I believe I can confidently say, you know, 50 percent of the time.
Q. Okay. Wow, yes. I see. What weather resources do you use to help you perform your air traffic control functions?
A. In what regard?
Q. In general your air traffic duty, you know, maintaining PIREP awareness, other things like you've mentioned weather.gov and some other sources.
A. The weather.gov, SkyVector, the CWSU will come by and deliver SIGMETs or CWAs or MISs for the area and adjoining areas.
Q. I see. And do the CWSU individuals, do they come by frequently and interact with you as the OS throughout a shift?
A. As frequently as weather products change and emerge.
Q. I see. As that happens, are they coming by and just giving you like a verbal, hey, this is coming up or do they come by with a product and give you something? What is typically look like?
A. They'll come by with a product so I can have one at the desks and I'll go out and deliver them to the affected sectors.
Q. Oh, that's great. Okay. Seems like an obvious question, but are there any challenging weather scenarios here as ZAN?

A. Yes.
Q. Care to give a couple of examples of what would be a normal challenging weather scenario?
A. Low visibility, blowing snow, icing conditions, caribou on runway.
Q. Okay.
A. I know it's not weather, but --.
Q. I understand.
A. -- weather driven.
Q. Yes. No, I get it. So I know as an air traffic controllers we receive a lot of training all the time. Can you walk me through or talk about any of your most recent weather training you received in the last year here? Anything that stands out?
A. I don't recall if it's been within a year timeframe. I believe it was an ILT training delivered just discussing how pilots could have the bias that, or excuse me, controllers could have the bias that pilots have the better weather radar in the aircraft.

And how it's not true how controllers will have better depiction of essentially precipitation from their scopes since some pilots get --
Q. I see. Okay.
A. -- that when I believe there's some, just how even if the temperature is above freezing and it's a clear blue day, you know, there's still potential for icing.

Q. I see. And I'm sorry, what did you call that training? It's an ILT?
A. Recurrent ILT I believe stands for Instructor-Led Training.
Q. Of course, okay. Thank you. And just out of my own curiosity, what made that training stand out more than others? Was it videos they used? Did they use the pilot talk about it directly? What stood out and why? Why did that stick with you?
A. I believe just for the matter delivered. Just the fact that we will have a better, you know, fuller image of the weather scenario, weather products or weather cells. I believe it was a pilot in a video delivering the information if I remember correctly.
Q. I see. Okay. Okay that's all the questions I have for now.
MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Travis?
BY MR. ARNOLD:
Q. I'll probably steal this one from somebody, but what equipment or tools would make your job, if you had money is no object, you can get it tomorrow, what stuff would make your job easier as an OS?
A. A lot better communications, coverage for Alaska, better radar coverage, GBT coverage. I believe that's all I can think of at the time.
MR. ARNOLD: Thank you. That's all I have.
MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Karena?
MS. MARINAS: Just one more.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. So when you heard the MSAW and the D side OJTI had called you over thinking that there was an issue with the GBT, what ran through your mind for what could be going on with that conflicting information?

A. Can you clarify? Restate it please.

Q. Well so your, he's, so the OJTI is telling you we lost, you know, tracks on these two Bering Airs and we're thinking maybe it could be a GBT outage again. But then also you're hearing the MSAW alert.

Did those things, did you guys have any discussions about those or did anything ring in your mind about any of that?

A. No. I remember thinking that peculiar that, you know, it could be the NOME GBT because both aircraft dropping off radar. I believe it was simultaneously. Again, my thought was maybe the pilot to the east, that Bering Air had found a hole in the weather, wanted to descend and give the MC continue on.

I've seen pilots do that in the past. That was my hope with reaching out to Bering Air dispatch to see if maybe the edification or if they had a cell phone that they were in some kind of communication that we weren't with the aircraft.

The MSAW, if I remember correctly, was not alarming when the controller alerted me to come over. It hadn't gone off. I know I have seen the MSAW go off when other aircraft at other times had been doing approaches and had been in a safe altitude and descent

profile going in airports. Yes, I believe --.

MS. MARINAS: Okay. No more questions. Thank you.

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. I want to go back to your comment about feeling like the low altitude alert could have been a little bit more timely. Were you standing in that general area of the sector area as I'll call it when the low altitude alert was issued?

A. No.

Q. Okay. That's it. Thank you.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay. So we'd talked earlier on your, on the data tags, what happens when an aircraft descends at a rapid rate? What shows up as far as an indication on there, is there something that indicates that the altitude is changing rapidly? I don't know if I'm stating that correctly.

A. If an aircraft is descending on an unsafe trajectory in an area, the MSAW alarm has been programed to alert which is red letters, Mike SIERRA Alpha Whiskey, that alerts on the data tag to alert the controller of a potential unsafe situation.

Q. All right so then it turns red. So is there Xs or anything that will pop up if it's going into rapid descent? Do you --

A. I believe so.

Q. -- recall anything? Okay. Sorry, I was just curious. Okay. Before I give my last question, I'm going to let everybody go around one last time.

MR. OGDEN: I'm just going to go around this one time here. I think we're good though. I'm good. Yes, thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes, Trevor?

MR. BOUSU: No.

MR. ARNOLD: Nothing.

MS. MARINAS: Nothing from me.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Oh, okay. So the only question I have left is, is there any question that we didn't ask you that you thought we were going to ask you?

A. I don't believe so.

Q. Oh, I lied. Is there, another one, anything else you would like to add?

A. I don't believe so.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So let's go ahead and end the interview. The time now is 1833 Alaska time.

(Whereupon, at 6:33 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Nathan McDonald
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 26, 2025

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.

[redacted]

Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: JEFF HARRIS, Quality Control Support Manager
Federal Aviation Administration

Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,
February 26, 2025

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CASEY OGDEN, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

TREVOR BOUSU, Air Traffic Control Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

KARENA MARINAS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

TRAVIS ARNOLD, Air Safety Investigator in Training
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

KATHLEEN BANASZAK, Representative
(On behalf of Jeff Harris)

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:04 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: The time now is 8:04 Alaska time. So thanks for coming to see us today and talk to us about some questions that we have. Just introduction, again. My name is Betty Koschig, NTSB, I've been working there for about 16 years and my experience with air traffic was as a military controller.

MR. HARRIS: Um-hum.

MS. KOSCHIG: So what's your name?

MR. HARRIS: Jeff Harris.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Could you spell your last name?

MR. HARRIS: H-a-r-r-i-s.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So as I said, this will be audio recorded and I just want to make sure that you are aware of that, correct?

MR. HARRIS: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So we will send you a transcription of the audio. What we would do is we send our audio out to a contractor that we have an agreement with and they transcribe it and they send it back to us, so the only people that have the audio would be the NTSB and them, and we have a very strict agreement with them, so the audio will not be released. The transcription, however, will be, so that's the reason we'll send it to you. If you have comments, if you're reading over it and you're like well, you know, this is what I meant to say or this is

to clarify anything, you're more than welcome to send that to us and we will footnote it, we will not change the transcription, but at least we'll footnote your comment, so --

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- you've got some feedback in there.

So you have a representative with you, is this the person you'd like to have as your rep?

MR. HARRIS: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, would you please state your name?

MS. BANASZAK: Katie Banaszak, Office of the Chief Counsel for the Federal Aviation Administration.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So during the interview, we will be asking a lot of questions, but they all will be for you. If you want to confer with your representative, no problem, you could do it right there, but since it's audio recorded, if you didn't want it over the audio, you can step out of the room and have a conversation and then come back and we would stop and start the interview.

Okay, why we're here this week is to investigate the fatal accident of Bering 445 that happened on February 6th.

MR. HARRIS: Um-hum.

MS. KOSCHIG: So we'll be doing all the interviews and trying to gather all the factual information as much as possible. So just a little bit about the NTSB and about our party, the NTSB is an independent agency that our main focus is on safety, on

gathering information and -- I'm sorry, I'm going ahead of myself -- it's determining the probable cause, gathering information, and making safety recommendations. We're not part of the DOT, the DoD, FAA or any of those other regulatory agencies. As I said, our major product is safety recommendations. But as far as we're gathering information this week, factual information, and we do appreciate your input on that.

We do have a group that we also -- we invite parties to help us with subject matter expertise. In this situation, this group, we have the FAA and we have NATCA SMEs here to assist us in making sure that we're getting all the information we need and we're getting their input on their expertise in certain areas.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So I'm going to let everyone introduce themselves and -- so you'll know who everybody is.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, Casey Ogden, I'm an air safety investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board, my background is primarily military, but I did spend some short time in the FAA.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MR. BOUSU: Trevor Bousu, Operations Manager, Denver Center, 19 years in the agency, four as a controller and 15 in management.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. MARINAS: Good morning, Karena Marinas, controller at Los Angeles Center and an air safety investigator for NATCA.

MR. ARNOLD: Good morning, Travis Arnold, controller at Omaha

TRACON and I'm also a NATCA ASI.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So the setting, we are the NTSB group and we will be taking this thing all the way to the time that it's published, so we'll be working on the factual and dealing with the whole process that it goes through for the NTSB.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So what to expect during this, probably about an hour, we're going to ask a lot of different questions and first get a little bit of your professional history, find out your experience and then we're going to start asking questions about what you may or may not know about the accident --

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- and then probably broader, about QC, maybe the facility, all different -- other aspects of the center, so broad range of questions for you.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So any time that we do ask a question, you don't know the answer, "I don't know" is a perfect answer, or if it's something we ask you to recall something and you don't recall, that's a perfect answer. And we may ask questions that seem like it should be just we should know that, a commonsense kind of answer, it's because we want to hear you say the answer, we don't want to guess on anything.

MR. HARRIS: For sure, okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: If you need a break at any time, please let us know, we'll stop the interview, you can take a break, no problem with that. You might see us jotting down some information as you're talking, it's usually questions or things to remind us to ask because while we go around, like I'll start out and then we go around the room, each other asking questions, we try not to interrupt each other and we try not to interrupt you --

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- so that's the reason why we'll write things down so that you won't lose your line of focus and neither will the other investigators. I think that is about all for now, are you ready to get started?

MR. HARRIS: Yes, ma'am.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF JEFF HARRIS

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So what are your operating initials?

A. J-H.

Q. And what was your age at the time of the accident?

A. Forty-two.

Q. What is your job title?

A. Support Manager, Alaska District.

Q. When did you start working for the FAA?

A. March 17, 2014.

Q. Was that the academy?

A. Yes.
Q. And where did you go from there?
A. Anchorage Center.
Q. Have you been here ever since?
A. Yes.
Q. Have you done any details?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay, what --
A. Operational supervisor for six months.
Q. So when you came here you were a CPC to begin with, correct? Tell me a little bit about what you were.
A. When I came here I was a developmental.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, from the academy.
Q. Um-hum. And then what, tell me, when did you become a CPC and the broad history here?
A. Yeah, so CPC, I mean, our average certification is about two and a half years, so after being here, I would say, I was probably an average controller, so about two and a half years for certification as a CPC.
Q. Okay. Were you a CIC here?
A. Yes.
Q. And then you did OS for -- were you a permanent SO, ever?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So you were -- when were you -- how long were you an

OS?
A. Approximately three years.
Q. Okay. And were you an OM?
A. No.
Q. Okay. But then when you took the job as the support, then you just -- you detailed for six months or SNOS, correct? During the period you were in this position.
A. No.
Q. Okay.
A. So I was a CPC --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- and I did a six-month detail as an OS --
Q. Okay.
A. -- and then from there, permanent OS and then from there, an acting support manager, meaning temporary.
Q. Okay, cool, great. Thank you. Do you have any military?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Do you have a college degree?
A. Yes.
Q. And what is that degree in and where was it?
A. An associate's of science through Dixie State University and an associate's in aviation technology from University of Anchorage, Alaska.
Q. Do you hold any aeronautical certificates?
A. No.

Q. Do you have a current medical?
A. No.
Q. Are you required to have one?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Who's your supervisor?
A. Talon Medema.
Q. So when you were controlling traffic here, what area did you work in?
A. South area.
Q. Okay. What's your normal work schedule?
A. Monday through Friday, 7:00 to 3:30.
Q. Were you working on the day of the accident?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So your normal hours, 7:00 to 3:30, were you aware of the -- since it's so close to the end of your work day, were you aware of anything going on, the accident or anything happening with the aircraft by the time you left that day?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Did you end up working over that day, any overtime, just this day?
A. I worked a little bit of time after my shift.
Q. Okay. All right. Do you recall where you were, where you were working when you found out about the accident or the situation at hand at that time, because I do understand it probably wasn't qualified as an accident, we didn't know then.

A. When I was notified about the incident?
Q. Yes.
A. As I was walking out the door to go home.
Q. Oh, okay. All right. So that's all the admin-type questions I have.
A. Okay.
Q. So I kind of want to know, we already starting touching on, was to find out when you -- you already said you were notified right when you were walking out the door, so what happened, tell us what occurred after that and what you did and how you assisted and that.
A. So I was walking out the door and Neale Sheneman, our executive officer, advised me that there might be a situation in the controller floor, so I walked down in operations just to get a grasp of what was going on. I did have something very important at home that I needed to go home for, I'm typically very much involved with all the ins and outs of these types of events, being involved with QC, but I wanted to get kind of a pulse of what was going on in the area.

So I walked down there, I could tell it was -- there was definitely a tense mood, what felt like a tense mood in the operation, and so I was able to review it. I came up and talked to Neale and it sounds like, just based on what I gathered, is that there was definitely some reason for potential concern, then I notified him and Talon that I needed to get home and that I

would be available within several hours to come back and assist with anything additional that needed to occur with -- if anything more came from looking at it.
Q. Okay. And so were you -- so yeah, I understand you had some things to do, but did you get a call or anything later to come back or to assist with anything that afternoon?
A. No. I spoke with Talon and Neale later, but nothing -- immediate notification to come in and gather any more data that we could gather for the next day.
Q. All right. So I realize that the -- it still had not been verified that there was an accident, so when did you find out that it was an actual -- it was truly an accident?
A. You know, I don't -- it was a Thursday, I believe, right?
Q. Um-hum.
A. Honestly, I don't -- I would say sometime on Friday.
Q. So when you were -- when it was known that it was an accident and you were notified, so what actions are -- what are some of the things that you did to -- in your job, what are some of the things that you do when something like this occurs?
A. With the -- specifically, an accident?
Q. Yes, specifically with this one, what --
A. Okay. First thing we want to do is do a CER --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- a Covered Event Review, part of the QC order. So getting that schedule, getting controllers involved in that, so we were

able to schedule that CER as quickly as possible once we were notified of the event.

Q. And would you -- did you do the CER that day or --

A. No.

Q. Okay. Did you talk to any of the controllers that day?

A. No.

Q. Okay. What was your -- who did you mainly communicate with about the accident?

A. Talon and Neale.

Q. Okay. And when did you get the CER completed?

A. I believe it was on December 7th -- no, no, no, the Saturday, December 8th, sorry, February 8th.

Q. Okay. So you had to come in to work that day?

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. Was there anything else that you had to get completed, what else is required in this type of situation?

A. Common post-event checklist, also known as a CPEC. Gathering as much data as we can on the event, so we could complete a services rendered telecon.

Q. And were you part of the SRT when they --

A. Yes.

Q. And what else -- what else would you be involved with after, after the CPEC?

A. With this event?

Q. Yeah.

A. If anything specific came from the CPEC, there typically would be action items --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- that are assigned, almost a self-assignment through a CPEC, and just to work with the ATM and the rest of the support manager team to see how we want to address any follow-up that occurs with any CPEC items.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I had a couple -- I think I have a couple more questions, but I'm going to wait and I'm going to let my colleagues ask questions.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Yeah, I'll kind of start with some facility documentation, things like that, I see there's a few open CAPs, there's one for PIREP solicitation and dissemination, that is in the implementation phase as of December 30th, 2024 and then there's also one for safety alerts that's in implementation, it looks like January 7th of 2025. Can you talk to me about those two CAPs and --

A. Um-hum.

Q. -- where they're at and what the goals are?

A. Yeah. So PIREPs, where we're at, as a facility, is more on the implementation stage. When I say implementation, I mean actively trying to work through the mitigations to increase our compliance with the training that PIREPs are both solicited and

disseminated.
Q. Um-hum.
A. With the safety alerts, likewise, the creation of that was just -- and we'll see on here, both top five items for us, those are things that we try to focus on and -- as they have the biggest risk to our users. Safety alerts, both safety alerts and PIREPs was done collaboratively with our ICV team which consists of NATCA members and operational supervisors. We were able to have discussions there, we felt like we could justify needing to have these two items as focus items for safety within our facility.
Q. Understood. Was there a kind of catalyst to both of those opening or was it just a trend that you guys had seen over time and you were just trying to correct?
A. I feel like I'm really big on data.
Q. Um-hum.
A. Controllers, I feel like, respond well to data, not gut feelings, so with the PIREP one specifically, we had done a review of services provided, I don't recall the date, but we were able to sample, roughly -- Monday, seven days, our goal was shoot between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., roughly, and we listened to -- we collected aircraft that were departing and arriving at airports throughout Alaska and then we went back and verified that the conditions at those airports justified, were required solicitation of PIREPs and then after doing so we went in and verified it through AISR, which is how we input all of our PIREP information

to validate that we're actively inputting PIREPs at those airports, so -- knowing, with that, we were able to -- I recall that it was roughly 43 percent compliance is what I saw with that data. That data collection was completed collaboratively with NATCA members, I think that's very important because, again, when that information comes out and it's done by peers, not by Jeff Harris, the QC guy who's always trying to say we're not doing enough, then I can -- I'll refer people to their peers about how we collected the data, that way there's a little bit more of a sense of trust amongst the peers versus maybe someone in my position to do that, so I was involved with a partial data collection at times when we were trying to bridge some gaps, but the majority of the information collected was collected from people who are actually current in operations.

In addition to that, we worked with both NATCA and management to collaborate on how we were going to collect that information to ensure that the information we were collecting had a high level of integrity, as in the past there was always a question afterward, it was like "well, did you consider this or consider this or consider this in your collection," understandably, controls, you're trying to find holes in -- which is fine --

Q. Yeah. No, I understand.

A. -- in how we're collecting data. So we really -- we've had some lessons learned over the last year and trying to just make sure that what we're collecting would resonate well with the

workforce and it wasn't -- could it withstand a certain level of scrutiny because we've asked these questions beforehand.

Q. Right, that's great. Can you talk to me about the goals of these CAPs, what mitigation level you'd like to reach before closing them or is that still in development?

A. No, we want to see a very high level. These are safety high-risk items, so we want to see a high level of compliance, so for our facility, we'd like to see, for PIREPs, 85-plus percent. When we're looking at our initial compliance level, you know, that would be almost a 100 percent increase in our compliance there. With safety alerts, I would like to see that number be above 90 percent and as of -- so I know our initial compliance early in 2024 was closer to 40 percent and as we rounded out the end of 2024, we were closer to 77 percent, so we saw huge growth with our safety alert issuance and we're seeing some good fruits going into 2025.

Q. So what training or what tools have been developed to increase that compliance?

A. For safety alerts?

Q. For both, PIREPs and safety.

A. I'll start with safety alerts, so some things that we've done is we're trying to just keep the discussion on safety alerts ongoing, so we put out a facility newsletter, when there's situations where controllers are doing a bang-up job, meaning just a top-notch job, we do a controller spotlight, we try and recap

the situation, what they do, did well, what was kind of going on during the event, highlighting that controllers are issuing safety alerts, so we're trying to use more, I don't know what -- to catch more bees with sugar than --

(Laughter.)

MR. HARRIS: So we're trying to just recognize it, so when we don't have -- when we have an event where we have someone that doesn't issue a safety alert when it was warranted --

MR. OGDEN: Um-hum.

MR. HARRIS: -- we choose not to include that person in the write-up, but what we do is kind of have -- you know, the whole hundred and 58 days since an injury, we do something more of that, like a hundred -- it's been a hundred and 75 days since we've had the last event, last safety alert issued, kind of capturing that, when's the last time we didn't have a safety alert when we should have --

MR. OGDEN: Um-hum.

MR. HARRIS: -- I don't recall the exact number, but I think we got up to close to like a hundred and 68 days, and then we kind of keep that update going on in the newsletter and then all of a sudden it will be like four days and then people are like oh, how do we go from 178 to four and think if people -- the goal is, it's just like oh, I wonder what caused the reset and then that's typically when we'll have our local safety come in, council come in and have a brief about like what was going on in the situation

and where we could've been, so -- so that is just kind of ongoing dialogue we do, like send a newsletter every month. I'm not saying it's in every newsletter because as these folks from NATCA can say, our goal is to not have to issue safety alerts and so it's not like this comes up frequently, so when it does we try and highlight more the good than the bad.

As far as training-wise, we -- when I say "we," collaboratively with NATCA and local safety council developed what I would call simulation training, so we were able to go through and use a program called TARGETS and also use the last year's safety alerts that we had within the facility and we created short videos of these. What I have found is that controllers want to issue safety alerts, it's typically not well developed in muscle memory of issuing safety alerts.

So phraseology's unique, it's not natural, kind of compared to how we typically issue alerts and so our goal with this safety alert training was to get people in a room, one of those actually occurred in this room, we got these events coming up, we're talking about safety alerts and we're giving people the opportunity to issue safety alerts in an environment like this and just talking about, you know, why we don't do it, what are situations in the last year where we should've done it and why we didn't do it and talking -- you know, talking about why we just need to be issuing safety alerts even when maybe there might be the human factors side of the same, it's not warranted in a

situation, just trying to get people to get -- just issue the safety alert and then kind of go through the -- like, the recovery stage and stuff, so a follow-up that we have in addition to that is that we're going to do one-on-one safety alert training, again, with all of our supervisors working with their employees one on one and they're going to go through the safety alert training again.

The group format was good but again, we don't know -- my goal is just to get people used to using the phraseology and I want supervisors to feel confident that their employees in these situations know how to issue safety alerts and if it can't, make that a part of the -- just something that should be on the radar and follow-up should be occurring so people can just spit out this phraseology and everyone's on the same page with expectations.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. I see. I really appreciate the background notes, extensive, it's fantastic. Talking more about this event, we mentioned the CER --

A. Um-hum.

Q. -- and reviewing the CER notes, it says the NEXRAD was out until 02:53 Zulu, discussion on the impact to operations when NEXRAD's out of service will occur, and airspace would be why the MSAW was delayed in alerting ATC. Can you talk to me a little bit about those details?

A. Yes. So when I'm facilitating a CER or an SSR, my goal is

always to bring up discussion points that typically don't -- people don't consider in these. I know we're going to talk about, like, the basics, that's easy to cover, so I'm always trying to find particulars about contributing factors that are forgotten. So as I was reviewing this event and the NEXRAD was out of service, this is one of the discussion points that I brought up.

I'll be frank, I can't speak to the day-to-day operations and I've been out of operations for over two years, so I don't think that's fair of me to speak to that process, what that looks like, but the discussion I wanted to have is just what does that process look like, are we factoring in these outages when we're approving, it's for maintenance, that's part of the ORM process, right, is that we need to -- I mean, if I come up to someone at, you know -- if Trevor goes up to someone at Denver Center and says hey, we're going to take out the ILS of this airport and it's a mile, you know, half mile visibility, someone says Trevor, it's not the best time to do this, can we schedule this another day.

So the discussion I wanted to have is like if we've got known precipitation at these airports, are we kind of going through the same level of scrutiny with this tool that is available and so that was the discussion point that I brought up, it was what is behavior in these situations from our operational managers or our OMICs, if a supervisor is covering, is how much scrutiny are we putting into these approvals of the NEXRAD outages.

Q. Understood. And then can you glean any insight on the MSAW

being delayed?
A. Yes, so I believe you guys have -- yes, this is -- I have a lot of strengths, technology isn't one of them. I understand that there's different parameters that we have within the MSAW, I know that we requested specifically a very detailed breakdown of MSAW and I believe that you guys have that as a part of one of your requests and I --
Q. Um-hum.
A. I would not be -- I would not be the person to talk to about how that -- what I observed as I reviewed this event is that we had an aircraft at 4,000 feet and the MSAW started to alert about 2300 feet, so again, this is one of the things I brought up in the CERs is it might be good to review the automation side of this just to make sure that the tools that we have set up to help controllers be aware of these situations is accurately working. Just like anything, faults to MSAWs, faults to CAs or anything like that, or delayed, and that could potentially be really good or really bad for our workforce based on too many or not soon enough.
Q. That's fantastic. That was kind of what I was driving at is what made you think that there was an issue with the MSAW and you told me it didn't go off until about 2300.
A. Yeah, yeah, 2300, but like I said, we have a very intricate MSAW system and to speak to -- I know to speak to the different levels in the en route portion of it, I know that would be very

difficult for me, I know there's people that can explain that at a much more basic level and I'm not that person.

Q. Understood. Just a few more and then I'll be wrapped up. The SRT, so I know there's different color codings for SRTs, I'm not going to lie to you, I don't quite understand the different color codings and when they could or would be used, this one was color coded green, could you talk to me about how that decision was made and why not yellow, red or whatever combination?

A. We're not -- we're not -- like, that's not a determination for us to be made at our level, we're just as surprised at the color code as you might be when you read it.

Q. Um-hum.

A. If you've participated -- I'm sure Trevor's participated in an SRT before, it's like drum roll, please, we're yellow and it's just -- it's subjective based off facts that they have. I'm consistently -- I wouldn't say surprised, I never know how that determination -- we're not trained on how that determination is being made, the only thing that I really understand is depending on certain color codings maybe additional follow-up is required based on those codings. For example, on a QC order, a color code of yellow is going to require an SSR to be completed. From a QC standpoint, that's the only thing that really sticks out to me.

Q. I see, okay. And then final question, maybe has a follow-up, but expectations as far as this event, what met your expectations, what did not meet your expectations as QC?

A. QC, what met my expectations. Expectations met is that how we're issuing safety alerts. I feel like our -- I would say based on the feedback from the OMIC of the area that the staffing was in a configuration allowed for a good result here, so staffing. And again, my role is not to scrutinize, if the OMIC feels like the staffing was where it should've been, then I wholly trust him. So staffing.

Communication, that we were notifying our OS so we can get management involved in the ALNOT process, I know the response on ALNOT is much quicker than we've done in previous events and so I was happy to see improvement there.

Overall teamwork in resolving this, I felt like our facility did a really good job of coming together and just providing whatever services we could to try and find that out, so meeting expectations, yes.

Not meeting expectations, I would say the two areas that we need to prove upon in this area is a better awareness of forecasted weather and -- in our operations, and ensuring that PIREPs are disseminated and solicited in advance so when these type of events come up, we have as much up-to-date information that we can provide to the pilots. Mind you -- yes, I'll end with that.

Q. Yeah, okay. And then I apologize, there's a follow-up. Is there any training being developed as a result of this event, specifically?

A. I would defer that to my -- the training department. Currently, no.

MR. OGDEN: Okay. That's all I have for now, thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor?

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. All right, just a couple things. Did you complete the CPEC or did somebody else complete that?

A. I recall, I completed the --

Q. Okay, when you were completing that, did anything jump out at you right away and if so, kind of, what? Any kind of observations or kind of "aha" from your review of that?

A. I was pleased to see us issue the safety alert. Yes. I want us to always be in a position in this where we're issuing safety alerts and I want it to be the -- when we're not doing it, I want it to be the exception, not the standard and so I was very pleased to see that we issued a timely safety alert in this situation.

Q. And then how many QC specialists do you have under you?

A. Two.

Q. Two, okay. And how many OSAs are you guys on average completing a month?

A. That varies. I would say, if I was to average over the last year, closer to -- I'd say between 75 and 90.

Q. And you're using those OSAs for compliance or the PIREPs and everything? Is there a way that you guys are tracking that at all or --

A. Are we using LSAs for compliance, yes.
Q. Okay. Specifically for your CAPs, for your PIREPs and your safety alert CAPs?
A. I find for us in PIREPs, we're going back to more data collection outside of LSAs, that we're in the operations collecting the data in a similar fashion that we did when we found that we were at a low level of compliance in our initial, gathering information, ensuring that the airports require PIREPs and then validating that we are inputting those PIREPs in through AISR.
Q. For the SRT, I saw there was rated green and it did say a district follow-up required, did they -- what did that look like or have they followed up on that?
A. There hasn't been any specific guidance from the district on this follow-up. I want to think about that for a second. Can you give me just a second, I think I'll remember something.
MR. BOUSU: Yeah, no problem.
(Pause.)
MR. HARRIS: Yeah, I'm going to stick with my original answer.
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. Okay. Casey had asked you what met your expectations and what didn't from the incident, one of the things you said that didn't was a better awareness of forecasted weather in the operation. In your opinion, what does the area need or what does

the facility need to help with that?
A. Yeah. So I'll say one thing we do very well is how we've been -- we're trying to be very proactive, we're trying -- we're trying to find out a way to make this -- and this is well before this event, so I don't want you to feel like this is spurning the actions, but we're trying to find ways -- the reason that's a top five issue is that's every facility in the NAS, and so we're part of that, we're part of that data.

Controllers receive a pre-duty weather brief before they come in to the operations, so let's say that you guys show up here at 5:30 in the morning to take your shift, you're going to watch your video, feeling probably like a big bag of garbage because it's just, you're tired, you watch a video and it shows a forecast of the area. Now, if we got on right now and looked at our forecast for the day, it's like looking at a Van Gogh picture, it evolves, the blobs change, the colors change.

So trying to capture a way to what I feel is not fair to controllers is to look at something at 5:30 in the morning and at 12:30 you're supposed to remember where moderate turbulence is, not only at the surface, but in the flight levels, where icing is at, not only -- I mean, we're talking about the equivalent of like Montana to like Arizona and you're supposed to know what's going on at both of those, and you're talking to air traffic in both those areas, so my -- it's just making sure that controllers are aware of what's forecasted, not only at 5:30 but also at 12:30 and

we are working collaboratively with NATCA on processes currently where we can give controllers more data, real-time data as they come in to operations.

Q. And speaking of the local safety council, is there anything coming up in referencing this incident or that you guys had planned prior to, either briefings or kind of any training?

A. Yes. We try to -- we have briefed on PIREPs frequently, we tried to get local safety council to brief on this in January and when this event kind of came through, they had already kind of met for the month and so for us, it was can you guys just kind of follow us, can you guys squeeze us in, and then talking to the NATCA facility rep, he asked if there's any way we can push this to February just based on, number one is that we want to make sure we have all the data, that we're not going into this event -- again, we don't want people to scrutinize what local safety council is saying, we want them to have all the information that they need, that they can speak well to this, they can speak intelligently, so per the request of NATCA, we held off on this until this month, so my understanding is they're currently discussing these -- this event and other items related to PIREPs for --

MR. BOUSU: That's all I had, thank you, appreciate it.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. Speaking of LSC and PIREPs, when we were reviewing the notes

from your LSC, there was a bullet that just said PIREP 28 minutes before, do you recall that or know what that's talking about?
A. I think it would refer to the fact that we -- and I could -- it would be a speculation, but probably assuming that there was opportunity for PIREPs 28 minutes before the event.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. That would be a complete speculation on my part.
Q. Okay.
A. As I don't take notes for local safety council, I do participate in those when I can and I don't recall if I was able to attend that meeting.
Q. Okay, so who are members of the local safety council, then?
A. I am not a member of the local safety council.
Q. Okay.
A. You want specific names on those?
Q. No, just generally --
A. Oh, okay. That's going to be operational supervisors and I would say dues-paying NATCA members that are going to -- representing NATCA.
Q. Um-hum, okay. And so you just attend when you can, you said?
A. I try and prioritize it, sometimes these meetings are held on Saturdays and Sundays just due to factoring workload, I have come in on the weekends to attend these meetings, but some situations I just simply can't attend.
Q. Okay. How often do they meet?

A. Twice a month.
Q. And so if you're unable to attend, what kind of communication happens between you and the council or does any communication happen between you and the council?
A. Typically, the communication occurs beforehand, so for example, if we have something that's maybe trending in our facility, let's say, let's make up a hypothetical, merging target procedures, I will ping the local safety council leads and say can you please bring this up, this is the topic that was discussed in an SSR, for example, can you just address this and see if you feel like there is a concern in operations on this topic and if there is, after -- because sometimes they'll just -- it's a one-off, so they'll say hey, guys, merging target procedures in the flight levels, is this being done, are you seeing this isn't being done, people are like I don't where Harris is coming from, I think we're rocking it so it's like okay, let's just drop it, I trust these folks.

But if they go in there and say you know, we don't really know where we're at, they could communicate that back and then we can start doing some data pulling, we can do an emphasis item on a specific topic or ask our supervisors to complete an IPM based on having this as a focus for the month so they're not just completing an IPM blindly, "okay, there might be some concerns here, can you please make this a focus," so --
Q. Okay. So who, then, are doing SSRs and things like that with

you?
A. NATCA.
Q. Is it LSC members or another --
A. Typically, no.
Q. Okay. Do LSC members have any -- ever get involved in any -- with SSRs or SYSIRs or anything like that?
A. I would say typically, no.
Q. Okay. Casey asked you or I don't know, one of these guys asked you -- asked you about training that's happened on the event since this happened, but what about just specifically on PIREP solicitation and dissemination, what kind of training has gone on that you had input from the QC perspective?
A. So the PIREP training that we've done is what I recall has been in briefings and I think that you guys have made a request for that specific information, so you guys would have -- what you guys have from training would be a part of that request for data on PIREPs, and if you don't have that, we can definitely provide that. Yeah. I mean, I couldn't speak specifically to dates or times that we provided anything recently, but I know we have put out stuff recently.
Q. And they've been -- you're saying you think that they've been predominantly briefings, who are -- do you know who are giving those briefings?
A. So the two that I recall as of recent, one was just data that we had for throughout the NAS on PIREPs and weather-related

events, that was a read-and-acknowledge in Team, so that would be briefed out, responsibility of the individual to read the brief. And the other one that I remember was OS and CIC responsibilities and that was a verbal briefing to come from the operational supervisor to the individuals in the operations, and that was discussing more -- like more -- looking at weather more holistically versus just putting a hyper-focus on getting PIREPs instead, just factoring in all of the different parts of PIREPs.

Q. Okay. A little bit of a switch. You talked about a newsletter you guys are doing for the workforce.

A. Um-hum.

Q. Who's -- I mean, I just kind of -- it sounds interesting. Who's putting it together and how does it get distributed?

A. So I -- we had -- we kind of had like a little bit of a riff in our facility, just feel like there wasn't great communication going on, I felt like the bigger push was for members of NATCA who are not paying-dues members, who are on, like, local -- I don't know if -- Travis, I don't know if you guys have like a list at your facility where like if you get like updates from your FacRep and there was just people who are not on that list because they're not paying dues and so they're like we're -- kind of felt like we're not management, we are represented by NATCA but we're not really getting stuff communicated to us, so we want to know what's going on, too, we want to understand what staffing changes or what work groups are going on or where we're at with work groups or

like what's going on in a facility and so one of the things that was determined is that we could put out something like a facility newsletter. So I typically -- it's just I'm winging something every month, it's very well prepared and what I do is I try and collect as much data as I can, typically it will have certification, it's just like a general overview of the facility, where we're at with work groups, who's gotten certified, what are trends that we're seeing in our facility, kind of what happened last month that we need to be talking about, where we're at with PIREPs.

I know, I think the last one for January, we were able to look at January 2024 versus January 2025 and we saw -- from one year we almost saw like a 65 percent increase in PIREPs and so again, I know we're low on compliance but we're better than we were last year, so you know -- and so as we collect more and more data, we're trying to find that balance between we need to improve and we are improving.

And as you guys know, it's like it just tends to focus on what we're not doing right, so -- but the last thing I do is I put this data together, I'll run it by the NATCA facility rep, by my ATM and my XO and just say, "How does this look?" It's 99 percent better. And then from there, the NATCA rep will say hey, can you change this, I just -- I don't -- this feels maybe a little tad aggressive, or can we do this, whatever he wants, I mean, this is -- the goal is to make this as collaborative as possible between

that and then when I get the thumbs-up from everybody, we'll post it out in Team and -- as a read-and-acknowledge for everybody. So it's not like it's a required briefing item, it's just a way to -- and I've had actually really good perception from people, not only at the management level but the workforce level, just kind of kudos and like I said, we try to do a controller spotlight almost every month, just something that came up where a controller did a really great job.

What we're trying to do lately, for example, like with our Ketchikan event we had the other day is just say there was a lot going on and there was a really -- we could've really provided poor service here and we didn't, so kind of highlighting controllers when they're doing a great job because this is what we want to see repeated.

And then we use those types of situations, too, for -- we capture those, we have a running time off award list that we keep going to when we capture these types of situations so we can more formally recognize the employees when we are allocated money in the spring for these types of awards.

Q. That's good. Okay, thanks. So when the -- you talked early on about -- about NEXRAD being out and kind of having conversations with the facility about that and you said you suggested a review to ensure tools are working accurately, did that suggestion get taken, who's doing that review, has it -- has there been any result, any result from that review?

A. So are we talking about NEXRAD?
Q. Yeah. I mean, that was what you referenced when you were -- when you were talking, you know, very early on.
A. Yeah, so I can speak to the follow-up on that, so the NEXRAD is -- just know that there's things that I can control and there's things that I can influence and things I'm concerned about, my job, I have almost zero control of what happens in this facility. So for me, what I can control is just disseminating this information.

So I did bring this topic up at our standups, I brought this topic up in our e-board which we need to have on every Tuesday with the operational managers and I also addressed this in a facility event review for -- we try, with these types of events, to do a facility event review and I believe you guys have this for the Bering Air event and it's essentially just findings from our facility based on our CERs, our SSRs, discussions, and just trying to, again, take all this data and put it in a way that, not just the people -- it's a terrible event, but there are things to learn from this, that ideally, we do better or we continue to do in next events, so just trying to capture that and disseminate it out.

And so these topics were sent out to all the OMICs, OMs, and the OSs, it's just things to reflect on when you're approving these NEXRAD outages specifically, is you need to be going over, reviewing the weather, they've got a scope right there, they can go over to Nome, zoom out and they're going to see potentially a

big blob of orange, green, or red out there and ideally, just like an ILS being out here and saying hey, probably not the best time to be taking out a pretty valuable tool right now, so -- outside of that, I don't know how to -- how to pin anything else specifically for these operational orders, I can give them information, what they do with that information, can they formalize this into a process, yes, but as Trevor will tell you, at that desk it's just like controllers, it's going to be good judgment must be applied and I can't teach people how to have good judgment, just how to factor in what's in front of them and then make the best call possible.

Q. Yeah.

A. As far as the MSAW alerting, again, I feel like I've gone through that. There's nothing that I've heard back from the national MEARTS program or FDP on any of the analysis of this tool that has told me that our automation is not working as it should. If I was to speculate on this, that's all it would be, but I feel like we're in -- based on the lack of follow-up from their end is that there's nothing alarming in this, is that we didn't have technology or MSAW working adequately in this situation, that the system operated as designed.

Q. Okay, thanks. So then sticking with the NEXRAD piece, if -- and since you've been an OS before, I'm assuming you would already have an idea about this, but if they come to you and say okay, NEXRAD's going to be out and you see precipitation, you're looking

at it and thinking about approving it and you see precipitation on the scope, what would you expect to happen to that precipitation on the scope if they take the NEXRAD out?

A. It's gone.

Q. Right, okay.

A. Yeah. It is a tool that's no longer available.

Q. Okay.

A. I will say another piece, just talking about all the layers in the Swiss cheese, it was brought up that the SOC also calls the AWU to verify that they're okay with them taking these NEXRAD weather stations, so I feel like there are multiple layers built in that, in this system, where not only air traffic but also the weather unit has a level of discretionary buy-in to this weather approval tool and that was told to me by Michael Ottenweller and he was the CWSU acting in lieu of Graham Weston being out of the building.

Q. Okay.

A. And from what he told me is that they also have the ability to say this is not a good time to approve a NEXRAD outage.

Q. Um-hum. So it seems like it made it through a few people --

A. Yes.

Q. -- and approved through a few people. Um-hum.

A. And again, I will say I believe what he had -- I recall this, it was -- that call would go through the AWU and not CWSU.

Q. Okay. What kind of training briefings are available to the

OMICs and OSs here and do you ever take any part in those?
A. What type of training? I mean, some of the training briefings that we provide for all of our workforce, our OMs and our OSs also get all those. We do have a fairly -- I know we have, at times, OMLDP, which is Operational Management Leadership Development Program, where they will work with the OSs to complete some type of training in procedures and processes. I'm not in training, so I'm not aware of those.

A recent training that we, I would say QC was involved with was after the November 90193 event, is just reviewing the overdue and ALNOT checklist with the supervisors and the OMICs to ensure that they (1) understood where that checklist was in the operations and then (2) is they understood the expectations for ALNOT processes when these types of notifications occur.

One thing that we wanted to clarify is how quickly, when we're talking about the timeline, 30 minutes from ALNOT to initiate and we wanted them to be ultra-clear on what that meant, so there's no ambiguity what that term means. So we were able to reach out to QCG and just make sure that our interpretation of that was in line with kind of what we thought we were able to train on that and I felt like that led to a better result in this situation because we have a much quicker response with our ALNOT processes.

Q. Congratulations on that.
A. It's a team effort.

Q. Yeah. Okay, I'm going to pass -- oh, actually -- sorry. So -- and this is just capturing something that you had brought up before, now I want to better understand it, in your SOP, do you have something about using a PIREP worksheet, it sounds like, to possibly track PIREP solicitation, are you familiar with that?
A. Help me out with FSOP, that's a new term for me. I might be --
Q. I'm sorry, your facility -- your facility operation.
A. Like our SOP, is that what you're --
Q. Yeah, your SOP.
A. Oh, okay. Sorry.
Q. Has something in there about -- do you have it up, by chance? Just about PIREP solicitation and dissemination and having a worksheet in the areas, like in -- to keep up -- it sounds like maybe no.
A. If I was to -- if I was to speculate, the worksheet that I understand -- oh, thank you.

(Pause.)

MR. HARRIS: I would say -- I can't really speak to that, I mean --

MS. MARINAS: Okay.

MR. HARRIS: -- if that's a tool that we use, I've not been in the operations for a couple years, it's not something that I currently -- I see being used. I think -- I couldn't even tell you what I would've thought that tool be and what that looks like.

MS. MARINAS: Okay.
MR. HARRIS: And I would also note that it says "may," so it's an optional tool --
MS. MARINAS: Right.
MR. HARRIS: -- as it is written, so --
MS. MARINAS: Okay, I have no other questions, thank you.
BY MR. ARNOLD:
Q. Good morning.
A. Good morning.
Q. I just have a couple quick questions, one, the first one being an opinion question, talked a little bit about NEXRAD being taken out, the holes in the Swiss cheese lining up.
A. Yeah.
Q. If you were put in that position, would you have allowed the NEXRAD to be taken?
A. I would say -- I can't speak to that. I don't know the circumstances of the operation, I don't know what was on the glass, so I really can't -- I really can't speak to that.
Q. Okay. And the second question I had here, you spoke about a couple areas that you felt you did some improvement and I'll narrow that focus, you talked just briefly about forecasted areas, you talked about pre-duty weather briefs and how that kind of --
A. Um-hum.
Q. -- you know, you forget about that later. And you spoke earlier about being a data person and I can appreciate that, what

data do you collect or have you collected to influence your opinion that the facility as a whole needs to be better at soliciting PIREPs for forecasted areas?

A. Okay. So that would be -- I would say that one's not more data driven, it's more collaborative driven, so when I sat down in our CER, we had the north area rep, and I've also spoken about this with the facility rep, the FacRep, and said -- and just trying to be as real as possible, "Hey, Jessica, Rob, if you sat down at 5:30 in the morning and there was like this little band of severe turbulence forecasted at Barrow, what's the likelihood that you're going to remember that at 11:30 or 12:30?" It was like probably zero percent.

I mean, there is so much for our workforce to attain, that's why memory aids are such a critical part of what we do, it doesn't matter what center or terminal, memory aids are a critical part of what we do because retaining that much information is next to impossible. So that one's not going to be data driven, that's going to be more just -- that's more human factors driven in that it's impossible for controllers to retain that level of information over an eight-hour time period without having some way to refresh on that consistently.

Q. Okay. One small follow-up question to that, you spoke a little bit about your CAP items --

A. Um-hum.

Q. -- 85 percent compliance approximately, I think you said, on

soliciting and disseminating PIREPs, did you say that earlier, is that what I have down here?

A. I don't remember that percentage.

Q. Okay. Maybe I misheard you, I apologize.

A. I think -- yeah, I couldn't speak to that percentage, I don't remember --

Q. Okay.

A. -- saying anything about 85.

Q. Sure. It appears that your --

A. Can I --

Q. Yeah, go ahead.

A. I think what we were -- the only thing I brought improvement-wise was a 65 percent increase in overall PIREPs from January of 2024 to January of 2020 (sic). And honestly, I'm going to try and recall that, I don't remember if that was January and/or February, I'd have to go back to that, I'd have to go back to that, to that newsletter to recall specifically what, but I do remember the increase being roughly 65 -- in overall volume only of PIREP solicitation.

Q. Okay. Probably a typo.

A. Oh, no, you're fine.

Q. Overall volume being just a straight number for PIREPs.

A. Correct. So if this year we have -- this year we have 500 in January --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- the following year we had an increase of that at 65 percent.
Q. Okay. Okay.
A. And it was pretty dramatic, I think it was the difference of like -- if I can recall, it was like 1500 to like 2300 or something of that nature so, again, I'd have to recall the document to give you specifics on that.
Q. And that CAP being heavily focused, I just want to clarify, heavily focused on what I'll call arrival and departure PIREPs?
A. Correct.
Q. With no focus on en route PIREPs?
A. We have reviewed our en route portion, I feel like we do a really good job on that. Do I have data to speak to that? No, I can't, but what I find is when reviewing our over-flying, let's say, for example, if I'm looking at Juneau -- let's say we're looking at Nome, it's -- when I'm looking to do a review of that, I'm looking for the low-level PIREPs, Nome, Nome, Nome, Nome, Nome, I'll see like five PIREPs in that time, I'm like oh, heck, yeah, we're doing over-flight, over-flight, over-flight, over-flight, over-flight, our upper altitude controllers do a really good job painting a great picture and that reflects in our data. Over the last two years we have not had a single, that I can recall, over-flight where we've had a flight attendant or a passenger get knocked down or some type of injury of that nature in the flight levels because we're not disseminating that weather

out, so --
Q. Specifically, though, just to clarify, specifically, in the flight levels is where you're saying?
A. Correct.
MR. ARNOLD: Okay, okay, thank you.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. It's back around to me. I do have an opinion question. I've got some others, but I got a more opinion one. One of the things that I think we keep hearing is, with the weather situation, is that -- and I agree, the controllers don't have enough updated information, they're -- they read the -- I mean, they go through the weather, pre-weather (sic) briefing and then it's all day without anything. What is a solution, I mean, what are -- if you could just make a huge change on how this can change to better inform the controllers, what are some things that could happen?
A. That's where I think we should try and not reinvent the wheel, I think reaching out to facilities like, you know, Trevor's facility and see what they're doing. One thing we have considered right now is we're having a new tool that we're going to try out, we've got it up, collaborated with NATCA and it's going to be a tool that will be used by supes and CICs that will show the forecast, they'll have that information available as it comes in. I hope that we can move forward with that, I think it's -- I think it is the answer and I imagine Travis coming on position here and -- or Karena and you're hey, you're going and jumping on this

sector here, just be advised there's a forecast of moderate 24 to 28 and that's -- I feel like that's where we need to be at, is like you just got your updated information and then when I come and say, "Hey, Karena, can you give me a PIREP for that guy at 26,000 feet," you're like, "Why?" It's like well, yeah, just talk about the forecast or more ideally is that you've got it on your radar to be more proactive potentially, but -- so that's one of the things that we're in the works right now of -- as a tool, I know we'll be speaking about this tool on Tuesday in our e-board meeting about what that looks like and then, obviously, working with NATCA and seeing what the implementation and impact is for overall.

I think we have a couple things that, potentially in the coming months, including the PSAT tool that we're -- we realize that briefings are not going to change behavior, we've got to provide our workforce with tools, we've got to do more on the accountability piece not only at the supe level but even at the CIC level, it's just -- we just -- we've got to get better engagement in these -- with weather.

Q. I totally agree and I hate that our meteorologist isn't here this week because he would love to have had this discussion with you because, you know, one of the things that we do try to do is make recommendations that would create a better environment, but also one of the things we don't want to do is have a recommendation that's not going to work, so we're very careful

about -- we look at unintended consequences and that would be great if, like this, what you're working on is working here, that would be just such a model, if it's working, it's effective, that --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- we could use as something that we would -- could recommend to -- to the FAA --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- to be put out through all the agencies, but it's one of those things, I am looking forward to seeing how that's going to work and I know we will -- we're interested in finding -- because I know we see a lot of different things, but it would be something, of course, we're going to be talking with our -- you know, with our group members, we talk with, you know, other representatives from NATCA and from FAA to see well, what are the unintended consequences of this, we don't want to also recommend something that's going to increase workload.

A. Yeah.

Q. But these are great ideas and I hope facilities -- like yeah, this is a great idea that you're coming up with.

A. Yeah. If I could offer my opinion, I think where we're at in an agency is that we've -- we typically do a really good job keeping airplanes separated between terrain and other aircraft, and that's kind of the standard of what an effective controller looks like, is five miles, thousand feet. Where we've missed the

mark is that our data shows us is, which we tried to collect in our last brief that we did in January, is that the likelihood that you're going to put two planes together or you're going to put a plane into terrain, it's pretty low.

The likelihood you're going to throw an aircraft into weather, both -- whether icing or turbulence and we're going to cause injuries, I mean, what the data -- and I will say that that data is based kind of on what I'm seeing with those -- that's where your likelihood of us having major issues are and really trying to change the controller mentality in saying look, I appreciate that you can do five and one, but I need you to -- that's not likely where your -- NTSB is going to be showing up or your ERTs are going to be showing up, it's their weather-related events.

And that's where we really -- these are things that we can protect for and when we do protect for them, we don't really know that we're even protecting for them, you know what I mean? Like, we never know the impact of safety when we're actually doing our jobs in that manner where it's easy to gauge five miles and one because if you're doing it, no one's talking about it.

Q. Absolutely, absolutely. So yeah, I'm anxious to see how that turns out, so I'll probably be doing some follow-up just to check.

A. Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So that's all I have for right now.

Casey.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Yeah, just a follow-up. In the event, the controller had received an advisory that Runway 10 and 2-8 were closed, there was going to be a delay of some type, and they had made a suggestion, I won't say instruction, but they advised the pilot you could slow down and the pilot agreed with that and they opted to slow down. Do you have any comments on that, is that a technique that's trained, is that something gained on the floor with the experience, how does that come about?

A. In my opinion, it's a great practice because you're providing a service to a pilot, you're giving a pilot a big picture of what's going on. I've done this, where I've asked a pilot hey, you -- let's say at Kodiak going to King Salmon -- hey, you can depart right now, but if you depart right now you're going to hold at this fix for four minutes, so you're calm, wait four minutes, then depart or depart now.

Now, to say well, we departed four minutes later and we ran into a flock of eagles, well, what are you doing, Jeff, why are you even calling me, I'm not getting -- I'm not telling the pilot anything but information, you want to save four minutes of fuel, hang out on the ground; if you want to hold in the air because you want to practice your holding patterns, that's great, but at the end of the day, I'm not -- I'm just telling you and I think that's an additional service and I think we should be doing that and I think it's what our workforce does and I commend the controller,

he's trying to be safe, orderly, and expeditious, he's trying to increase the efficiency of that, in that situation, so I would say I would encourage, in my opinion, I think this is a good practice, I think this is what we should be doing for our pilots, is giving them all the information that they need, so --

MR. OGDEN: Fantastic, thank you. That's all I have.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Trevor?

MR. BOUSU: Nothing to follow up on.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.

MS. MARINAS: Nothing from me, thank you.

MR. ARNOLD: Nothing from me.

MS. KOSCHIG: Did you want to ask the magic question? If you have the wand.

MR. OGDEN: Oh, sure, sure.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Money is no object, any tool you could have is yours, what tools would you like to see implemented in the facility or the airspace, weather products, anything?

A. I think this piece, that tool is going to be awesome, this has kind of been a home-grown system, so I don't know, with time, if we had more money to invest into this, to capture all of the factors that are required, turbulence, and just giving our controllers more real-time data, that would definitely be awesome. If I could change another thing, too, I think one of the things, you know, I'd like to see us go back to normal schedules, I think

these schedules, these new schedules for controllers with these fatigue mitigations, I don't know, I don't know. It hasn't been my favorite thing thus far, it's been very difficult for me, at a QC level, to accomplish what I need to get accomplished at times as far as getting SSRs together, getting NATCA available to represent our workforce, I mean, it's just been challenging and it's January, it's January in Alaska and I'm having a difficult time getting people to sit down at a table, that is asinine.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. HARRIS: We need -- so that has been, that's been challenging, a little bit of a barrier for us, too, so -- and you're going to see it even more so as we try to accomplish recurrent training, pro training, we got people working straight to midnight to accommodate to these new schedules, I mean, can you imagine working a mid and them expecting to do recurrent training for a couple hours after that, it's just -- there's some unique barriers, so that probably would be the only two things that's just been unique.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, okay. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: So any "oh, by the ways"?

(No response.)

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So the last question I always ask, is there anything that we didn't ask you that you thought we were going to ask you?

A. No.

Q. No. Anything you'd like to add?
A. No, thanks for all you guys do.
Q. Oh.
A. Appreciate you being up here in February something.
MS. KOSCHIG: Oh. Appreciate you being here for the interview and giving us a lot of good information and then we'll go ahead and end the interview at 9:25.
(Whereupon, at 9:25 a.m., the interview concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Jeff Harris
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 26, 2025

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.

[redacted]

_____

Karen D. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: JEREMY PASKETT, Training Support Manager
Federal Aviation Administration

Anchorage, Alaska

Tuesday,
February 25, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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KATHLEEN BANASZAK, Representative
(On behalf of Jeremy Paskett)

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:30 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, the time now is 11:30 Alaska Standard Time, right? Okay.

MR. PASKETT: Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So good morning, my name is Betty Koschig and I am a senior air traffic control investigator with the NTSB. What is your name?

MR. PASKETT: Jeremy Paskett.

MS. KOSCHIG: Could you please spell your last name?

MR. PASKETT: P-a-s-k-e-t-t.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And before we get started, I just want to make sure that you're aware that we will be audio recording this interview and can you just acknowledge that you are aware it's audio recorded?

MR. PASKETT: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And we will be making a transcription of the audio and we will -- it will become part of our factual report. The audio will not be part of our factual report, but the transcription will be and it will be in our public docket when it comes out with it, but that audio, we keep that. Okay. And I see that you do have a representative with you, is this person the person you want to be your representative?

MR. PASKETT: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Can you please state your name?

MS. BANASZAK: Yes, Katie Banaszak with the Office of Chief Counsel.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, will you spell your last name, please?

MS. KOSCHIG: B-a-n-a-s-z-a-k.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. Thank you. And as your representative, we will be -- all the questions will be coming to you, you are more than welcome to talk to your representative at any time, if you want to leave out of the room and talk to her, if we ask a question that you want to question her about, you're more than welcome, we'll just cut the -- you know, turn off the audio and then we'll continue once you come back in, so -- but all the questions will be directed to you. All right, any questions so far?

MR. PASKETT: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, so now let's go into the introductions. Okay, part of our process at the NTSB is to invite parties in to participate in the investigation. The reason they come in is to provide us technical expertise. Although we are -- we are air traffic control investigators, we don't know everything and we want to make sure that we have the experts here to help us to make sure that we are gathering everything we need and getting the expertise from the FAA and from NATCA in this case, which are part of our group. So I'm going to go around and let everyone introduce themselves. First, I'll start out with my colleague.

MR. OGDEN: Thank you. Casey Ogden, my background is

primarily military, I spent about eight years in the military, transitioned over to the FAA, spent a few years there before transitioning to my role as an air safety investigator.

MR. BOUSU: My name is Trevor Bousu, Operations Manager at Denver Center, I've been in that operations manager role for two years and 14 years as an OS before that.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

MS. MARINAS: Karena Marinas, NATCA air safety investigator, a controller at LA Center for about 20 years now.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold, a NATCA ASI for about half a year now and I've been with the agency since '08.

MS. KOSCHIG: So this group here is the NTSB team and the NTSB group for air traffic. There's other groups that are out there, we have an actual -- we have our investigator-in-charge, there are other teams or other groups, I guess, is the better word to say it, we have the ops group, there's structure, there's several other groups involved, so we are just one of the groups in this investigation.

But as the NTSB, we are an independent agency, just a little bit about ourselves and our goal here, our mission is to find out what the probable cause of this accident was and so we're on a fact-finding mission, we're here to talk about everything, we're just not here -- we don't have any agenda on this as the cause and we're going to gear everything for it, that's not what we do, we're here to pick up the facts and look at all the facts and make

a determination. But as the NTSB, we're not part of DOT, FAA, or any other agency and also, we don't have any regulatory power. Basically, our power lies within our safety recommendations and we are very strong on that, so -- okay, let's see. So we're going to be -- you know, during the time that we're here and I hope -- and during our -- our interview with you, we'll ask a whole gamut of questions just to see if there's something that this -- that you know that this facility could need as far as if there's anything, safety, just anything dealing with safety that you can help us to understand or anything that is -- at this facility could use that would help enhance safety.

So this interview today, also, it will last about an hour, usually they don't last much longer than that, and what I'll do is start asking some admin questions, get a little -- to know a little about you and your ATC history and then we'll start asking you some questions about training and also some about the accident, what you know about it, if you know -- you know, what particulars if you were involved.

Anyway, it's after the fact, as far as collecting data or anything like that. So we're going to just bounce around on different areas. So during this, what you'll see us doing is I like to type while you're talking so that if there will be things that you say and I'm like oh, I need to go back and ask you something on that, so it's just taking notes for my part and you might see other people take notes or jotting down, we will destroy

those, those are going nowhere. What's going to be used is what's in the audio, but those are just for our purpose during this interview, just so you know. So we're not ignoring you, we're not searching e-mail or searching the Internet, just so you know. Also, at any point you do have any questions, feel free to ask. If we don't -- if we don't phrase a question in a way that's understandable, say "What do you mean?" That's totally fine.

If you don't know an answer to a question, you don't know it, that's a -- that's a great answer. I mean, if there's something we're asking you to recollect, if you don't know anything about, you can't recollect something you don't know, so I just want to make that clear. Any questions on any of that?

MR. PASKETT: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: So if you -- but if you do need a break, I think we're not going to be here long enough, please just say I need to take a short break.

MR. PASKETT: Sure.

MS. KOSCHIG: So I think that's -- anything else you can think of?

MR. OGDEN: The event.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah, thanks. What we're here to talk about is the accident that occurred on February 6th, involving Bering 445 and that -- yeah, for that event. Sorry, I didn't write in my notes stuff on that, but yeah, we're here for that event, the accident, actually, so that we can gather the

information and get -- you know, for that. Okay, so anything else I'm missing?

MR. OGDEN: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you.

INTERVIEW OF JEREMY PASKETT

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So let's start out finding a little bit about you. Even though we know you're not working as a -- on the control floor --

A. Correct.

Q. -- I still might ask you some ATC-type related questions, like, what are your operating initials?

A. Juliet Papa.

Q. Okay. All right. And what was your age at the time of the accident?

A. Forty-nine.

Q. What's your job title?

A. I'm a support manager assigned to training. On my official FAA records, it would be operational supervisor tied to operational manager.

Q. Okay. Do you ever work as an OS or OM?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So you kind of detailed into the support job?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. That's good to know. How long is that going to be or is it --

A. How long is it going to be?
Q. Yeah, how long -- well, how long have you been doing it and is there -- is there a term that you're going to be doing it within?
A. I've been doing it since approximately last April.
Q. Okay.
A. And I do not have an estimated end date.
Q. Okay. Do you like it?
A. Yes, I enjoy it.
Q. Oh, great, that's perfect. So when did you start working for the FAA?
A. Two thousand and six.
Q. And was that going to the academy?
A. Correct.
Q. Where did you go from there?
A. I came here to this facility.
Q. Okay. Have you been here ever since?
A. No, I transferred to Salt Lake Center, I don't recall the exact date.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. And at Salt Lake you were a CPC?
A. I transferred to Salt Lake Center as an operational supervisor.
Q. Okay. So where were you before Salt Lake?

A. Here.
Q. Here, I'm sorry.
A. Yeah.
Q. So you were a CPC here and then you went to --
A. I was CPC here.
Q. -- Salt Lake, okay.
A. Yes, correct.
Q. All right. And then you came back here as --
A. Also as an operational supervisor.
Q. Okay, cool.
A. Do you need more specifics?
Q. No, I think we've got some --
A. Okay.
Q. -- stuff on your -- the background, but I just wanted to hear a little bit from you. Any military?
A. No.
Q. Some of these questions we ask, they may not be applicable, but I just want to make sure we're not guessing on things. Did you work at any contract towers at all?
A. No.
Q. Do you have any degrees?
A. An associate's.
Q. Okay. In what?
A. Air traffic.
Q. All right. Where did you get that?

A. UAA.
Q. Oh, nice. Do you hold any aeronautical certificates?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Do you have a current medical?
A. No, it's not required for my position.
Q. Okay. Who's your supervisor?
A. Talon Medema.
Q. Are you current -- are you qualified on any of the positions here or do you stay current with it?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Do you work overtime?
A. No.
Q. What's your work schedule?
A. Typically, Monday through Friday administrative hours. I may flex in as early as 6:00 a.m. and stay as late as 2:30 in the afternoon, or maybe come in as late as 7:00 a.m. and stay until 3:30 in the afternoon.
Q. Okay. And you were working a normal schedule the week of the accident?
A. Yeah, I don't recall if I had leave or not, but yes, I would be -- that would be my normal scheduled workweek.
Q. Great. Okay, I think those are about all of the admin-type questions that I want to ask, so first I'm going to ask just a little bit about the accident, just to find out how much you know or don't know. Did you review the audio replay of that or the

video, audio or video replay of the accident?
A. I have seen it, it's been quite some time.
Q. Okay. Did you have any -- and like I said, I might ask some stupid questions or what seems to be weird, but after the accident, did you have anything to do with helping to get all the information together to assist the ATM or anyone else in the building to gather the data?
A. No.
Q. Okay. I know we --
A. That was completed by the quality control department.
Q. Okay, all right. And I know we asked for some training information, were you -- did you dig up any of that for us?
A. Can you be more specific?
Q. I think the training as far as the refresher training, I think, didn't we get some refresher training sheets?
MR. OGDEN: I'll check.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. Just to double-check, on the training that each of the controllers had completed, I mean, did you -- did you retrieve any information for this investigation?
A. My specialist collected the information. It was --
Q. Oh, okay, great.
A. So she did the data collection.
Q. Oh, okay, all right. Yeah, that makes sense.
A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. But as far as anything else dealing with the accident, you didn't have any involvement.
A. Really --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- unconnected to that.
Q. Okay. All right, perfect. So let's get into a little bit of just a couple questions about -- so are you the person that will get together what's going to be on the annual refresher training every year?
A. On the annual training plan?
Q. Yes.
A. Yes. So I coordinate with the -- also the local safety council to identify the items that will be covered in the annual training plan.
Q. All right. And --
A. It's a collaborative process and we have some items that are required per our orders to cover.
Q. And what are some of those items that are on this annual plan?
A. Specifically, I know PIREPs are included in the annual training plan, things such as communication, team work -- excuse me, I should be more specific. Those things are in the order, you're asking for what's specifically in our annual training plan?
Q. Yeah, annuals.
A. Let me take a look and I can tell you.

Q. Okay, great.
A. Lost aircraft orientation.
Q. Um-hum.
A. Recovery and air traffic operations. Safety alerts, opposite direction operations, fatigue awareness, oceanic procedures, and we'll also have operational supervisor and controller-in-charge training. And then the DEN and VIP movements, the facility evacuation, weather, PIREP dissemination and solicitation, traffic advisories. We have not finalized under equipment, if it's going to be non-radar and primary backup mode or backup equipment, but it will be at least two of those items.

Also the following procedures, we haven't identified it, but pertinent to intruders, special flight handling, bird activity, special activity airspace, military operations, suspicious UAS activities and space ops. We'll cover at least two items in the basic sections, we haven't identified those yet, and then we'll cover, at minimum, one topic related to professional skills and we have not identified those, but those would be similar to team work, communication, leadership, self-motivation, professionalism, those types of things.

Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, I think that gives you a pretty good synopsis.
Q. Okay. And yeah, that sounds like a lot of great stuff there. So how do you ensure that the controllers complete this training?
A. So we track their completion in Team.

Q. Um-hum. And how did they do it is what --
A. So the refresher training is issued in multiple ways, we will have briefings issued, that will be in Team, we will have simulation training provided where it will be done in a simulation-type environment, and then that will be tracked with signature and then entered into Team upon the completion with their -- each of their completion dates. At times, the local safety council also assists us. During crew brief, we have some of these assignments sent out that way, to where the supervisors host those and all of these end up being tracked in Team.
Q. Okay, great. Do you like Team?
A. Personally, no, I don't care for it.
Q. How come?
A. It's not as user friendly as what we had expected it to be.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. And it's, you know, just moving around in the program itself and trying to find the avenues of what we're looking for.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. So --
MS. KOSCHIG: No, that's "good to know" stuff, yeah. I was wondering how that was coming out. Well, I did have some more questions, but I don't want to -- I don't want to take everybody's questions, so Casey, I'm going to bounce it to you.
MR. OGDEN: Perfect. Thank you, Betty.
MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. So I just kind of have a general overview of a few things and then get a little specific towards the event, but during the tour, we got a view of the PSAT system.

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell me about that, when was it implemented, how is it going, anything you know.

A. The PSAT system is new. I want to say it was briefed out to our operational supervisors initially in probably October of last year time frame. Correction, to our operational managers in October of last year. And even prior to that, they were developing, so this has just been part of the developing plan. I believe it was added to the AAID, which is a controller data interface piece of equipment, that probably also happened in October for the links. And then I believe official training rolled out to the operational supervisors in January. This was last year. And to the CICs.

The PSAT tool, if you review our ZAN SOP, it will talk about a PIREP worksheet that could be used for tracking purposes. It is a breakdown of the airport's reach of the areas and it has a grid system so the supervisor can mark where he's received PIREPs for -- however, it's optional in our SOP to be utilized. We could not get there with collaboration of making that something that's mandatory for CICs to use and whatnot, so it is an optional tool. Also, because it's optional and because it's not visual as far as

always out in front of everybody's face, it's not easy to see it, in my opinion wasn't the most effective thing that we could do, it's probably the best thing that we had, given the time, but not great for effectiveness and soliciting PIREPs and driving that tempo. So they came into development of this PSAT tool, it was kind of a brainstorm child of -- our flight data supervisor developed it and introduced it, rolled it out to us as an option and it is essentially going through a testing phase for implementation.

Q. Understood. So given it's in the testing phase, it sounds like OMs, OSs, CICs, they've all been training on it. At the time of the event, this system would not have been required to have been used --

A. Correct.

Q. -- just optional?

A. Correct. And even at the time of the event, I could not speak to what extent it was being utilized, I have not worked in the operational floor for quite some time.

Q. Understood. Okay. So this event, is there any refresher training being developed because of this event?

A. The training that we could say has been tied to this event was actually developed by our quality control department, they developed a ZAN event review, which covered a few different things, one of the things it talked about was the NEXRAD system and reminding operational managers to ensure that they are

reviewing the weather before they release operational equipment, and more as a reminder. I'm not saying that they didn't in this event, I have no information pertaining to that. Also, in the event review, it talked about just findings from the CER and when they talked about the MSAW, it appears that the MSAW was delayed in alerting the controller to the event and so it opened up a review process for that.

This only went out to the operational supervisors and managers as a collaboration, the collaborative process wouldn't permit it to go out to the controller workforce. Other than that, there has not been any refresher training issued. Any training that seemed that it may have been impacted, had been trained beforehand, before the event, and so it would be performance related and not training as a whole related.

Q. In the MSAW review --

A. Yes.

Q. -- who is doing that review, how did that start?

A. That would've been relayed to Sam Bartell and their team. I believe they go by FAAST, is their office name.

Q. Okay. Are they --

A. And they would just be reviewing the data, when it went and what those results look like.

Q. Are they locally --

A. They're here in this building, yes.

Q. Okay. And then beating on that same drum, crew briefs, any

crew brief establishing this or does that kind of tie back into your refresher?
A. Tied back into the refresher. So we will have a local safety council review of this event, actually, next month. They discussed having it this month, but given the other events that they were already reviewing for this month and the time allotted and the time that they want to commit to this event, the local safety council felt that it was best to wait until next month.
Q. Understood. Just a couple more from me. You had spoken you were previously a supervisor here, you reviewed the event, I understand it's been a while, so --
A. Yes.
Q. -- your recollection isn't fantastic, I understand. Was there anything about this event, in your review of it as operational supervisor, that experience, that stood out to you in any way?
A. From the replay that I saw, it appears -- and this is my speculation, I want to make that very clear, I speculate that the aircraft stalled. What caused the stall, to me, is unknown, it could've been a variety of factors, so I don't even want to speculate in that direction. I did not observe any PIREPs solicited prior to the event. My understanding is PIREPs were solicited two hours prior to the event with an aircraft that had gone in and I believe it was negative icing at the time.
Q. I appreciate that perspective.

A. I'm just trying to think of anything else. Yeah. And I don't know if they had or how many opportunities they had to solicit PIREPs in between, from the preceding aircraft that went in and when this occurred. I mean, we are talking western Alaska, a lower-altitude aircraft, so I don't know any that had come in, if they were high fliers over and above and into Nome or what their routings were.

MR. OGDEN: Understood. Well, that answers all the questions I have. Pass it back over to Betty.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Trevor.

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. Hi, Mr. -- being with us here, I only had just one question, I've gone over the local training order, it was nice to see the OS development program and kind of how everything's laid out for the training for the OSs. In the orientation, it doesn't specifically list it for CWSU, but is there any training or -- what would you call it, familiarization with CWSU that OSs or OMs get?

A. Actually, all employees get it.

Q. They do, okay. What does that look like?

A. There is a checklist of items that they go over with CWSU and I'm sure we can help you find that.

Q. Okay.

A. It has been amended, I don't recall the date, but I would say it was probably amended the end of last year and shortened --

Q. Okay.

A. -- because they were -- some of the things that I had CWSU providing familiarization on was more applicable to air traffic and not the tools that they utilize.
Q. You said there is a checklist, correct, that they --
A. Yes.
Q. -- review? Okay.
A. Yes. So if you would like a copy of that, I can -- we can solicit that.
Q. Yeah, that would be great.
A. So I don't know if the proper way would be you making that request --

MS. KOSCHIG: We'll make that request.

MR. BOUSU: Yeah.

MR. PASKETT: -- and then we can fill that.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you so much.

MR. PASKETT: Yeah.

MR. BOUSU: That was all I had. Thank you, appreciate it.

MR. PASKETT: You're welcome.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Karena.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. Okay. So when you do crew briefs or any kind of briefings to the workforce, who generally does those, like delivers them?
A. It's varied on who it's delivered by. Operational supervisors, members of the local safety council. Occasionally, we'll have a manager, but that would probably be the exception and

not the rule. And otherwise it would be issued out in Team as a mandatory briefing, which may require reading that read-and-acknowledgment or a verbal briefing by their supervisor to the employee.

Q. Um-hum.

A. Or by a supervisor to the employee.

Q. You mentioned that --

A. I should also add in, occasionally we have controllers who have lost their medical that are looking for administrative duties that assist us with issuing some of those briefings.

Q. You mentioned that you work with the LSC sometimes on some of the -- you know, permissions and trends and stuff like that. I'm assuming the QC department is also involved with that?

A. Correct.

Q. And what kind of feedback do you get from the QC department on a regular basis about where the facility is and what the suggestions should be for training?

A. The QC department and I, we talk on a regular basis on input for assistance in developing training materials or where that's going to come from. From an LSC role, I would say he more or less leads from the management standpoint, not as a leading member of the local safety council. I attend many of their meetings, most of their meetings, but I would not consider myself a member, per se, of the board, but I do participate and I would say that I am treated as if I am a member, it is a very collaborative process

and it's a very open discussion where we talk about where these training items will be developed from and where they will be best received from, from which voice for the workforce. Does that answer your question?

Q. Yeah, it does. Who's on the local safety council? Who's -- I want to actually correct that. Who's normally attending the local safety council meetings?

A. Normally attending would be Jeff Harris, Neale Sheneman, myself, Surena Gaona, Erin Berg, Erika Marasco, Dylan Chalifour, Greg Howard, Mike Farrens, and I'm missing somebody that I just can't -- I can't recall. But --

Q. So I only recognize one of those names, what are their general positions?

A. Mixed between operational supervisors, QC specialists, and controllers.

Q. How many controllers, about?

A. I believe we have three CPCs on there. Well, potentially four.

Q. Okay.

A. So I'm quite certain that Erin Berg attends on a regular basis, she is a support specialist, but she's also a CPC who maintains currency, so she would be the fourth.

Q. Okay.

A. And I would also say I believe we have one CPC from each of the areas.

Q. Um-hum. Okay. So when you guys -- when you talk with QC and get feedback on what to include in training, what kind of data are they giving you, where is that data coming from?
A. The data that they pull is -- well, sometimes it's here local, sometimes they're pulling data from the national bases and saying here's a trend that we're hearing about nationally and we'll discuss whether or not we feel that it's something that's appropriate to drive training here.

For example, I want to say I believe it was in January that they issued a briefing on PIREPs specifically and it was based off of trends that had been happening in the nation. To help drive the need to increase PIREPs, we've been working on that for a little bit of time and have had several trainings, you know, surrounding that, winter weather PIREPs, I would say, going back in November, December, and January, all three months, covering those topics.

Some of that data is also based off of their own search for how we have been doing, as a facility, on the solicitation and dissemination of PIREPs, where they are, the QC department is monitoring like an OSA and just listening and to see how many PIREPs are needed or how many PIREPs are obtained and where were they obtained at, where did we have sites that needed them and did we have traffic going there and how did we do. You'll probably want to meet with the QC department to get more specific than that, to really drill in how that process looked, but they have

been doing this in a very robust manner for several months --
Q. Okay.
A. -- trying to increase the number of PIREPs that we obtain.
Q. Okay, so that's good to hear. I guess the last thing I would have for you, then, specific to the PIREPs, since you guys have been doing a lot of training, proficiency training on that, it sounds like, what are some of the highlights and the talking points and stuff that you guys have been focusing on? What did some of the data show that you needed to focus on nationally and locally?
A. Well, let's see, I think I do have -- yeah, this is just as an example, a bulletin that they put out to all operational personnel in January. It talked about three events that happened nationally, one was American 2909, where the aircraft encountered turbulence of an unknown intensity, resulting head and leg injuries to a flight attendant, and Alaska 700 en route from Seattle to Phoenix also encountering severe turbulence at flight level 3-3-0; reports of moderate turbulence and severe turbulence report received from Alaska were not disseminated to subsequent aircraft, two flight attendants and one jump seat pilot suffered head and back injuries and were transported to a hospital. Another one encountered turbulence of unknown intensity while en route, resulting in head and leg injuries to a flight attendant. So they used those as attention grabbers to focus on the PIREPs, knowing that when we talk and we encourage and we ask for PIREPs,

sometimes it can create a level of frustration, especially among controllers who are doing that, they're, you know, collecting and disseminating and doing all of those things, and also recognizing that there's not a definitive bar of success as we look at PIREPs. So all of this was put together, ultimately leading to -- and then we talked about best practices in this, reviewing the weather at the airport before you switch an aircraft to see if, you know, that request -- or requires a PIREP. Looking at when a departure happens, the same thing, take a look at the weather to see if a PIREP is needed there.

If you're a supervisor or a CIC, be engaged in the operation and know the places that you need PIREPs and then solicit it if you're not getting them. Other things that we've put out is even a request for SSRs. If we're not seeing PIREPs being solicited where we feel like they should be, then let's have an SSR so we can identify why we're not soliciting or disseminating PIREPs in those areas so we can try to figure out what the root issue is. Did that answer all of your questions there?

MS. MARINAS: Yeah, I think so, thank you. That's good, that's all for me.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, Travis.

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. All right. I just have really, just really one quick -- probably quick question for you. You spoke on the ZAN event review board or the event review and you talked specifically or

maybe touched on the NEXRAD release process.
A. Yes.
Q. I'm assuming that there is something in some training somewhere that says you should take these things into consideration before releasing the NEXRAD in those scenarios?
A. I know that's training I received as an operations manager.
Q. Excellent.
A. Directly. That is part of the hands-on training that we --
Q. Sure.
A. -- receive and it's part of the ORM process.
Q. Sure. And with this event review, do you -- can you speak to how that release process is going to change or is it going to change?
A. I can't speak to whether it's going to change or not.
Q. Sure.
A. I could speak to generalities of what that process looked like while I was an operations manager on the floor, but that's also been some time.
Q. Sure.
A. I don't anticipate that there's been any changes.
MR. ARNOLD: Okay.
MR. PASKETT: Do you have any operation manager interviews coming up, because they would probably --
MS. KOSCHIG: Yes.
MR. OGDEN: Yes.

MR. PASKETT: -- be able to better answer that.

MR. ARNOLD: Perfect. Thank you.

MR. PASKETT: You bet.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay, I do have a question, you talked about the flight data, that area, is -- tell me a little bit more about what they do in the flight data area.

A. Okay, I think I talked specifically about the flight data supervisor helping --

Q. The supervisor, right.

A. -- to develop this program.

Q. Right.

A. Flight data helps to process the flight plans --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- and they help to publish the NOTAMs and issue the ALNOTs that are going out, they'll help to publish the TFRs when there's a problem with a flight plan, whether it's from inside the facility or an additional facility such as Canada or Japan, they will help to structure that to ensure that those facilities get the correct flight plan.

Q. Okay.

A. Sometimes there's an unsuccessful transfer message that is happening and there may be data in the flight plan, ICAO data in the flight plan that is not transferring over, so they would go and ensure that that information is correctly transferred to the

receiving facilities.
Q. Okay. Is that position always open?
A. Always staffed, yes.
Q. Okay. And do they -- do they act as a weather coordinator at all? Where does the weather -- is there a weather coordinator position, is it built in with another position or does flight data have anything to do with that, as well?
A. Flight data does have a part in the processing of PIREPs.
Q. Um-hum.
A. But I guess we had two different parts, so --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- maybe I should continue on about flight data. Thanks for refreshing my memory.
Q. Oh, thank you.
A. Flight data will ensure that all urgent PIREPs are entered into the AISR. They also assist supervisors with ensuring PIREPs get in. It's up to the supervisor whether or not they want to enter it directly themselves or take it to flight data, but flight data will ensure that all urgent PIREPs get entered into the AISR and tie into the weather department, that they get that -- the Center Weather Service Unit, get that information. The operations manager, I would say, would be acting as the weather coordinator as a whole.
MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right, Casey.
BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Yeah, just one or two wrap-up. The PSAT system, I understand it's in its review now, implementation, what have you, is it going to be required to use once it is implemented?
A. I would hope so.
Q. Okay.
A. I believe that's still in collaboration, I have high hopes that it will. I see a lot of good things coming from that PSAT tool and what we are trying to accomplish. I understand they're using similar tools as testers in some facilities throughout the nation, but none of those tools would switch over to our equipment because we are not ERAM based, so I love the idea that here's something that we developed ourselves and -- to try to make things better.
Q. Yeah, fantastic. I hear you.
A. Yeah. And just to give live information, right, as real time as we can possibly get it.
Q. Understood. This, in your opinion, I know it's been a while since you reviewed the replay --
A. Sure.
Q. -- but at one point the controller working the accident aircraft got an update from Nome and they said hey, the runways are closed, okay, runways closed, the controller relays that information to the accident aircraft, makes the suggestion you could slow down and the aircraft, I believe, did slow down, they took the suggestion. Is there any training that brings that up,

is this just something that controllers develop through experience on the floor? Could you speak to that action in any way?

A. What I recall from working in operations, this is the generality of some controllers, not all. I know of controllers that would clear the pilot to a point, short-stop them or clear them into holding and then notify him of what was going on at the airport and then leave it up to the pilot to request a slowdown.

Some controllers will just tell them what's going on at the airport, snow removal is in process or in progress, right, and if you would like to slow down, you're welcome to, except they would typically say speed at your discretion, you know. I do recall what you're talking about in this situation and the thing that stood out to me from this is the phraseology was not in line with 7110.65, of what I would expect.

Q. Understood.

A. Yeah. And so I would expect that to be followed up with a performance discussion from a supervisor on the phraseology and not necessarily the technique.

MR. OGDEN: Sure. That's all the questions I have, thank you very much.

MR. PASKETT: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor?

MR. BOUSU: No, thanks.

MS. KOSCHIG: Karena?

MS. MARINAS: Nothing for me.

MS. KOSCHIG: Travis?

(No audible response.)

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay. I do have a couple. What changes -- if you could make any changes at this facility, what are some changes you'd make, you know, if you had all the resources and funding that was available?

A. I would bring on more RPOs to help us with the training program, but I wouldn't say that that's connected with this event.

Q. Right.

A. We are struggling with having the resources in place that we need to maintain a robust training program for the simulation portion only because we get, say, contractors in place, it takes some time to train them and then by the time that we get them trained, before they've been here very long, in some cases before they've been here a year or two years, they already have job offers to go to the FAA to be controllers.

So maybe the change needs to be that we pay our contractors more or make these as FAA positions and not farm them out to contractors so that we have other benefits that -- that they stay with us and hopefully we can do something more there, but we are limited on the number of people that we can hire, right, so --

Q. All right.

A. Other changes, yeah, other changes I would put into place is the stuff that's going on in the media now and, you know, every

FAA employee, every federal employee got five questions or five statements that they needed to put out, that is a stressor that we do not need in this line of work. I mean, was I stressed that you were coming? Sure, I was stressed that you're coming because of just being nervous of going through the process, not because of what we're trying to accomplish because I love that you are here and what we're trying to accomplish, but that adds a stress, the added stress of feeling like I have to justify my job and my duties by filling out a questionnaire that may or may not be tied to "I just want to see what they're doing," that has no place in this type of work environment.

Q. Right.

A. I cannot imagine the stresses that the controllers feel when they already are going into a stressful -- potentially a stressful work situation and it is very difficult when you talk about trying to separate your outside life to what you're doing day in and day out. Even for me, difficult for me to come in here and have this conversation, I knew two of the people that were on that flight.

Q. Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

A. So it's a stressor going through that process. Well, one that was more of an acquaintance, but the other I knew more personally.

Q. Oh.

A. And I'm very tied to the acquaintance's family, so --

Q. Oh, sorry to hear that.

A. -- that -- you know, those are stressors. It's a small community up here, the controllers are feeling that --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- because they know the people, they know the pilot, they know --
Q. Yeah.
A. You know, you develop these relationships, so yeah. And that's one of the things that we talk about, we talk about it at standup, hey, we're going in, we're doing this, put these other things aside, we preach that, we teach that. The practical side of that is that can be difficult, some people, it's easy for them to do that and separate, right, and others struggle with it a little bit. So yeah, that's something I would change.
Q. All right, great. My last question is, are there any questions you thought I was going to ask but -- or thought we would ask and we didn't ask?
A. No, I think you covered the themes. Well, honestly, I thought that you were going to ask when's the last time you trained on PIREPs, when's the last time you trained on winter weather, have you trained on recovery, have you trained on these things, which we all have in --
Q. Right.
A. -- the end of this last year.
Q. Yeah, with the refresher, I think we got some documentation on that, correct?

A. Yeah.

MR. OGDEN: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. PASKETT: But even our mini briefs, you know, things that we had covered were icing types and forming conditions effects on the aircraft, you know --

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.

MR. PASKETT: -- the freezing levels, multiple freezing levels, you know, PIREPs completing the picture of the whole thing, so we have really, as a facility, I would say, have been proactive in trying to train things before seasons happen, that generally, we have these situations coming into play. Now, for Alaska, we can have icing year round.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. PASKETT: So --

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. PASKETT: So we will talk about it again and we will talk about it again.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. I recall the last time we were here, I think you were preparing to put that --

MR. PASKETT: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- a lot of training out on PIREPs, so --

MR. PASKETT: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: So that's good, so everybody got a good briefing on that and I do believe we had all the documentation

that your assistant provided us on that.

MR. PASKETT: Yeah, very good.

MS. MARINAS: I actually had one more I forgot about.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes, go ahead, please.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. And on that note, you know, you talked a lot about the PIREPs briefings and trainings that you guys have done, when was the last time you did approach control services?

A. I don't recall, I'd have to go through and look or ask my specialist to go through and look for approach control services.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. One last question and it may not pertain to ZAN, but do you do any -- any type of training relationship or whatever with flight service controllers? Do you help them with anything?

A. We have been -- I know our QC department recently reached out to flight service regarding a training item and I don't specifically remember what that item was, but we do not have one that we have an open door or a conversation like that. It's when we identify --

Q. Okay.

A. -- an item of concern that we raised and --

Q. Okay.

A. -- I want to say it had something to do with issuing safety alerts, you know, because we work a lot with flight service and switch these aircraft over to flight service prior to them going

into these airports to land and then if we see that a safety alert needs to be issued, we'll call over to flight service, ask them to relay a safety alert to the aircraft and they don't have the standard phraseology requirement that we have for safety alerts, so trying to bridge that gap on how we could make an improvement there.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right. Any "oh, by the ways"?

(No response.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Any questions for us?

MR. PASKETT: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, then.

MR. PASKETT: Oh, I do, I do.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, please.

MR. PASKETT: And this is kind of tied in to the last time that we visited.

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. PASKETT: I know that I haven't received a transcript of the previous event and I know that that can take some time.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes.

MR. PASKETT: What safeguards do you have in place to ensure that I receive that transcript?

MS. KOSCHIG: As far as you getting that transcript?

MR. PASKETT: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Casey and I are the ones that have the transcript and it's going -- and we're waiting for it to come back

to go through review and it's one of us that will send it to you --

MR. PASKETT: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- directly.

MR. OGDEN: It will be me.

MS. KOSCHIG: So those --

MR. PASKETT: But after you send it --

MS. KOSCHIG: Uh-huh.

MR. OGDEN: Um-hum.

MR. PASKETT: -- specifically, how will you know that I've received it?

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, we ask you.

MR. PASKETT: That's where I'm going.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, please speak on that.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, so we send it via Kiteworks, Kiteworks is a system that tracks that data, it will tell me when you received it, when you downloaded it, who opened it, when they did it, so we have metrics to track that data.

MR. PASKETT: Okay.

MR. OGDEN: So it --

MR. PASKETT: So then if it is --

MS. KOSCHIG: It's a secure server.

MR. PASKETT: If it is never opened, if it is never --

MS. KOSCHIG: We'll know you didn't open it.

MR. PASKETT: Will you reach out to us and say this was sent

to you and we notice that you haven't opened it?

MR. OGDEN: Typically, there's a statement provided in the e-mail relating to that, it would state hey, you have X number of days, no input provided will serve as compliance with this, so verifying the e-mail and we can reach out. If I think there has been an issue, typically, we send this, it gets downloaded. If it's not, I do a precautionary "did you get this?" Nothing happens, then it goes to the next step.

MR. PASKETT: Okay, I appreciate that because where I thought that was going was NOAA puts this general blanket statement, NOAA puts provided no -- constitutes as your acceptance.

MR. OGDEN: Um-hum.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. We do put those on some things, yes.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah.

MR. PASKETT: It makes me -- you know, concerns me as an individual.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. But yeah, we do track --

MR. PASKETT: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- whether you've opened it or not or --

MR. PASKETT: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- at least download it, don't know if you open it, but --

MR. PASKETT: Yeah. Yeah, I don't -- I personally want to add a footnote to the last one, so --

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, sure.
MR. OGDEN: Certainly. Yeah, fantastic.
MR. PASKETT: So that's why I'm concerned, so --
MR. OGDEN: Understood.
MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. And those things do kind of --
MR. PASKETT: Yeah.
MS. KOSCHIG: -- take a while.
MR. PASKETT: Yeah, yeah, I understand that. Okay.
MS. KOSCHIG: But yeah, so I'm guessing you'll be seeing that pretty soon, I know we're -- we've got other cases we're working on the same with this that'll be coming down the line, as well, so -- and Casey will get your e-mail address after this. Please, Casey.
MR. PASKETT: Okay.
MR. OGDEN: I still have it.
MS. KOSCHIG: All right.
MR. PASKETT: All right.
MS. KOSCHIG: And all right, any other things?
MR. PASKETT: No. Thank you for your time, I appreciate you being here.
MS. KOSCHIG: No, I appreciate you being here, it's great information and it's very helpful for all of us. So we'll go ahead and end this interview at 12:28 Alaska time.
(Whereupon, at 12:28 p.m., the interview concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Jeremy Paskett
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 25, 2025

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.



_____

David A. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: TALON MEDEMA, Air Traffic Manager
Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Thursday,
February 27, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

APPEARANCES:

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KATHLEEN BANASZAK, Representative
(On behalf of Talon Medema)

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:07 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, the time now is 1507 Alaska time. So good afternoon again. My name is Betty Koschig and I am a Senior Traffic Control Investigator at the NTSB. I've been there for about 16 years. Can you please state your name?

MR. MEDEMA: Talon Medema.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, can you spell your last name?

MR. MEDEMA: M-E-D-E-M-A.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So before we get started with all of our questions, just wanted to verify that you were aware that we are audio recording this.

MR. MEDEMA: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you. So we will have a transcription made. And that transcription will be a part of our factual report. The audio that we have will stay with the NTSB. Except one will be sent to our transcriptionist which we have a contract with.

It's a company. And they are not allowed to let the, they're not allowed to do anything else with that audio. They will send us the transcription back. The audios will be protected and the transcription, of course, will be the only thing that goes into the docket.

So I see you have a representative. Is this the person you would like to have?

MR. MEDEMA: Absolutely.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Would you please state your name?

MS. BANASZAK: Katie Banaszak with the Office of Chief Counsel for the Federal Aviation Administration.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. As your representative, you are more than welcome to refer to her at any time if you would like to step out and talk to her. That would, that's fine, we'll pause the investigation and, or the interview rather and we can then restart it when you come back.

Or if you would like to talk right there, that's fine, but just be mindful that the audio is still on at that point. All right. So we are here to conduct an investigation of the fatal accident of, fatal accident of Bering 445 that occurred on February 6th, 2025.

And as part of the investigative process, we invite parties to be part of our investigative team. And we have several subject matter experts with us today that will be helping us with this interview. We've got FAA and NATCA with us so I am going to let everyone on our group introduce themselves.

MR. OGDEN: Yes, Casey Ogden. I'm an Air Safety Investigator at the National Transportation Safety Board. My background primarily military and then short time in the FAA

MR. BOUSU: Trevor Bousu, Denver Center.

MS. MARINAS: Karena Marinas, NATCA Air Safety Investigator controller at Los Angeles Center.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold. Controller at Omaha TRACON and NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So we are the investigative group on ATC Group on this and everyone will be following this through the factual report all the way to the end until this is published. So we will be a team for quite a while.

But a little bit about the NTSB which we had spoke earlier, but the NTSB is an independent agency. We are here to determine the probable cause of the accident and we have, we are working with several other groups.

We've got an Ops groups, there's I think structures, several other groups within the NTSB that are working on this accident right now actually. So there's a, it's a huge party as far as membership on this.

And once we do bring all these parties, all these groups together, then we will discuss a probable cause. But as the NTSB, we're not part DOT, DoD, FAA, any of the three letters anywhere. We don't have any regulatory authority either.

Our major projects are safety recommendations. Our chain of command pretty short. We go from our Chair of our Agency to Congress. So that's where all of our power lies. This is safety recommendations and that's just pretty much it as far as us.

So what we're going to expect on this interview is it will last about an hour. I can't imagine it lasting longer than that, but we are going to, I'm going to ask a little bit about you, your

professional career.

And then we're going to go around and start asking questions and filling in some blanks that we still may have with your facility just so we can get a higher level of look at things. Any questions so far?

MR. MEDEMA: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So if we ask questions, if you, you know, if you don’t know something, you don’t know it, that's fine. Or if you don't recall something, I don't recall, that's fine as an answer. And we may ask you some comments and questions that we just don't want to make any assumptions.

We just want to hear your response to it. Also, you'll see us taking some notes. That is just for our own use. The notes will not go anywhere. They'll be destroyed. So you won't find them in any docket or anything like that.

It's just for the interview we're using them. All right. And am I forgetting anything, Casey?

MR. OGDEN: Off the top of my head, I don't believe so.

MS. KOSCHIG: He's my back up. So let's get started.

INTERVIEW OF TALON MEDEMA

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. What are your operating initials?

A. Oscar X-ray.

Q. And what was your age at the time of the accident?

A. 40 years old.

Q. Okay. And when did you start working for the FAA?
A. 2006.
Q. Was that the academy?
A. Yes.
Q. And where did you go after that?
A. Denver Center.
Q. And how long were you there?
A. I want to say five years.
Q. Okay. And where did you go after that?
A. To Anchorage Center.
Q. Okay. And you came here as a --
A. Temporary STMC, or excuse me, temporary TMC.
Q. Okay. And tell us about your time at Anchorage Center, your promotion process and if you've done anything else away from here.
A. Okay. I came to Anchorage Center on a temporary two-year TMC bid. I kept my operate -- excuse me, I initially kept my currency as a TMCC which was a carnet at the time in the south area.

At the conclusion of my temporary time, I was made permanent here and requested so I kind of got re-assigned to the high area as they were short where I certified on both platforms there. I became a supervisor initially in the south area and then I became a supervisor in the high area.

And for a while, I kept currency in both areas. I was on the National Article 114 ATOP work group a management SME for a number of years. I was an OM for the high area. I was a lead TMO. I

also did the duties of the support manager of International Airspace and Procedures and also Domestic Air Space and Procedures.

In addition to my TMO duties, while I was a TMO, I was asked to join the National Validation Team about, geez, at this point it was probably seven years. I still maintain that ancillary duty.

I went to Anchorage TRACON upon request of the AGM for a detail as ATM. I later became permanent ATM after bidding the Anchorage TRACON job. Then I came back here as the ATM for Anchorage Center.

And then during that time was requested to do a detail to headquarters to work on the ABACUS program which I did for two years. And I returned full time to this position in October while still keeping some ancillary duties of and the National Validation Team, NVT, and then part-time for work on ABACUS.

Q. Wow, that's quite a bit. You stay busy. Okay great. Do you have any military?

A. No, ma'am.

Q. All right. Do you have any college?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay do you have a degree?

A. I have a, yes, I have a Bachelor's of Science in Air Traffic Management with a minor in Aviation Safety from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University at Daytona Beach, Florida.

Q. Do you have any aeronautical certificates?

A. Besides my controlling, no.
Q. But you have your CTO?
A. No, I don't have a CTO. I --
Q. Oh.
A. I've been at center, center employed my entire life.
Q. Okay.
A. Minus the trade of ATM.
Q. Oh, okay. Just to verify you're not part required to have a medical. Correct?
A. That is correct.
Q. Okay. Okay. I think that's the majority of those I don't need to ask. So now I'd just like to get down to asking some of the questions that, about the accident and your involvement as far as what you did.

So tell us when you found out that there was possibly an accident or if you found that out or when it was reported. What was the process when you did become involved with it?
A. I was actually, I had been talking with my XO just prior to it and I had returned to my office to start packing some stuff up for the end of the day and I received a phone call from Mr. Watts from the watch desk advising me and I don't remember the specific terms that I should come downstairs.

I grabbed Neal on the way down and we went into the ops floor, got a brief synopsis in between phone calls and at that point, attempted to find the airport manager to see if we could at

least have somebody visually on the ground.

Quickly found that the number that is in the pink book or the salmon book was not operational. And I asked for the OM to call Flight Service since it's co-located there and see if they had a working number for the Airport Manager.

They, at that time, advised that they saw nobody on the ground, but we did get a cell phone number for the Airport Manager. We had a staff support specialist that was still here at that time and we requested that she begin to pull audio for the time of the event.

And then also if we do get a playback going so that we could observe like it's auditory or whatever so we can kind of observe what was seen. I was here for a couple of hours later. Listened to the audio, I believe at that time I also watched the playback.

If not, I did that the next morning and talked with all three controllers that were involved at the, well there was four people plugged in, but sorry, there were, yes, there were four people that were plugged in.

But three that were actively engaged in air traffic control to check on them and see what they were doing and then also had some initial questions based off of the phraseology that I asked them.

Q. All right. And so then where did you go from there?

A. I went home.

Q. Okay. And at that point, still wasn't sure it was an

accident. Correct? Or were you at that point?
A. Personally?
Q. Well --
A. Personally I considered that, that was most likely going to be a complete loss of life.
Q. Yes. And then you came in the next, would anything else go on that night or did you have anything to --
A. That night I went home because I had my kids. And then I believe I checked back in with the OM just to see if there had been any status update with the RCC and if they advised that the HELO was having difficulty being able to get down low enough to see anything and the C130 was circling, but only had three or four hours left of fuel.

They were going to return and then re-start the search and rescue at first light the next day which they did and that is when they made contact. I also know that before I left for that night, we knew that Bering Air was sending out one of their own aircraft which couldn't make it out there.

And then they also sent that HELO, sorry that it made it out there, circled for about 12 minutes and went back and then they sent out a HELO as well and they could not make it to the area that we had the last reported hit because of a combination of snow and icing or ice I believe.
Q. Okay. So that day, that next day, you were here at work. Correct?

A. Yes.
Q. Okay and so is that when you started with the SRTs, the CERs or were you involved in, how were you involved in all of that?
A. I did sit in the CER and observed. I usually do sit in most of the SSRs and stuff like that simply because I want to hear directly from controllers what they're saying and not have it funneled through form. I did conduct the SRT the following day as well.
Q. Okay. And before I go any further, I do want to, you know, I'm sorry for your loss. I do realize that it's a small community and that you knew people that either on the aircraft or either related in some kind of friendship or family type of way so I just wanted to put that out there.

So oh, one question I did, so when did or did anybody, any of the controllers, were they sent to get drug testing?
A. The recommendation, or they asked me to make a recommendation for drug testing. And we went through the whole process and the our side controller was drug tested and the OJTI was tested as well. The D side trainee was not. And the A side was not and is no longer a part of this agency.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. I'm going to let my colleagues start asking some questions. I still have some that I want --

MR. OGDEN: Awesome.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- so please, Casey?

MR. OGDEN: Thanks, Betty.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Okay so I was looking at the CAPs and there's two CAPs in particular that are somewhat related. There's a CAP for PIREP solicitation dissemination that was, it's in the implementation phase as of December 30th and then there's one for safety alerts on January 7th.

That's also in the implementation phase. Can you just give me some background on those CAPs and kind of where they're at and what the goals are?

A. So PIREP CAP and the safety alerts capped are kind of driven by some past performance that we've had in the area. And then also observation that we need to improve in both of those areas, but the implementation is trying to do checks on the areas to kind of have a good spot of where we're at.

We know that we can improve in the PIREP dissemination solicitation and there's actually a couple of parts related to that I'm sure you've heard about those throughout the time here. But we were not having the implementation of, or excuse me, we were not having the results that we wanted in PIREP solicitation.

We were pretty, honestly, pretty low numbers in where that is. Like a lot of centers here, unfortunately, that's kind of the case. We were trying to look at different ways. We reached out to Salt Lake and Denver who had similar CAPs or similar issues to see if we could find something that was a little bit different instead of just kind of repeating, you know, discussion and follow

up in the PRC.

Safety Alert as well. We have, unfortunately, there is the tendency to have a bit of safety alerts here due to just the nature of a lot of small planes flying out around the different terrain and obstacles.

And ensuring that is one if you're going to take one positive from this incident is that the R side in question had a PRC beforehand on not issuing the longitudinal alerts and at this point although it was not the first thing that he issued for reasons of the information that he was being given, it was something that was done so.

Q. That's kind of a great transition point. You had mentioned the controller had issued a low-altitude alert. I just kind of want to get a general view of your expectations of that operation. What met your expectations? What did not meet your expectations?

A. When I first reviewed, the first time that I saw the operation, my very first question and upon listening to the audio is why the low altitude alert was not given first. And why there was the questioning of the altitude that happened first.

And that, to me, seemed out of order which is why I asked the controller that night before he went home why that was done in that manner. And when he gave me his answer, I understood and I was a lot better with that sequence of events.

And the reasoning that he had given is that the NOME GBT had been having some hits and when they looked and saw the altitude,

they had lost the altitude on that in another aircraft and at first they thought it was the GBTs going out again.

And so the question of the altitude and then there's really like he kind of gets halfway through that before he switches to a low altitude alert and I was okay with that. I, can I go back and armchair quarterback a lot of stuff? Yes, but upon review, I was fine with where it was at, at that time.

Q. Yes, that makes sense. You had mentioned just briefly, and I could be hitting on something that's not there, but you had mentioned something about phraseology when talking about the event.

A. I would say, I would clarify that. I would say that there's nothing there. It's just technique wise when you're listening to stuff, you kind of in your head go I would not have said --

Q. Oh.

A. -- this or that.

Q. I see. And then one more point with the overview of that event. Any expectations met or not met with PIREP solicitation dissemination?

A. Again, playing armchair quarterback, it would have been nice if we had been soliciting PIREPs , but I don't know inside of his head because common practice for me would have been when clearing that aircraft for the approach upon arrival please report your conditions through and get a PIREP that way. So you have that.

Q. Correct.

A. But, yes.
Q. I see. And I don't want to put words in your mouth, but if there had been a prior arrival or departure into or out of NOME, it would be an expectation that they would have gotten a PIREP--
A. Correct.
Q. -- if conditions weren't, okay. Okay. That's all the questions I have for now. Thank you.
MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor?
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. Let's see here. I guess along the lines of expectations, did the sector configuration in staffing at the time of the incident meet your expectations and why or why not?
A. Such a configuration at that time of day, sorry, you said sector configuration and staffing at the time. Yes, sector configuration and staffing at that given time would be sufficient for the operation and time of day. And, yes, I realize it is a very large air space.
Q. The interfacility SOP in Section 7 it states about a PIREP worksheet. U.S. or CSC may require the worksheet to document the PIREPs .
A. Yes.
Q. Is that understanding as optional? Is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Has that ever been a mandatory item that was used to keep track of PIREPs in your area?

A. There was an attempt to make it a mandatory item and that could not be achieved through collaboration.

MR. BOUSU: That's all I had initially.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. What was it? Could you describe it?

A. Excuse me?

Q. Could you describe it, the worksheet?

A. It's just a pretty simple worksheet of like place, time, PIREP and you would just be working through. It's more of like a historical document which is why we tried moving towards something that's different with the PEPC tool and kind of where that's going is because that's live and relevant whereas the PIREP tracking tool is just a historical document at that point.

You're looking at stuff that could be hours old. Like when I would use it, because I did use it most of the time when we had weather when I was in OS and I could use it for like a full shift, you know, and still keep tracking and throw another sheet on or whatever.

But it's a historical document you're looking at a historical document instead of forecasted.

Q. Is it used and kept at the sector or --

A. At the OS. At the OS desk.

MS. MARINAS: Okay. That's everything.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Travis?

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. I just have a couple of questions. Are you, how do you feel about the pre-duty weather briefing?

A. I feel that the pre-duty weather brief gives a good synopsis of what was forecasted at the time that it was created, whether that be in the morning which they're usually finishing right before we have stand up or in the afternoon.

And at that point, you're basically dealing with an artifact. And there's no update to that so like I can tell you when I came in for the mid when I was a controller supervisor and I still am looking at the same pre-duty weather update that's from 2 o'clock, excuse me, it's not necessarily relevant.

Or which is why we have the 1 o'clock call in with a, which is actually is good. Because we've got a new picture to finish off the rest of the mid-shift on there and what we would expect is for that OS to brief the area as again of hey, here's your 1 o'clock, you know, so that they have something more relevant.

But with the constraints of where we are with CWSU and their time that we don't have anything there which is another concept that we're trying to explore is whether we take the forecasted, you know, three-hour chunks, print that out and at least provide it to the supervisors or CICs on the desk that they could brief controllers a little bit more relevant status coming up.

For the creation of what it is and the constraints because they're, when they created that, I think it had to be done within two minutes and stuff like that. Like it's, I think it's kind of

as dialed in as they can get for the constraints here.

And it's difficult for our center since we, it's like giving a synopsis for like the entire lower 48.

Q. Another opinion question.

A. Oh, good.

Q. Do you feel that the pre-duty weather brief is easily recallable? Easy to remember when for a controller, let's say mid-shift, mid-way through their shift?

A. I think, I think the generalities of it I think are recallable. Again, and this is where I keep coming back to like the artifacts part like you're talking about a PIREP tracker or you're talking about a pre-duty weather briefing that was created X amount of hours ago.

You're turning into artifacts and it might be nice which is kind of why we've explored this direction of okay we now have an updated at least picture that we can show you where this is what we're looking for the next three hours that's actually more relevant based off of what we have.

And we could use that or we could potentially put it on one of the monitors of that sectors group, but are all stuff that we're trying to figure out how to do.

MR. ARNOLD: That's great. Thanks a lot.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay. All right so I do have some questions I guess slash comments because one of the things I think we, you know, you've

given us a lot of information, but I also think that we just want to see if you're aware of certain things that we gathered while we're here.

So if you don't know about them, then there's no way for you to address them. So you may be aware, but for certain things that are, are you aware of how often and I don't mean this condescendingly at all because I don't know what you are aware of.

Are you aware of how often the NEXRAD goes out and in this area and how that is a concern amongst the work group here, through our workers, employees?

A. Well in the case of NOME, NEXRAD from and mind you it's been a while since I've worked the floor, I can tell you that NOME NEXRAD probably was the one that went out the most. And that is going to be due to geographical and weather reasons.

And I don't know if that has been voiced as in this is a great concern or this is a giant concern. It is more so I would say that for a lot of us the understanding of this is what we have operating wise.

The same as we have, sorry let me do a quick count, six, seven NEXRADs and there's gaps in between all of those because they're only over, you know, YK Delta or Anchorage or like areas that have population basis, but the rest of the time that those aircraft are flying, there is no NEXRAD coverage for that.

Q. All right. So is there any way that, are you working with the FAA in any way or on or of its initial rep, whoever would put

these NEXRADs up on getting more of them? I mean, is there anything in progress at this time that addresses the need for more of those?

A. I don't recall historically. I can tell you that I have seen a lot of stuff in the news recently addressing the fact that we don't have that, but historically I don't recall.

Q. I would be anxious to see if something could move forward on that. I think, you know, it is, it's just something that's brought up quite a bit.

A. Oh, for sure.

Q. So, yes. Also the same is brought up is kind of like wish list. If we could have something, what would you rather, what would you like to have? Is the GBTs, you know, like in this situation, they get one out for just a seconds, but I mean it's, that's scary for it to go out.

Has anything -- I mean and it's a whole different, you know, ballpark, but is there any way that this system can be improved? Is there any actions that you could push forward with the FAA to enhance this or do you know of a way?

A. So with everything that we have up here whether it be GBTs, frequencies, radars of which we are a combination of both FAA radar and military radar, you're always going to come back to the question of redundancy.

And that is something that is hard for our state because a lot of these places when they fly out to and our tech ops

employees do an absolutely amazing job, where they go out there and it's hunkering down and digging down just to get to the door of the site in winter.

Or they can't get close enough because of whatever outage does not allow them to land there so they have to land at another village that's close, get on, you know, a snow machine and make that trek.

There's I mean if we had more redundancy, if we had more products and I've been asked this question before, --

Q. Yes.

A. -- in the relation of if you had all the money in the world, --

Q. Yes.

A. -- and this wasn't a problem, what would you do to solve it? And it would also be what is our greatest risk here? And that is if we were full contingent of the NAS.

Q. Right.

A. Like we're getting ERAM 2029.

Q. Yes.

A. But there's products that are in ERAM and products that ERAM produces, but TBFM which is a separate thing that we have to push for, that would give us better products to work with. If we had other redundancies that the lower 48 has, then we can mitigate some of those risks.

And it's evidently like when you come up and you're asking

for a play back or this or that, we don't have that. So many of our systems are homegrown. AID is which is our version of e-rids is homegrown, is maintained and every year we sit there and push to try to keep that online and relevant and updated.

The PIREP tools that we've been working on, this individual who knows how to code in-flight data working on those programs. It's -- I hate to use a cliché, but it's just the way Alaska is. We have a problem to look at it and try to figure out how we can solve it because that's where we're at.

Q. Right. And yes, I totally understand. You know, you're dealing with a lot of different things and, but how if you had an ERAM right, had ERAM when this accident occurred, how would that have enhanced?

Tell us some of the things that would have enhanced your ability, the controller's ability to do their, to track better? I mean, all the safety issues or all the safety stops in there that would have helped them with this so we can understand how ERAM is going to lift your facility up and --

A. There would be different, I would use different scenarios for how ERAM would do some of the stuff. Unfortunately, for what we're talking about here. It's a very unfortunate situation.

Q. Right.

A. Where we, what happened, happened.

Q. Yes.

A. The radar, I mean we're running off of GBTs that are there

because we don't have radar sites that look down there in there and that's the thing. We don't, we have equipment, but just not necessarily maybe everywhere we should, and I don't want to tie ERAM to this. I don't.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. Yes.

Q. Right. But ERAM would definitely --

A. ERAM would do --

Q. -- increase --

A. -- ERAM would improve that.

Q. Yes.

A. It would improve operations in Alaska. It would also improve the efficiency of our flow into and out of Anchorage which right now a huge spotlight is on the ATAPS program that is coming in there via the military and a big proponent of that would be having TBFM and also ERAM to be able to do that.

Q. Okay, great. Let's see. The only other thing that I have a kind of a question, comment about is all right when the controller and I know this is -- I mean, it's just a regular control for safe guard control procedure is to say that when the controller was asking the pilot well saying well look you would like to slow down, that's, you know, you can do that and I'm paraphrasing.

Do, would, did it surprise you that a pilot might think that that's an instruction? Would there be --

A. Based off the phraseology that he gave, that would surprise

me that the pilot would think that would be an instruction. It's an advisory.

Q. It's an advisory. I totally agree. Yes, exactly. And the reason I ask is, you know, just dealing with other parts we're talking to a lot of different people. And that was just brought up and it's and that was what my thought was too, but --

All right so I don't have anything else right now. Casey?

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. No, the -- you had mentioned before I guess one, you know, money is no object. It sounds like early ERAM install date would be preferred, GBT dependency, may be more NEXRAD Feeds. Anything else that comes to mind? Anything whatsoever?

A. Not that I can think of.

MR. OGDEN: Okay. Awesome. That's all I have. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor?

MR. BOUSU: Nothing.

MS. KOSCHIG: Karena?

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. A couple of questions. So since you've been certified here before and as a supervisor, other than okay so in the scenario that you described, I think where you would issue an approach to an aircraft and then ask them to provide a PIREP with Flight Service after they land, how would you get that information as a controller for future use?

A. Honestly, a lot of times Flight Service would call us with

after they landed and say, hey, he recorded moderate turbulence on or whatever it may be, you know, on there and okay and then they would put in that PIREP as well.

Q. Okay.

A. Typically from, but you're asking, you know, it's been more than a decade since we've done that so --

Q. Oh, okay.

A. -- but yes, that would, that was kind of where we were at so.

Q. Yes, okay. All right so and with Flight Service for you now as the ATM and management in general, what kind of interactions or do you have any interactions with like the Flight Services facilities that underlie your facility and how do you guys communicate?

A. So two of the three AFSS ATMs are former OMs from here that I made the recommendations for. One of them I would say I check in just to see how things are going, you know, every couple of months.

The other one actually was coming through town and brought us a couple or a pallet worth of PIREP forms actually that they had gotten access of and we needed them, but we probably in person see each other twice a year or so.

But I mean there's still interaction trying to understand and the, prior to this we had been having some open discussion with them about low altitude alerts and what that looks like when we're seeing it, but the aircraft is already talking to Flight Service

so. And just trying to understand their viewpoint of that so.
Q. Okay. Okay, but are there any kind of formal meetings or discussions for safety purposes or training or anything like that with them?
A. I would not say formal. The last one was more of an inquisitive like if we called and asked you to say low altitude alert, do you have any like memories that are there because that's not a, that's not something that they're hopefully spitting out all the time.
Q. Oh, I see. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. So you're, yes, okay, that's what you mean.
A. Yes.
Q. I see it. Okay. Thank you.
MS. KOSCHIG: Nothing?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No more questions.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nothing.
MS. KOSCHIG: Is there anything you would like to add? I don't have any more questions.
MR. MEDEMA: No, I'm good.
MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So is there anything that you thought we were going to ask you that we didn't?
MR. MEDEMA: Just what I would have done if I was the controller, but --
MS. KOSCHIG: So what would you have done?

MR. MEDEMA: Don't know.

MS. KOSCHIG: Well exactly. It's hard to put yourself in that person's place isn't it?

MR. MEDEMA: Especially with, there's a difference between being a high altitude sector and you notice an aircraft starting to descend rapidly and in this case you're where that aircraft is, is at DMs is at the bottom of where they're going to be and, --

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes.

MR. MEDEMA: -- you know, unfortunately, you're not going to have a lot of reaction time based off of how the MSAW program works so.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes. So oh, by the way, we'll go ahead and end the interview. The time now is 14, no, 1550 Alaska time.

(Whereupon, at 3:50 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Talon Medema
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 27, 2025

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.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: GRAHAM WESTON, Meteorologist-in-Charge
Anchorage Center Weather Service Unit
National Weather Service

Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,
February 26, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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I N T E R V I E W

(4:24 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: All right, the time now is 16:24 Alaska time. So good afternoon, my name is Betty Koschig, I'm a senior air traffic control investigator at the NTSB, been there about 16 years, done quite a few investigations and look forward to hearing what you would like to talk to about us today -- talk to -- with us today. So what's your name?

MR. WESTON: My name is Graham Weston.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

MR. WESTON: Graham, like the crackers, Weston, W-e-s-t-o-n.

MS. KOSCHIG: Great, perfect. So just a reminder that this -- that you understand that this is being audio recorded and would you like a copy of the transcription?

MR. WESTON: Yes, please.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And we will get your e-mail address and ask that you write it down.

MR. WESTON: Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: And just to let you know that we will send this out and get it transcribed, we will have the audio. The only other place that gets the audio is the transcriptionist, but we've got a contract with them, they can't release it, we will not release the audio, the only thing that will be released to the public is going to be the transcription. So when we send you the audio (sic), what -- we're going to go through it, if there's

acronyms that are wrong, we'll correct those, so you're getting a corrected copy, but only just the correction of spelling, things like that. We will not rephrase anything in it. And if there's something in there that you want to make a comment about, you can -- we can put a footnote in there just to note your comments, but we will not change the wording of it, just so you know. And I see you don't have a representative, would you like one?

MR. WESTON: No, no thanks.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. You are entitled to one, so if you did want one, it's -- it's your --

MR. WESTON: Prerogative, right. No, thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. And yesterday you were here and we're here -- we're here talking about -- to conduct an investigation, an air traffic control investigation of the Bering Flight 444 that -- I mean, corrected, 445 that -- the accident that occurred on February 6th. So as part of this investigation, as an investigative body, we invite parties to work with us on these investigations as technical experts and in this setting we have FAA and NATCA SMEs and I am going to let them introduce themselves, I'll start with my colleague, though.

MR. OGDEN: Hey, Casey Ogden. I believe we met previously, but I am an air safety investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board and my background is primarily military and did some short time in the FAA.

MR. BOUSU: Trevor Bousu, I'm an operations manager at Denver

Center, 19 years in the agency, four as a controller, 15 in management.

MS. MARINAS: I'm Karena Marinas, a controller at LA Center and NATCA air safety investigator.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold, I'm a controller at Omaha TRACON and I'm also a NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So we're the NTSB team and what we're going to do is go through this, all the way through the factual until the report is published, so it's a group that whole way and our basic goal here is to gather facts and -- which is why we're talking, so you can give us some facts and information. We like to talk about -- I realize you weren't involved in -- what you worked on at the time of the accident, but we appreciate you giving us some insight into CWSU and to the weather situation, that will definitely help us a lot.

But just a little bit about the NTSB, we're an independent agency, so we don't work for -- yeah, we don't work for DOT, FAA, DoD, and our main product is safety recommendations, so we're always looking for areas that we can help improve the safety. What to expect today is we're going ask a little bit about you and then we'll start getting into talking about the weather, CWSU, and all the information you'd like to share with us. And we're going to go around the room, each one of us asking questions and making sure we fill in any blanks that we may have on that. If you do see us jotting down things or typing, of course, those are just

notes to ourselves, but those will be destroyed, they will not be part of the records that will be published. Questions so far?

MR. WESTON: Negative.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I think you pretty much know it lasts about an hour, that's general, and if at any time we ask questions, sometimes when I ask questions it should be common sense or you think it's common sense, it's because we don't want to put words in your mouth and if you don't know something, you don't know it, if you don't recall something, you don't recall it, those are great answers and that's the basic structure of our investigation. So before we get started, any questions yet?

MR. WESTON: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right.

INTERVIEW OF GRAHAM WESTON

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So who do you work for?

A. The National Weather Service.

Q. And what's your position?

A. I'm the meteorologist-in-charge at the Anchorage Center Weather Service Unit.

Q. How long have you been there?

A. Approximately September 13th of 2019 and I've been the full-time manager since around the 16th of February 2020.

Q. And where were you -- how long have you been working for the National Weather Service?

A. November 13th, 2017 until present.
Q. Until present. So where were you before you started working at Alaska, here? Anchorage.
A. Okay, so I think the answer to the question you didn't ask was before Anchorage CWSU, I was across town in Anchorage, at Alaska Aviation Weather Unit.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. So I started with that.
Q. Um-hum.
A. So that's where I started in 2017.
Q. Okay.
A. To answer the question you did ask, I was in Australia working with the Bureau of Meteorology and I was embedded with their equivalent partner to the FAA, working.
Q. How long did you work there?
A. In that role or in -- with the Bureau of Met?
Q. With the Bureau.
A. Okay, with the Bureau of Meteorology, so 2015 -- do you want months or no?
Q. No, that's fine, yes.
A. Okay, 2015 through 2017 I was with the Bureau of Meteorology; 2012 to 2015 I was with Qantas as a meteorologist.
Q. Okay.
A. And then 20 -- 2009, no, 2010 to 2012 I was with the Bureau of Meteorology.

Q. Okay. All right. And did you work anywhere else in the meteorology field?
A. Negative.
Q. Okay. And so where did you go to college?
A. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott --
Q. Oh, okay, great.
A. -- 2004 to '08.
Q. Okay. And what degree did you get there?
A. Between fall of '04 and autumn of -- no, fall -- yeah, whatever, fall of '07 I got a B.S. in aeronautics --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- and the spring of '05 through spring of '08 I got a B.S. in meteorology with a math minor. I also got a graduate diploma in meteorology through the Bureau of Meteorology when I was in Australia.
Q. Oh, nice.
A. Yeah, part of the internship.
Q. Oh, that is great. Sounds like that would've been fun working there.
A. Yeah, sure. Depends on what you're doing.
Q. Yeah.
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. Do you have any time in the military?
A. Negative.
Q. All righty.

A. One other thing I did was I got a rotorcraft PPL back in 2002 --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- got that in New Zealand and I got it converted to an FAA one the same year.
Q. Oh, okay. Oh, okay, great. If I do forget to ask you something, please fill me in.
A. That's fine.
Q. Yeah. Do you have -- okay, you don't, I don't need to ask you that. Who's your supervisor or --
A. Goes by Al, his name is Albert --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- Pietrycha, P-i-e-t-r-y-c-h-a. And I apologize if I misspelled his name.
Q. Oh, that's fine.
MR. OGDEN: That's okay.
MR. WESTON: If he reads it and he's --
(Laughter.)
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. All right, so -- I don't think I need to ask you all of this. Sorry, I'm just going through this to make sure I don't need to ask you anything else. So let's talk about -- I realize that -- oh, we'll go down with the admin part, have you got anything else to add on your credentials or anything, I'm more than happy to --
A. Sure.

Q. -- note those.
A. If, yeah, something springs to mind, I'll --
Q. Sure.
A. -- let you know.
Q. Yeah, appreciate it.
A. No worries.
Q. So let's talk about the weather around the accident and I want you, like, to give us -- give us a briefing on -- that will be helpful to help us understand what's going on in the CWSU and then in the Alaska area.
A. Sure. As you stated, I was not present during the accident, so I can't comment on what happened on operations. I believe there was a trough lying south of Nome, it was with Norton Sound there, east-west orientation and precipitation there. There were questions about the radar being taken in to service and comments made about a free text notification, this is just what --
Q. Oh, okay.
A. -- what it is, what a free text is, so that it means something more to you than what free text means -- so --
Q. I wondered what that looked like.
A. That's what it looks like and you can -- those are the actual -- from that day and it had one from the prior day, as well, at the bottom of the page.
Q. Okay.
A. But you can see that the radar was -- the request was made

sometime prior to 5:00 a.m.
Q. Um-hum.
A. CWSU opens at 5:00 a.m., therefore before we were around.
Q. Um-hum.
A. And then the second one was around 6:20 in the morning, local, was another update to that. You'll also note, if you read the text, I don't know if you want it read out for transcription, but it says that product may not be available.
Q. Yeah, if you want to read that out, that way you can get --
A. Sure, I'll read the second one out. And the first one was issued at 4:26 a.m., the second one was at 6:22 a.m. Alaska Standard Time, February 6th, 2025. It was -- here's the message in full: "WSR-88 Delta, free text message, National Weather Service, Fairbanks, Alaska, 6:22 a.m. Alaska Standard Time, Thursday, February 6th, 2025, Papa Alpha Echo Charlie (Nome) radar maintenance from 2-6 15:30 Zulu to 2-7 01:30 Zulu. Product may not be available during this time." And that's what a free text would have.
Q. Oh, okay, great. Thank you for that.
A. No worries.
Q. Appreciate it. Okay, I'm sorry, then --
A. Sure.
Q. -- we can continue.
A. No worries. And so as you can hear, read in that, the product may or may not be available.

Q. Right.
A. There were questions about the radar and what we could see, the radar was not taken down as far as we were still able to see precipitation on it.
Q. Oh.
A. I've looked at the -- I can send you a link, but I got the visual of what was going on at the time, so the meteorologist never lost sight of radar data.
Q. Oh, okay, great. Good to know.
A. You also were asking about how the decision to do maintenance on the radar --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- is done as far as getting a decision like this.
Q. Yes.
A. I spoke with the S-O-C, the SOC person, and they've got a checklist. One of the first people is the military, defense wing, they get a say as to whether yea or nay. Another person is a pertinent weather forecast office lead forecaster, so this one was Fairbanks because Nome falls under their purview, otherwise Anchorage or Juneau would be the other meteorological office that would be contacted to say yes or no as far as whether the radar can go down.
Q. Okay.
A. Then there's the actual person doing the maintenance, the work, and then the other person was the OM, the operations manager

on duty.
Q. Okay.
A. So the CWSU, as you could -- the meteorologist is not in that list of making the decision. But we are not here 24/7, we're only open 5:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m., seven days a week, so there's that eight-hour window overnight and that's why it makes sense to have one of the forecast offices that's open 24/7, they know what the weather's like and they know what they need and having -- if you have one clock, you know what time it is, you have two clocks, you don't know which one's necessarily right and that's why you have one weather service person --
Q. Yeah, okay.
A. -- being asked.
Q. I like that analogy. Okay. So what else would you like to add?
A. There was a question yesterday about our area of responsibility at the --
Q. Um-hum. Oh, yeah, sorry.
A. So we forecast for approximately 2.8 square -- million square miles --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- or approximately -- yeah, up to 45,000 feet, so approximately 23.8 million cubic miles of airspace because we are four dimensional. We're responsible for also monitoring a hundred and 50 nautical mile buffer around the ZAN flight information

region or FIR, so that goes into Russian airspace, Tokyo airspace, Canadian airspace, so Edmonton and Vancouver FIRs and Oakland FIR.

Q. Quite a large area.

A. Yeah. So we're over 3,000 nautical miles east-west and we're over two and a half thousand nautical miles north-south extent. Not including the hundred and 50 mile buffer that we provide information about SIGMETs, for example, that are issued to the Russians or Tokyo and that sort of thing to the appropriate controllers.

Q. Okay.

A. Our airspace is equivalent to approximately 13 of the other 20 CWSUs in the lower 48, not including the hundred and 50 mile buffer, so I'm sure we could absorb a few extra CWSUs in our area of responsibility and monitoring, but in Alaska, between the Alaska Aviation Weather Unit and CWSU, there's one to three pairs of eyes looking after all of that converse to, you know, the 13 CWSUs in the lower 48, you've got those eyes plus six -- roughly five to six depending on convective season at the Aviation Weather Center, AWC, in Kansas, looking after a similar area, so --

Q. Um-hum. Great.

A. I did provide a couple pictures as to how big the forecast area of responsibility is compared to the lower 48, just to help people and there is a map with -- showing it with Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau's public weather forecast offices' area of responsibilities, those are the three offices that write the TAFs

that, you know, fit within their purview there. So they're the TAF writers. The Alaska Aviation Weather Unit writes the SIGMETs and the area forecasts and the AIRMETs and they also have the Volcanic Ash Advisory Center duty, so they write the volcanic ash advisories and produce the graphics.

Q. Oh, okay, great.

A. And then we do -- as a CWSU, we do the CWAs, the MISs, and -- as well as doing the briefings. We do daily standup briefings routinely at 7:30 in the morning and at 2:50 p.m. local. We also have three recorded briefings standard, the first one's due by 5:45, we try to get it out by 5:30; the second we have done by 12:50 p.m. and the last one is by 8:50 p.m. We focus on weather that could impact air traffic, such as SIGMETs, Center Weather Advisories, and meteorological information statements; volcanic ash -- volcano status information or volcanic ash, as well; icing, turbulence, convection, AIRMETs, required PIREPs, and flight categories for the 10 hub forecasts that they --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- have requested. When we do our standup briefings between 7:30 and 2:50 p.m., the target audience is the Anchorage operations manager, the frontline managers, the traffic management unit. We included Alaska Aviation Weather Unit graphics and graphics made by us in a PowerPoint briefing.

Q. Um-hum.

A. We also brief TRACON and ATC by phone Monday through Friday

at 8:00 a.m. now.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. It's been adjusted since this. The pre-duty weather briefs we do, the three times, as mentioned previously, the target audience is the air traffic controllers around the state, so ZAN, TRACON, ATCTs, they watch it before they take their positions on their first shift of the day. And then the videos have statewide focus, the same content pretty much as the standup briefings.

They are -- as per the lower 48, try to be kept under three minutes for multiple reasons, attention span is one, but for somewhere -- it's infrastructure, so at Juneau, for example, if we had a three-minute video, it could take, I've heard, maybe five minutes or so for the video to come up to be able to actually watch it, and so it's one of the things of being in Alaska and having a technological issue with COMMs that has steered how we've developed versus the lower 48 and what services you have there.
Q. Right. No, I definitely can see that, the bandwidth we noticed is not good, yeah.
A. Yeah. And are you familiar with what CWAs, the Center Weather Advisories, are or meteorological information statements?
Q. Yes.
A. Okay, because we have two particular ones for MISs --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- for Alaska that the other CWSUs don't.
Q. Uh-huh.

A. One is for cold air aloft, that's when temperatures are below minus 65 Celsius and below 45,000 feet and we will give them an idea of where -- a heads up as to where aircraft may experience those conditions because of fuel solidifying --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- over a longer-term exposure for the older aircraft that don't have fuel heaters. The other one is for high altimeter settings, which is typically in a February or January time frame and it's where the altimeter -- the altimeter that's got an analog wafer physically cannot read above 31 inches of mercury and therefore the controllers have to do special modifications. I'm not a controller, so I don't know what they do, but they have to be aware of that for planes landing out in the bush, whatnot.
Q. Oh, yeah, wow.
A. So that's something that we do, but it's on the really cold winter days, it could last a few days.
Q. Well, this is welcome information in here, appreciate that.
A. You're welcome.
Q. So the only question I have that -- you thoroughly briefed us on this, so it's very, very helpful. What's your relationship with Flight Service?
A. It's -- it's not bad, it's just not -- so Flight Service, they provide us with PIREPs, they will -- they will call us, typically, when urgent PIREP UUAs are issued, that they received it, they do enter the PIREPs, as you see.

Q. Um-hum.
A. It has not been our practice to contact them for PIREPs, it's usually they're providing PIREPs. If I need to clarify a PIREP, I can contact them because in the remark section of the PIREP, they will -- and they're supposed to put AFSS --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- Alaska Flight Service Station, and that way we know that we can contact them.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. It's just like if it's an Anchorage PIREP, they'll put Z-A-N in for -- or Zulu Alpha November in for the remarks section to allow us to know this was the facility and then I can try and find out who the controller was to try and clarify, you know, what they were told, because typos happen.
Q. Yeah, of course.
A. And if it's a tower, they typically don't identify themselves, so that is a clue.
Q. Yeah.
A. You know, that's how you can figure out who may have entered it.
MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, all right. Good to know. I'm going to let my colleagues ask some questions, our --
BY MR. OGDEN:
Q. Yeah, I don't have many, the background information is very helpful and I do appreciate you coming and giving that. It sounds

like you had an opportunity to review the meteorological conditions of that day. Expectations as the CWSU OMIC, were they met, did the --

A. Yeah, I mean -- yes, I don't -- I don't think Mike did anything nonstandard, I mean.

Q. Um-hum.

A. You know, sometimes it's just the luck of the draw. That day, the person was in the position they were in and -- yeah. So that's just the way it is, it could have -- you know, I've been at -- slightly different, you've asked about, not today, but yesterday you asked about PIREP solicitation --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- and how that works and the life of a PIREP --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- and even asking if -- all right, you know, can you get X number of PIREPs an hour and that sort of thing. I'd never put a number on it, as far as PIREPs go, we want PIREPs all the time, every -- you know, every time you talk to a plane, give us a PIREP --

Q. Sure.

A. -- because there is no upper limit to how many, it could all be CAB OP, you know, great flying conditions, it could all be terrible flying conditions, it could be just their observations, so that's what we've -- so I would never ask for, you know, get at least one an hour.

Q. Um-hum.
A. Secondly, I've asked about all right, wintertime, you know, it could be wintertime and it's evening in Nome, not this situation, but I would talk to the supervisor for the north area because it's where I -- and I would say hey, are there any planes going out here because we need -- I'd like to get PIREPs in this area and there might not be any pilots, you know, planes flying for three or four hours out to that area I'm interested in and that's another thing that hampers trying to get your -- you know, trying to get one -- a PIREP an hour or whatever --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- because if there's no flights, there's no flights and if there's no flights, there's no risk to aviation because there's no one flying.
Q. Um-hum.
A. So that's kind of the -- one of the other problems about trying to get PIREPs in a routine fashion, we don't necessarily have the traffic when we want it and where we want it to help out.
Q. Understood.
A. So yeah, as far as like soliciting PIREPs, I know there was a question, there were three aircraft that went in prior to it and they did not get PIREPs back from the pilots. I don't want to talk about what the controllers did because I don't know a hundred percent, it would be speculation on my part, so -- but just an anecdote, but just an observation, soliciting PIREPs, it's easy to

do when the weather is good and you're not so busy, but when the weather's bad and the controller is busy and the pilot is busy, so when we need them is when it's hard to -- and giving it to do.

Q. Right.

A. And I get that, so just the nature of the beast.

Q. Yeah.

A. Communication is the third one, aviate, navigate first, so --

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Are you finished?

MR. OGDEN: I think that -- yeah, I have no further questions, I really appreciate it.

MR. WESTON: I could tell you more about the life cycle of a PIREP, if that's what you -- I know you asked that yesterday or --

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, if there's any context you'd like to add, please do.

MR. WESTON: So PIREPs can happen organically, as in the controller and the pilot, one or the other, the pilot offers it up or the controller asks for the PIREP and they get it, they fill out the PIREP form. Some of the supervisors up in the north are -- north or south or high side, they will enter the PIREP into AISR themselves, they have that comfort level. Others will walk it down to flight data to enter the PIREPs and flight data will then take the sheet back to the -- the supervisor of the appropriate area. If it's urgent, an urgent upper air, they may stop by our desk to show us hey, we've got this and we're going to -- it's going in, so we'll have a heads-up before it even gets

into the system that it's there and we frequently will tell the Alaska Aviation Weather Unit about it before it even shows up or when it shows up, we will copy the text from AISR, we've got a map, a picture of it, if it's somewhere that's atypical --

MR. OGDEN: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: -- and here's the text, here's where it is, so they can focus on looking at the right area quickly. But they also have all the PIREP information themselves, they don't need us to do it, it's just more of an extra pair of eyes, hey, just in case your head was down when this popped up, here is the information. So that's one way.

Another way is where we go and ask whether it's for volcanic ash or some other hazard, we will say okay, we will speak to the supervisor, we avoid talking to the controllers directly because, you know, the supervisors are the person, they will know. This is all when we're not under -- when there's no restrictions for military exercises or whatever, security, something secure going on, we can't go down to the floor, we will talk to the OM or traffic management personnel and they can communicate with the appropriate person. So we don't walk to the floor all the time, but if we talk to the supervisor, the supervisor can look, like I said, to see if there's any planes out there, but they can direct the controllers as to soliciting PIREPs for us and what they need is what we're looking for. We don't -- you know, we try to know our lanes and we don't tell controllers what to do.

MR. OGDEN: I see.

MR. WESTON: We just ask. So that's how it typically works. And we may get a request from the Alaska Aviation Weather Unit, hey, we're picking up this, can you get a PIREP. It could be related to issuing a SIGMET, canceling a SIGMET, the same for us, issuing a Center Weather Advisory or canceling it, we're just getting feedback on what products we have out there.

MR. OGDEN: Understood. Yeah, no, thank you. Thank you for the clarification, that helps.

MR. WESTON: Sure.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, thanks.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.

MR. BOUSU: I do not have any.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. I only have one. So in the -- first, the free text you showed us --

A. Yes.

Q. -- where it does say the products, what product or products may not be available, what products may not be available, do you know?

A. So the reflectivity for radar, yeah, is what I'd expect to may or may not be available. So in this case it was still available even though they were working on it. And I did check with the SOC because I got asked this question, or maybe by the

ELT, but what radar you can see on your scope may be different than what we can see on our --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- public site and the public weather radar, and so we -- unless someone tells us that you can't see it, we don't know that you can't see it and vice versa, you might be able to see it and we can't, the controller, I should say, might be able to see the weather on their scope, but we don't see it because it could be comms line thing, so --

Q. It's not necessarily the same equipment.

A. Right.

Q. Um-hum.

A. The source will be the same, but the delivery might be different.

MS. MARINAS: All right, thanks.

MR. WESTON: Sure.

MS. KOSCHIG: Travis?

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. Just one question. You said that the CWSU is not part of the chain of releasing the NEXRAD.

A. Affirmative.

Q. In your opinion, based on the forecasted weather conditions in that area, if CWSU was in that chain, would you have released that to maintenance?

A. It doesn't make sense to do it with a weather event, like you

can see the precip that was the icing but, I mean, there's also hindsight. But no, I mean, if you got weather -- no, I mean, if it's going to be a kind of off day, sure. If there's low-level wind shear -- yeah, I don't -- no, I wouldn't -- or at least I'd advise against it, it's not my decision, so I just provide the weather. It will give out weather here, I'll let them make the decision but I'd say you wouldn't advise it and I think that's -- so that's, I believe, what happened.

I know you can quote me because it's recorded, but I believe that Fairbanks, initially they released it and -- meteorologist, and then they said no, it's a weather day and that's why there's these two messages, I believe, and that's where the second one -- and -- but because they said that it -- you weren't going to lose the radar, they went ahead with it, allowing it because we weren't going to lose the data feed and I believe that's why there's two messages, but --

Q. Interesting.

A. -- trust but verify.

MR. ARNOLD: Thank you.

MR. WESTON: Yeah.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So you may have told us earlier, but how do you get these, what kind of mechanism do they come on, I mean, are they come over -- do you get them off line or how do --

A. So we've got our internal weather -- it's AWIPS.

Q. Um-hum.
A. The afternoon --
Q. Okay, AWIPS?
A. Yeah, Alpha Whiskey India Papa Sierra.
Q. Uh-huh.
A. What it stands for, I don't recall, but --
Q. Okay.
A. Anyway, it's what we look at our weather models on and that sort of thing and there's no alerts in there you can get. If you want to get this for any other investigations or any time you feel bored, you can go to Iowa State University, they've got archived weather data on that and that's where, I believe, this was sourced to print out.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. So if you want to look at TAFs, CWAs, MISs, la-dee-da-dee-da.
Q. Oh, that's interesting.
A. You can look at text products.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, it's good to know, thanks. All right. I don't have any more questions.

MR. WESTON: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Casey?

MR. OGDEN: No.

MR. BOUSU: No, I'm good.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MS. MARINAS: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Any questions for us?

MR. WESTON: No. I know there were questions you asked yesterday that you didn't ask me, which is fine.

MS. KOSCHIG: No, go ahead and answer them because we've gone through a lot of interviews since yesterday, so --

MR. WESTON: Sure.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- forgive me for not.

MR. WESTON: No, well, weather is pertinent to this situation or not, but you asked about what the most hazardous, fickle meteorological sort of conditions were for forecasting and that sort of thing --

MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

MR. WESTON: -- and my answer is slightly different than the one yesterday, I'd suggest volcanic ash because 90 percent of the time you don't know when the volcano's going to puff and you're a firefighter, you're reacting to the situation, you're not -- it's not like all right, I can see this hurricane is coming and I've got X amount of time to prepare for it.

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. OGDEN: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: A volcano goes, you react. It's actually calmer a little bit later, but in the initial ash event, I said 90 percent because we have what's called resuspended ash.

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: There was a volcano that erupted in 1912, west

of Kodiak Island, Novarupta, they call it Katmai for ease for a pilot to come up here during the summer who are not familiar with Alaska --

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: -- because it's close enough, they've heard of Katmai, they haven't heard Novarupta. It put enough ash in the air that there's ash on the ground from over a hundred years ago and when the winds are at the right speed and direction, it will blow over to Kodiak Island about 5 to 6,000 feet. It can also go northwest into Bristol Bay, but that's less frequent. It doesn't happen during the winter due to snow, you usually get it in the autumn or the spring as the time. That's more for education, not for --

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, no, that's interesting.

MR. WESTON: But it's just something that you can --

MR. OGDEN: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Absolutely.

MR. WESTON: You know, it's different here than the lower 48, that you might -- you know, it could be a great weather day, but you have that -- a volcano go and -- or we've had volcanic ash events happen where the pilot does a pan-pan 10 minutes before our shift starts in the morning.

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: So you walk into that.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. WESTON: And then that enters your pre-duty weather brief on time because you're dealing with a pan-pan versus --

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah.

MR. WESTON: But then that could disrupt other people, you know, the controllers getting on duty, you know, because of the requirement to watch the video, so --

MS. KOSCHIG: Correct.

MR. WESTON: -- that's something different.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So what else didn't I ask you about that --

MR. WESTON: You asked about resources, what you'd like to have.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah, thank you, it was going to be one my last questions --

(Crosstalk)

MR. WESTON: Sorry about that.

MS. KOSCHIG: You beat me to the punch on that one, so go ahead, tell us all, tell us all about this, on what would be helpful.

MR. WESTON: And we're in interesting times.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes, we are.

MR. WESTON: The CWSU program stemmed from an aircraft accident in '78 --

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: -- and NTSB recommended CWSU --

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: -- but we're the end result of the recommendation from an investigation in '78.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

MR. WESTON: There are 21 centers, there are 20 in the lower 48 and then there's us, the only ones outside of the lower 48.

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: Every center has a backup pair except for -- our backup pair is the Alaska Aviation Weather Unit. They don't produce the products we do and we don't produce the products they do. So a couple things, one, as I indicated earlier, we cover the size of 13 CWSUs in the lower 48.

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: Having maybe an extra person on just because you're here solo for 16 hours a day and you've only -- yeah, you got a lot of area to cover, having additional staff would help with everything. We are fair weather staffed, we lose one person, we're down 25 percent, we lose two people, down to 50 percent, and there's only so much you can do, as Oakland's going to find out. So that, the pre-duty weather brief, everybody's supposed to watch it, they prefer it to be under three minutes, they prefer it to be under 90 seconds if you talk to the controllers. It's hard to make it have value for everybody in an area this big.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

MR. WESTON: It's hard to do more than one, you know -- you know, this is calling across the CWSUs, each tower would like to have their own -- you know --

MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

MR. WESTON: -- high side, south side, north side, they would like to have their own because Juneau doesn't care so much about Russian volcanoes for the most part, so to make a video that's short enough to be able to mean something would again require having more than one person on, because we start at 5:00 a.m. and to get the product out by 5:30, it's difficult getting it tailored for putting out four or five different ones, it's not reliable for us to try and do that.

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: So anyway, that's a resource we could use.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes, absolutely.

MR. WESTON: I'm not saying this environment is going to allow that to happen, but it's just something and we're not the only CWSU who could --

MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly.

MR. WESTON: -- benefit from additional staffing.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right. And I believe you hit a good point there, is that I know that each tower would like to have their own personal version there, I mean, even for the centers, things that happen in one area is not applicable to other areas, but I agree, you just don't have the manpower to split all that up, especially

if you're in -- you've got a lot of airports and, you know, especially in the lower 48 and they have several airports and --

MR. WESTON: Right.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- to have more manpower and CWSUs definitely would help.

MR. WESTON: Right. I mean, it's like the -- for those who don't know, the panhandle in Alaska is handled by Juneau weather forecast office, but it's about the same size as Florida.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. WESTON: And they have two CWSUs and they've got multiple weather forecast offices, again, so we do more with less because we have to.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. WESTON: There was a question yesterday about AIRMETs --

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: -- and them not being graphical or why we're still using it, so we still have Flight Service stations up here, whereas they don't exist in the lower 48. You also have -- you don't have graphical AIRMETs up here like you do in the lower 48.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

MR. WESTON: You also have text FAs, which I don't believe you have in the lower 48. This comes back to the technological issues we have with -- you know, internet and that sort of thing in the remote parts of the state, we don't have the bandwidth to be able to provide those sort of graphics. Not an endorsement,

but something like Starlink satellite service --

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. WESTON: -- will help evolve what we can provide to aviators in the state but, like I said, I'm not endorsing any company, I'm just --

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. WESTON: -- using them as an example, like a vacuum and a Hoover.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. WESTON: But that's something that if that does, we could maybe evolve what we provide, but there's no point making a video that takes 15 minutes for the tower to watch. It's supposed to be a three minute or less video. That doesn't give them much value because it's talking about -- you know, Kodiak's not interested in what Juneau's got going on.

So anyway, that was why you don't have the graphical AIRMETs in that sort of thing, is because you can't communicate it easily to the people who are remote in Kotzebue, Nome, and that sort of thing. One other thing is Kotzebue is losing its -- as a double oh Zulu, I guess it's today, this afternoon, we lost our weather soundings or, you know, the balloon --

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

MR. WESTON: -- launch there --

MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

MR. WESTON: -- that's out indefinitely.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, wow.

MR. WESTON: That's because of staffing and yeah, we just don't have the resources to be able to maintain it, so that's going to impact our models, not just for us, but the lower 48, because we're on the western periphery of getting information, weather information for the --

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. WESTON: -- rest of the NAS. So I don't know if I said too much, but like I said --

MS. KOSCHIG: No, that's wonderful.

MR. WESTON: You had one more question that was --

MS. KOSCHIG: That question that I was going to ask you was, is there anything that we didn't ask you, see, but you were filling that in there.

(Laughter.)

MR. WESTON: Sorry.

MS. KOSCHIG: So is there anything we didn't we ask that we -- that you still are interested in talking about?

MR. WESTON: What was the type of aircraft in this?

MS. KOSCHIG: Caravan, was it --

MR. WESTON: Two-oh-eight?

MR. WESTON: Yeah, 208 Caravan.

MR. WESTON: One of my colleagues has noted that -- I don't think he's done an actual tally, but 50 percent of the icing PIREPs --

MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.
MR. WESTON: -- come from 208s.
MS. KOSCHIG: Oh.
MR. WESTON: We kind of casually call them ice magnets.
MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.
MR. WESTON: So --
MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.
MR. WESTON: -- yeah, I'm not going to repeat everything you said.
MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. It's being recorded, so --
MR. WESTON: Right, that's what I'm just going to mention, that --
MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.
MR. WESTON: -- they seem to be the ones that typically get and report the icing, airframe icing.
MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Okay.
MR. WESTON: Just an observation.
MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.
MR. WESTON: All right. Well, thanks for letting me chat.
MR. OGDEN: Of course.
MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah, absolutely. We'll go ahead and end the interview and the time now is at 17:12 Alaska time.
(Whereupon, at 5:12 p.m., the interview concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Graham Weston
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 26, 2025

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.



_____

David A. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: MICHAEL LANGEVIN, Meteorologist on Duty
National Weather Service

Anchorage, Alaska

Tuesday,
February 25, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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(On behalf of Michael Langevin)

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:55 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: So the time now is 15:55 Alaska Time. All right. Let's start out with introductions.

Again, my name's Betty Koschig. I'm a senior air traffic control investigator at the NTSB. I've been there for about 16 years so I've done a couple of these.

What's your name?

MR. LANGEVIN: Michael Langevin.

MS. KOSCHIG: Can you spell your last name?

MR. LANGEVIN: L-a-n-g-e-v-i-n.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great. Before we get started asking questions and stuff, like I said a few minutes ago, this is going to -- I just want to make you aware that this was being audio recorded so you do understand that?

MR. LANGEVIN: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Great. And as I said, we will make a transcription of this. The audio will be kept with us. Once we get the transcription back, we will send you a copy of that. It might take a few weeks because we have to go through it and make sure the acronyms are correct and all that so that we can give you a clean copy of it.

And if you did have any comments to make, you're more than welcome to email us back, and we'll put it as footnotes. We won't change the transcription itself, but we'll footnote your comments.

Just to let you know that.

Okay. So I see that you have a representative. Is this the person you want to be your representative?

MR. LANGEVIN: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Great. So what is your name, sir?

MR. WESTON: Graham Weston. Graham as in the crackers, and Weston, W-e-s-t-o-n.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Perfect. So just let you know during the interview, all the questions that we ask are going to be directed to you. But you're than welcome, if you want to go out and talk to your rep, that's fine; or if you if you wanted to just there and converse, that's fine. Either way. It's just if you talk here, it's going to be on the audio recording. But don't be afraid to say, let's just cut it, and you can go talk. So fine.

Part of the process, why we got so many people in here, part of the process is, we always bring in party members, we welcome party members on our group so that we can get expertise.

We've got the NTSB air traffic investigators, but it's great to have people that have recency that's working in the field that we can rely on to help us in this investigation. We sure can't do it alone.

This time, we happen to have some FAA, FAA SME, and NATCA SMEs. They're aviation safety investigators so we got a lot of, you know, got a lot of experience with controlling and investigating so we're really set on this investigation.

But I'm going to let everybody introduce themselves. I'll start out with my colleague, Casey.

MR. OGDEN: Awesome. Thanks, Betty. Casey Ogden. My background's primarily military. I spent 8 years in the Air Force. Transitioned from the Air Force to the FAA. Spent some short time in the FAA before transitioning my role as an air safety investigator.

MR. BOUSU: My name is Trevor Bousu. Operation manager at Denver Center. Nineteen years in the Agency; 4 years as a controller and 15 years in management.

MS. MARINAS: Karena Marinas. I'm a controller at LA Center, NATCA air safety investigator.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold. I've been in the Agency for about 16 years, NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So that's us. We're the NTSB team.

We're going to take this from doing the interviews all the way to the end. So we'll all be involved with the factual report and making sure that we review everything. And most of this is going to be air traffic stuff so we review everything to make sure that we are collecting all, everything that is factual and putting out everything factual.

That's just a little bit about that.

In case you don't know who we are as the NTSB, we are an independent agency so we don't work for FAA, DOT, anybody else. We go directly up to Congress. So it's a very short chain of

command for us, but we still are federal employees.

And as far as regulatory power or enforcement, we have zero, none. We cannot enforce anything, but what we do have, our part is making safety recommendations so that's where our power lies. And, believe me, we take that very seriously, and we are all wanting to make sure that if there's anything safety, that there's any issues, we can help make the world a little bit safer in the aviation world rather.

So, like I said, we're here to gather facts. When we do these interviews, we're not here to try to pick apart everything that you do and lay blame on stuff. It's one of those situations if there's something that needs improvement, let's bring it out in the open so we can have a safety improvement with it, with something.

And I hope you do kind of bring out, if there's things that would help you do your job better, let us know, bring this up. I mean, you're out here in Alaska where there's so much different weather, and the more that you can tell us and the more that, or you can let us know what would be helpful for you, is going to help us to make recommendations and point out what's needed. We're here to help with that because these things, it's really, it's seriously important to get that information out.

And we'll go over some stuff that I noticed that is being created as far as the PIREP stuff. We'll talk a little bit about that in a little bit.

This interview probably won't last more than hour, usually it's right about an hour. So I'm going to just start out asking some questions, get to know you a little bit, your history and, then, we'll move onto if you knew anything about the incident.

And, then, we're just going to talk about, I mean, the accident and, then, we're going to about what goes in the CWSU and how everybody communicates.

So if there's -- if we do ask you anything that you don't know the answer to, I don't know, a perfect answer so don't be afraid to say that.

Like I said earlier, if you need a break, yeah, we can do a break, just let us know.

And we will probably be jotting down some notes or typing. We're not looking up the internet or texting each other. We're just typing down things so we can -- because once we move on to somebody else, we try not to interrupt each other. So we type things down so we can recall what you said and come back and ask.

But all of that stuff we type down or jot down, we destroy that. What's going in our, for the record is going to be the transcription so just to let you know that.

Questions so far?

MR. LANGEVIN: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: You're ready to get started, right?

MR. LANGEVIN: Yeah, sure.

MS. KOSCHIG: You're, like, get on with it, right.

INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL LANGEVIN

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. We got your name. What is your job title?

A. Meteorologist.

Q. Okay. You work for the FAA?

A. I work for the National Weather Service.

Q. That's what I want to hear. So you work for the National Weather Service. I just wanted to make sure that it wasn't something different up here in Alaska.

A. Yeah. No.

Q. Everything's different here.

A. Flight Service still exists up here.

Q. Yeah. So you work for the National Weather Service. How long have you worked for them?

A. Since '98, May of '98.

Q. All right. Where did you start working, where'd you begin?

A. It was a summer employment. I don't want to say intern, but summer employment of '98 during my senior year. And, then, after I graduated, I got a permanent position in Key West, Florida, like, '99.

Q. Oh, wow. And, then, when you -- and, then, where'd you go after Key West?

A. Memphis, Tennessee, for one year; it was a temporary position there. And, then, Memphis to Eureka, California, as a general forecaster.

And, then, from there to El Paso. Well, I'm sorry, Santa Teresa, New Mexico, is the official station. And, then, from there to Palmdale, LA Center in 2005.

Q. And, then, where?

A. Then I spent about 3 years as an OPL, Observation Program Leader, for the National Weather Service in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Then back to Palmdale for a few years. And, then, from Palmdale to here, and that would be of last June 2024.

Q. Oh, okay. So you like it here so far?

A. I like it.

Q. Get a lot of, like, it keeps you busy with weather, right?

A. It's big. Yeah, it's busy. It's a huge state. Lots of territory to cover.

Q. Yeah. How many thousands of miles is it?

A. They say it's equivalent -- from the Aleutians to Juneau, is about the equivalent of Seattle to Maine. And, of course, we go from Juneau to the North Pole for the airspace, and I don't have that equivalency.

Q. Wow. That is, that's really huge.

A. So there could be three storm systems at one time as opposed to LA Center, it would just be one storm system.

Q. That's a lot to work with.

A. Yeah.

Q. Cool. I mean, it's kind of exciting to be able to work with that much stuff, but it's got to be very difficult to get

everything all together?
A. Yes.
Q. I mean, it's -- yeah, it's pretty neat.
Before I go a little bit, any further, I've got to tell you. The reason that we're even here doing the interviews is because of the accident that occurred on February 6th with Bering 445. I just wanted to make sure you were well aware of that.
Did you have -- have you got any military time at all?
A. No.
Q. Okay. What kind of hours do you guys usually work, what's your schedule?
A. 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and, then, from 1:00 p.m. to 9:00.
Q. What days of the weeks are those?
A. Seven days a week.
Q. Okay. You work 7 days a week?
A. Well, yeah, 40 hours a week.
Q. Yeah. Okay. Are you off on Saturday, Sunday, or when's your days off?
A. My regular days off, unless they change, are Fridays and Saturdays off, but they can change depending on people taking leave.
Q. All right. Let's see. Were you working the night that the accident happened?
A. I was.
Q. Afternoon?

A. Yeah, from 1:00 to 9:00 p.m., I was on that shift.
Q. Okay. So you work a week of 1:00 to 9:00s and, then -- how does that work?
A. For me, it goes a little bit back and forth. For others, it's straight evenings and the other person's mostly straight days. I do a few of the mornings and, then, evenings. So I -- yeah. I transition from the morning shift to the afternoon shift.
Q. Oh, okay. So let's talk more about -- what was going on that day, when this happened, what do you recall about the weather that day?
A. Well, I mean, there was a trough in the area of Nome, and its weather was a little bit of a weak system going through. There was AIRMETs out for that, for icing conditions that were up the, just off the Seward Peninsula from 2,000 to 9,000 feet, I believe.
Q. Okay. And did you happen to -- on that day, do you -- you had your normal brief. Did you have your normal briefing that day? Do you have an afternoon briefing usually?
A. Yeah. Come in at 1:00. I will get my briefing from the -- for the day shift, and it was Michael on that shift. And, then, we do our stand-up briefing about 2:50 p.m. for the supervisors stand-up briefing.
Q. All right. What do you recall that was put out at that, is the information you just stated, was there anything else that you put out to the supervisors at that meeting?
A. There was no new information at that time. The AIRMETs come

out right about that time, around shift change, about 1:00 p.m. at the latest, and everything was still current as of 4:00 p.m. timeframe.

Q. Oh, okay. Was there any forecast for a change, I mean, do you recall if there was any, if you had any forecast for a change, what was the, for Nome area, I mean, was there any areas that you would advise a pilot not to fly through?

A. Things were forecasted, moving as forecasted. There wasn't clearing, but that was after the accident. But, you know, things were pretty much progressing as forecasted so really no updates that I was aware of.

Q. So nothing that really just kind of stuck out?

A. No, it was just --

Q. When they take down, like, the NEXRAD, do they let you know about that, for maintenance?

A. It's a lot of different here than it was down in the mainland.

Q. Right.

A. So it's, like, I know what they were doing back home. But here, the FAA techs are in charge of that so it's a whole different animal, which I'm learning as we go on.

It was -- no, they didn't mention to me about anything going down at the time.

Q. All right. So if they had -- if they take down NEXRAD, how does NEXRAD -- how does that impact your abilities?

A. I mean, we do have other techniques to use if we're -- in lieu of the radar.

We could use satellite data to gauge on cloud tops. If not, we have forecasts of model soundings, and that's a good tool to use to figure out the tops of the icing conditions.

Q. Well, that's interesting. That's good information there.

A. But as far as the radars going down, there are free text messages that should be sent out when the users, whoever the users are, us including, other people would get that message.

Q. Can you recall if you got that, that day?

A. I don't -- no.

Q. Like you said, you've been to a lot of different places. Are there things here that or are there things not here that you really could use that would help for your job as far as weather, ensuring that you're getting all the weather information out, in and out, you know, as far as letting the controllers know or whoever else you disseminate the weather to?

A. I'll just like to get PIREPs to verify that my forecasts are on track and, also, that's the tools that I use to make sure that everything is verifying.

Q. And how do you find out if you're getting PIREPs, do they, PIREPs come to you?

A. Sometimes some of the controllers let us know that some of the urgent ones are severe, they'll let us know as they pass by and hand off to the Flight Data people.

But, you know, when I issue warnings out there, obviously, I make a solicit for PIREPs when I do that. And we have, we issue our cold air aloft so I definitely want PIREPs from them to make sure that the temperatures are as forecasted.

Q. Okay. Do you get -- do you work much with the Flight Service stations, do you communicate with them?

A. The communication that we have is when they receive an urgent report that they call us.

Q. So you cover all the Flight Service stations?

A. Yeah.

Q. Wow. That's a lot.

A. And from one of the Flight Service, I'm not sure which one, but they were relaying some icing conditions, and they want to put some more emphasis into that report so they wanted -- I came out with a Center weather advisory at that point since --

Q. Oh, great.

A. -- it was kind -- yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: I am going to let somebody else ask some questions. So, Casey.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah. I apologize if I repeat anything. I don't believe I will.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Do you recall anything about the accident flight, the weather surrounding it and any of your interactions related to that?

A. I got reports of PIREPs, but they were maybe 2 hours old. As

far as in and around that area, they were just reporting light to trace icing conditions, no turbulence was noted.

And didn't get any tops reports. That would be helpful too if I got more tops reports about icing conditions to verify the tops, you know, the AIRMETs.

Q. And, then, if this is outside of purview as CWSU, I apologize.

As a CWSU member, have you ever looked at an airport, say Nome, for example, a great one in this, they have PIREP-able conditions, and you realize, hey, there hasn't been a PIREP for 2 hours, like you stated, would you ever go to the control staff and say, hey, these areas needs PIREPs, or is that something that you don't do under your duties?

A. I have. I mean, if I'm going to renew a Center weather advisory or, perhaps, renew in a SIGMET, we will solicit more reports to see how things are, whether or not to continue those advisories or SIGMETs, you know. In that type of situation, we would definitely solicit PIREPs before the end of a product.

Q. I see. So the bump for PIREPs to control staff, that would be contingent upon a product that you have derived?

A. I mean, there's other scenarios that we would -- if we disagree with the TAF, we'll go to the forecast office and see, you know, this doesn't look very good, if we're coming up on the next hour where the TAF should probably be amended if the conditions continue beyond, so we have reached out to the forecast

office that issues those TAFs to, perhaps, update them.
Q. Do you recall if there was any input given after you had realized it had been about 2 hours, anything like that, to the control staff about PIREPs?
A. No.
Q. Okay. The weather that night, was it unusual?
A. Like, it was just a weak system. It wasn't a -- that's primarily why we didn't ask for any additional support because it wasn't a strong system, it wasn't anything like that.
It was just some light precip with tops to 9,000 feet, you know. It wasn't -- yeah. It wasn't anything out of the ordinary, that's for sure.
Q. I see. If you had to put a number on it, how often does this type of weather affect the ZAN region, 50 percent of the time, 75 percent, 20?
A. For this type of -- for this time of the year?
Q. Sure.
A. I'd probably say 70 percent. I mean, there's lots of areas that are covered by IFR AIRMETs. It's almost 80 percent sometimes, but it was about 70 percent.
Q. Gotcha. Okay. So you came in, you were working 1:00 to 9:00 that night, so that happened a little later in the afternoon.
Throughout the shift, did your expectation of weather change based on your work that you done so far during the day versus when you initially came into the shift?

A. There was no change in the expectation as the weather was pretty much as forecasted. It seemed to be pretty steady, you know, no dramatic shifts or anything.
Q. I see. So things were progressing as expected?
A. Yeah.
Q. Awesome. What do you expect the accident aircraft would have had as far as weather products?
A. What's that?
Q. What do you expect the accident aircraft would have had as far as weather products, it's kind of a different role?
A. What the pilot should have as far as weather products?
Q. Yes.
A. Auto pilot as well.
Q. I see.
A. But you would assume you should have a pilot weather briefing before his IFR flight.
So, obviously, he would have all the weather information which is AIRMETs, TAFs, METARs, Winds Alofts, and, of course, any SIGMETs or CWAs that were in effect at that time.
Q. What weather resources did you use during your shift on the accident?
A. Our AWIPs. Other resources that we use is AISR to follow up with PIREPs. Yeah.
Also, we receive the AIRMETs through AISR too so we know if there's an update or change, we would be noticing it through the

AISR system

Q. What guidance is best for forecasting icing here at ZAN?

A. What guidance?

Q. Tools, techniques that you have for forecasting icing.

A. Well, some of the -- as far as temperatures getting too cold then there would be less likely for icing conditions. And once temperatures are significantly cold then there's less likelihood of icing conditions and that's -- I would have to -- I don't recall exactly on the specific numbers.

But, otherwise, yeah, if it's in the 20s and things, it's definitely ripe for icing conditions.

Q. I see. And what products would you use to determine that those temperatures are occurring, like, how are you building that situational awareness?

A. Well, the surface temperatures, the METARs. And, I guess, selective, I'll put a forecast of sounding over there to get the moisture layer and the temperatures.

Q. Understood. Okay. Do you have control of any weather displays in the operational control areas?

A. For the supervisors?

Q. For any position.

A. Well, they have access to all the weather products that the AWU issues, and they could select products as they need fit for the season or for the day, you know, for issues.

Q. I see. Are you able to choose what is displayed on any

monitors in the control areas, or is that up to the supervisors?
A. From my work station, no, I don't have any controls. So I'd have to go over to their work station to modify the weather products.
Q. On the day of the event, do you recall if you had modified any just by --
A. No.
Q. Okay. Can you tell me what shows up on WARP?
A. WARP is an old system, and we don't rely on that here. But as far as, you know, what it's capable of, I'm familiar with what's it's capable of in LA.
Q. That's okay. We won't delve into it since it's not used here, and I appreciate that.
What's the most challenging weather scenario here?
A. Challenging. Well, there's lots of airspaces that don't, aren't being reported or they're flying through. So there's lots of areas that just don't have any observations, don't have any METARs, doesn't have any PIREPs, but we try to supplement that with other sources.
Mesonet has some additional weather sites that we use, but there's definitely some places that just don't have a lot of METAR -- I'm sorry, PIREPs.
Q. I see. So it sounds like CWSU and the control staff kind of lean on one another to build that weather purview?
A. I would say so, yeah.

Q. So speaking on PIREPs a bit more, what is the process for reporting a PIREP here to ZAN, what does that look like, that life cycle of a PIREP?

A. Well, at the stand-up briefings, we have our weather PIREPs on the monitor and that's what we use to solicit PIREPs. The control -- our supervisors take that back with them, and they use that solicit PIREPs.

And, of course, if there's any modifications to the weather forecast, we'll let them know that, you know, we issued a SIGMET or the Center weather advisory so we'll need PIREPs for this area as well. So that could change, of course.

Q. Have you ever briefed expectations as a CWSU for PIREPs to control staff, meaning, hey, I would like for you guys to get one PIREP an hour, that would help with the shift purview and what I can provide, or how is that -- is there ever an expectation given to control staff from the CWSU?

A. I relay my information up to the supervisor. How they handle that to the controllers, I don't know.

Q. Okay. Could you give me an example of, like, what that feedback might be to a supervisor, say, you came into shift and there's icing in an area?

A. Yeah, I mean, if I think that an area's not being covered by an AIRMET, I would probably solicit a PIREPs to see what kind of conditions are there and if it's just light, you know, then, it doesn't meet the AIRMET criteria or the CWA criteria.

Q. I see. Do you recall if the ATM or a supervisor requested a weather package to be given?
A. For Nome?
Q. Hm-hmm.
A. They requested weather information after there was as a missing aircraft so about Zero Zero 30 Z, the manager asked for PIREPs, AIRMETs, TAFs.
Q. I see. And in your experience, is that standard practice, if there's a fatality, you'll provide a weather package?
A. Yeah.
Q. Has the CWSU ever been asked to help with recurrent or refresher training here?
A. I've been here for 8 months so I don't have a complete knowledge of that yet.
Q. Okay. So in your 8 months here, you haven't been -- no one's reached out to you for any help with recurrent or refresher?
A. Well, as far as that type, we do have training when we get new controllers, either new or transfer controllers into our facility. They shadow us for about 1 hour so we do have some, you know, one-on-one training with the new controllers or whatnot.
Q. That's fantastic.
A. Yeah.
Q. That's very good.
Kind of a general question, what's pertinent weather to you as a CWSU?

A. Pertinent as far as significant weather?
Q. We'll go with that, yeah.
A. Definitely moderate icing conditions is pertinent because I know how dangerous icing can be for aircrafts, that's for sure. I know we do get a lot of severe turbulence reports, and that's just the way it is and, luckily, no injuries or incidents with that. I know that icing is a dangerous thing for everybody involved.
Q. Just a last question from me and this is a hypothetical. If I were to put you in charge, is there any weather tool you wish you could have here that would help you do your job better?
A. I know the Center doesn't have all the equipment that the lower 48s do. I know that we use ERIDs. In LA Center, we don't have access to that.

And that provides, you probably already know, it provides METAR, oh, I'm sorry, PIREPs. The controller enters in the PIREPs, and we had access to that so we had, you know, pretty much instant notification when that occurred.
Q. So if I had to put words in your mouth, you would like some type of system to where you could instant notification of PIREPs?
A. Yeah. And as far as what they had and what we don't have, I know there was a display that where they have all the air traffic overlaid on, I forget which system it is, and it had the weather on there and stuff like that. So it's nice to know how planes are deviating from weather and sometimes we use the online resources for that.

Whereas, the lower 48s, obviously, have the FAA system supplied to them. Maybe not each Center, but at least LA Center had it.

MR. OGDEN: Well, I really appreciate your time. That's all the questions I have. Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you. Trevor.

MR. BOUSU: All righty. I have some. I'm probably going to bounce around a whole bunch.

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. You had mentioned earlier you had issued a CWA for icing, was that the night of the accident, or was it just a general icing?

A. In general.

Q. Just in general.

A. There was a Nome Center weather advisories in effect around that time.

Q. Okay. During the day of the accident, the pre-duty weather briefing, I know at Denver we have our CWS folks record it, were you involved, did you do their pre-duty?

A. I did not do the recording.

Q. You didn't do the recording.

A. The next recording would have been done about 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Q. Okay. So it was your, the one you relieved --

A. Yeah, the relief, the person that did it --

Q. -- that did the briefing?

A. -- could have done it between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m.
Q. Okay. Did you review that at all when you came in at all to see if there was any pertinent changes or anything that needed to be updated with that at all?
A. We use that, those slides, for our briefing at 2:50. So we pretty much use exactly what he has unless things have changed so I'll definitely have reviewed his, for sure, yeah.
Q. Perfect. Is there any kind of automated areas in the three areas at ZAN where it would state and the controllers have a good visibility of what PIREPs are needed to be solicited at all, or is it just kind of that package that they take back from stand up, and it's on the, kind of the sup to be able to tell?
A. I think so. In LA Center, we had a PIREP form. We used for WARP and that went to the briefing terminals. We don't have that here.

But other than what we provide with the stand-up briefing and what the supervisors get from the stand-up briefing, they take back to the controllers.
Q. Gotcha. Okay. What is your interaction with the OSs and OMs, especially on --
A. Who's the OS?
Q. Operation Supervisor.
A. Okay.
Q. So what is your interaction, like, with them? Are they coming up to you getting information, or are you going down to

them getting information, or kind of what is that exchange of information look like especially at --

A. In general or during the event?

Q. Just kind of weather days or --

A. Okay.

Q. -- if you guys need PIREPs or anything like that, just kind of curious about what the interaction looks like?

A. So outside of the stand-up briefing, we interact with the OMs. We provide the OMs with SIGMETs, whether they're Canadian SIGMETs or Russian SIGMETs or our own SIGMETs. So we provide the OM with SIGMETs and Center weather advisories.

We provide a picture of the box location. We have a map and a box drop instead of just the text format. We have a picture provided for them so we just, you know, clip a picture from the, what was being displayed as well as the text information. So we give that to the OM. And, of course, we do that when we run that over to the sups as well.

Q. Okay. I know you've only been here for a little bit, but we had talked with the training manager who had stated that there is training and familiarization for new OSs, new OMs that come on board, and that they utilize a checklist.

Do you -- have you gone through that with any of them, or kind of what does that look like?

A. As far as the managers?

Q. Yeah, training, or training or familiarization for the

managers.

A. I don't know if we had any new managers since I've been there. We've had a couple managers leave since I've been there.

But, like I said, the training that I provided was for new controllers that I'm aware of. Obviously, if there was a manager, maybe not.

Q. What does the training look like for controllers?

A. Just for -- I pretty much tell them what we do, what the weather is like across Alaska, how the season's change and what to expect as the season's change.

Q. Do they have, like, a checklist or anything like that they need to go through with you, or is just kind of more in general?

A. More in general.

MR. BOUSU: More in general, okay. Thank you. That's all I have.

MS. KOSCHIG: Karena.

MS. MARINAS: Okay. I think we covered everything I had, but let me double check real quick.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. What does air traffic ask you for most, if anything?

A. I mean, each day could be different. We have very hazardous mix of weather and environments. We have volcanic ash which is a very, obviously, very sensitive things to the pilots. They want to know if there's any updates to the volcanic activity that's in our airspace or even in Russia's airspace.

As far as the control -- or the supervisors will want to know if we expect that the Center weather advisory will continue, if it's going continue, same thing with the SIGMET as well, so we'll reach out to the AWU to see if they're planning on extending the SIGMETs.

Q. To the AWU? What is that?

A. Alaska Aviation Weather Unit. That's our aviation weather center equivalent.

Q. Okay. I think you went over it a little bit, but just more generalized, what is your interaction with the Flight Service people normally?

A. For the 8 months that I've been here, it's been mostly just having them relay urgent PIREPs to us and, on occasion, they have gave us additional information from the pilot.

Q. And do you ever send them any information or relay anything to them?

A. I haven't yet, but, obviously, it doesn't -- I can do that at any time, of course, and I have done that at other centers.

They are definitely a source to reach out if you were going to need PIREPs since they are able to talk to a different sector of pilots. Whereas, the Center can only, you know, reach out to the one's that are on frequency.

Q. Okay. And, then, I think you did say that the icing that was in Nome that day is pretty typical for this time of year, right? Is that what you said, or no?

A. Typically it's a little bit colder so we'd have less of an icing issue. It's been more of a warmer season, warmer winter, so that does -- it is more prone for icing conditions.

So for my years of, my months of experience, I think this is just a warmer than normal season, and I think it's just more of an issue this season than it was in the past.

Q. Has that -- do you know if that's been kind of communicated out to controllers, or if they would have any -- if there's -- if anyone's made any connections on that for them or with them?

A. Well, we relay our information to the supervisors and if it's a significant season, we do mention that to our supervisors that the climate's forecast for the next 6 to 10 days is going to be wetter than normal or colder or, you know, warmer than normal.

So we look at the climate forecasts and relay that information as well.

MS. MARINAS: Okay. That's it for me.

MS. KOSCHIG: Travis.

MR. ARNOLD: Hi. I just have one quick follow up, and I'm going to guess it's going to be pretty brief.

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. Can you expand a little bit, you had a pretty strong reaction when maybe Casey asked about when the NEXRAD goes down, do they talk to you guys about that.

Can you expand on that, how that's -- you said that's different here than it is, for instance, down in LA, can you just

explain what you mean?
A. Yeah. Well, it doesn't matter which user is taking down the site, no matter what, whoever it is, they're going to send out a free text message irregardless of whoever it is.
The FAA does not come around the corner and tell us that they're taking down our radar. Generally notified by free text messages, or in the LA Center, it would be the WARP, it'd be a square signifying that the radar site it down.
But as far as advance notice, I can't say for all of my shifts. Whether Graham has any past experience with that or not, I don't know.
Q. And I think you spoke a little bit about how NEXRAD helps quite a bit with --
A. Oh, yeah.
Q. -- your forecasting and all that, would you say it's a pretty intricate tool that you would use?
A. It's definitely a very significant part of our tools that we use.
MR. ARNOLD: That's it.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. I had a couple questions. So you're a pilot?
A. Yeah.
Q. What do you fly?
A. A Comanche.
Q. Oh, cool.

Q. How long you been flying?
A. Since 16.
Q. Oh, wow. You flown up here?
A. Yeah. Well I flew from LA to here, yeah.
Q. Oh, wow. You got your own air plane?
A. Hm-hmm.
Q. Nice. Nice. So how's the flying up here, you enjoy that?
A. I'm a little behind the curve because icing is a big issue here. Ice accumulates on your wings. I didn't have wing covers; I just got wing covers 2 weeks ago. So most of the winter I was just not able to fly because I wasn't able to get the ice off the wings which is required.
Q. Yeah.
A. So I got wing covers. I'm just a little bit behind on the curve as far as getting used to Alaska, but I'm there. I don't have an engine heater which 50 percent of the aircraft owners do.

It's been a warmer season so I've been able to get by, but it's just been one thing after another.

Ice has been on the ground so it's, like, how can you push a plane on ice.
Q. Yeah. I bet it's beautiful flying.
A. Yeah.
Q. That's cool. Yeah, I was just kind of curious.

Also, there's the -- the new thing that's being developed here is the PSAT, you know all about this? Are you familiar with

the PIREP Situational --

MR. OGDEN: Awareness Tool, is that what it is?

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. OGDEN: Did I get it right? I just literally just spitball.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Are you familiar with that at all, or what's going on with it? It's still in development.

A. Does it also refer to something else maybe?

Q. Yeah, I don't know. Maybe. Who knows.

A. I'm trying to think of what --

Q. We just know what they're referring to it over in, like, the Flight Data area where it's supposed to display all the PIREPs, and I forget what else that's going to be on there. It's supposed to be pretty --

A. Is it supposed to be something that has to be active, like, in 5 or 10 years, 5 years?

Q. Oh, no, like, pretty soon, and they've got the TV or the displays up there. It's, like, the big TVs that they're going to put up there and display it.

They don't have it in all the little areas yet so it's still in the works, but, all right. Oh, yeah, there's something coming up on that. That's some good to know stuff.

It seems like it's going to be pretty interesting so I just wondered what you knew about it.

MR. OGDEN: Would you like to consult with your rep at all on that?

MS. KOSCHIG: Huh?

MR. OGDEN: I don't know. I was --

MR. LANGEVIN: I think maybe if you refer to something else that I might be more familiar with --

MS. KOSCHIG: Maybe.

MR. LANGEVIN: -- but I'm not sure.

MR. OGDEN: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. They refer to it, PSAT.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Do you guys have ITWS here, that type of equipment?

A. No. I know what it is, but we don't.

Q. Okay. Low-level windshears, do you have a lot of that going on around here, different areas of it?

A. Yeah, we do.

Q. What do you use for that forecast, if they're having a low-level windshear, how do you gather that information?

A. From soundings.

Q. All from soundings?

A. We have the sounding at Anchorage, for one. If not, we do have forecaster soundings.

Q. So if you get that, how do you give that to the controllers,

how does the controllers learn that there's a low-level windshear alert for a certain area?

A. Yeah. No, ITWS might detect that, yeah.

Q. Yeah. It would -- yeah. I'm just trying to figure out how it -- you know, because I'm used to always with ITWS.

A. Yeah, me too.

Q. So, yeah. I'm just kind of how -- yeah, I'm just trying to figure out how the controllers would learn about that there is a low-level windshear alert going on.

A. I think there's some unique stuff going on at Juneau. I know that's a tough airport for many pilots to fly into.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. I think there's some kind of weather detection --

Q. Oh, out there.

A. -- system going on there.

MR. WESTON: Are you talking about --

MR. LANGEVIN: Juneau.

MR. WESTON: You said Juneau for JAWS?

MR. LANGEVIN: I don't know.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah.

MR. LANGEVIN: Like I said, I don't know.

MS. KOSCHIG: No, that's a --

MR. LANGEVIN: I just --

MS. KOSCHIG: There's so many unique things here.

MR. LANGEVIN: I just know that there's -- they got some

equipment out there.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Anything for Anchorage that --

A. Other than forecast --

Q. Just the soundings?

A. -- the soundings is one of our better options, yeah.

Q. So you got quite a few weather cameras around the airports?

A. Definitely.

Q. How are those? I mean, do they come in handy and you use them a lot?

A. We use them a lot, yeah. And us pilots -- pilots use them a lot.

Q. Yeah. I bet you the pilots would. I've seen a few of them. They look to be pretty neat, I mean, it's good to have to see what's going on.

MS. KOSCHIG: What else? I don't have any other questions. Anybody else?

MS. MARINAS: Oh. I had something. Sorry. Just to clear this out, he said -- let me read this.

So, no, you actually, you did clarify this so I'm good. I don't have anything else.

MS. KOSCHIG: I was they had the ERIDs here too. That would be great, yeah.

MR. LANGEVIN: Soon. I think within the next year.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MR. LANGEVIN: I asked to see if we could get one too. I'm not sure if we were a part of that or not, but Graham made sure or put in the question to see if we were or not.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay. Yeah, that would totally be a great tool for them to have here.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Is there any question you thought we were going to ask you that we didn't ask you?

A. No.

Q. No, all right. Do you have any --

A. Just make Alaska better, more safe --

Q. Yeah, I mean --

A. -- because there's more tools that I have as a pilot flying in the lower 48s than flying here.

Q. Yeah. And, see, that's kind of like what we're trying to find out, what is it that you could use here that, I mean, because this is a -- the weather changed so much and there's just so many, there's so many weather accidents here.

A. To have AIRMETs plotted on your maps like they do in the lower 48s. You know where you are located in an airplane, and you know where the AIRMETs are located. Here, we have to use a map. We have to open up a new page and see the AIRMETs.

So are we -- to put where I'm at on that map is a little more challenging. But with the lower 48s, it's overlaid on your flight

path so I wish that would be here as well.

Q. How come it's not up here? Is it funding, or do you know?

A. I don't know. I don't want to speculate, I don't know. Some day maybe they will, I'm not sure.

Q. Yeah. So if you had that magic wand, I mean, what else would you wish for?

A. We just don't have that much communications for the GA pilots down here. The communication is just lax, you know, there's so much remote area it's just hard to get in contact with controllers especially if you're going through passes and whatnot.

Q. Yeah.

A. As soon as I crossed to Canada and British Columbia, I didn't have any communications with anybody except when landing. No more flight following after British Columbia.

MS. KOSCHIG: Wow.

MS. MARINAS: How long was that? Was that, like, hours?

MR. LANGEVIN: Yeah.

MS. MARINAS: A lot of hours, 2 days?

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MS. LANGEVIN: Well, you have to have an appointment to clear customs so unless you know specifically what time you're going to be there, otherwise, you're going to have to put a fudge factor in there.

I was a couple hundred miles short of Canada so I had a good idea when I could -- crossing. But from LA Center to Canada,

good luck, because it's always deviations or just deviations, like.

Yeah, you have to have an appointment to fly into Canada. At that time and about the same thing for coming into the US again.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. And so you're out of communications for a --

A. I was out all the way until Palmer.

Q. Wow.

A. I picked someone up at Palmer, yeah.

Q. And saying, there was no one you could pick up in Canada either, right?

A. No.

Q. Wow, that's a lot of area. Hmm.

A. They're probable -- I mean, specifically, like, at White Horse, there would be obvioiusly communication there, but distance outside of that, good luck.

Q. Wow. Yeah, I've heard before that a frequency. Yeah.

A. White Horse was my destination that I've added. And, then, I flew into Tok, Alaska. Of course, all the airports have, you know, weather displays when you land. But when you're in the air, I don't have anything until I landed. I called him so many times.

Q. Could you get a cell signal?

A. At Tok, yes. But outside of Tok, no. Well, I use Verizon so it's not the best up here in Alaska.

MR. OGDEN: Crazy.

MR. LANGEVIN: So outside of Tok, I would have been -- less options.

MR. WESTON: You talked about getting the bus.

MS. KOSCHIG: This is 2025, right?

MR. LANGEVIN: I know.

MS. KOSCHIG: It's kind of like --

MR. OGDEN: You sell the dot matrix printers down there?

MR. LANGEVIN: If there wasn't -- if there would be an FAA tower there, then, I would get my weather into my cockpit, but no.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right, that's good -- I'm guessing there's probably several areas like this.

MR. LANGEVIN: Several, yeah. I know they transitioned from OT transponders to ADS-B towers so I'm not familiar with how it is out here in Alaska.

I mean, that was great, it's a great tool for us to have down below. It was awesome to have that weather into our cockpits in the lower 48s because they're great advancement then.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

MR. LANGEVIN: It is here, but, like I said, it's just very selective.

I get all my weather when I get towards Palmer. I'm sure you would in Fairbanks too, but I haven't flown to Fairbanks so I don't know.

MS. KOSCHIG: That's good to know because, I mean, I don't -- yeah. That's good for us to know, the lack of that ability.

All right. Anything else you can tell us?

MR. LANGEVIN: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: It's good information.

MR. LANGEVIN: That's what I want to have here is what they have down there.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right. I mean, and that's -- I totally get it. I mean, especially with, you know, there's so many flights there. I mean, there's a lot of GA.

MR. LANGEVIN: There is a lot of GA. The ramp is full at the Merrill Field, right now on the ramp. It's a first from what the airport manager has said.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah. Wow.

I can't think of anything else. Let's go ahead and end this interview at 16:50 Alaska Time. Did I get that right?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Is it 17?

MR. OGDEN: No. It's 16:50. You got it.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, 16:50. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 4:50 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Michael Langevin
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 26, 2025

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.

[redacted]

Christina H. Neilson
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: MATTHEW SCHWEIZER, Inflight 1 Controller, Nome Flight Service Station

Nome, Alaska

Friday,
February 28, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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STEVEN KELSEY, Representative
(On behalf of Matthew Schweizer)

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:51 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Time now is 2:51 Alaska Time.

So, I'm going to make the introductions. My name is Betty Koschig. I'm with the NTSB, and I'm a senior air traffic control investigator.

I have 20 years ATC experience with the military; I was in the Navy. So I have 20 years there. Been doing this for 16. So I kind of got a little bit of knowledge about air traffic control.

Can you please state your name?

MR. SCHWEIZER: Matthew Schweizer.

MS. KOSCHIG: Could you spell your last name?

MR. SCHWEIZER: S-c-h-w-e-i-z-e-r.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Great. Thank you. Just to let you know that we will be audio recording this interview, and I just want you to confirm that you are aware of that?

MR. SCHWEIZER: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So, as I was saying earlier, we will have a transcription, you gave us your email address, we will have a transcription sent to you.

But just to let you know about the audio. The audio is going to be with the NTSB. We do send the audio out to a contractor that has a non-disclosure with us. They cannot send that audio anywhere. So we are keeping that. That will not go into any public record. It is ours. So we just, we like to keepsake those

so that your voice is not out there.

I just wanted to, you know, it's always comforting to me to know where my voice is being heard because I would not my voice put out there as well. So this is, you know, for all of us but specifically for you because you're here giving us a lot of good information.

It'll take a few weeks to get the transcription back because we've got quite a few of them, and it takes them a few weeks to get it. So it might be maybe a month or 2 months, dependent on how backed up they are.

All right. So I see that you have a representative with you. Is this person the person you want to be your representative?

MR. SCHWEIZER: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Would you please state your name?

MR. KELSEY: Steven Kelsey, K-e-l-s-e-y.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right. Just so you know, your representative's there for your support. You could talk with him during this if you would like, just be reminded that the audio is going to be recording. But if you'd like to step out and talk to your representative, you are more than welcome to do that.

We can take a break. We'll turn the audio off, you come back, we resume.

Just know that you're welcome to do that if there was something you wanted to talk about because he is here for your support.

MR. SCHWEIZER: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: And as well as taking a break, if you needed to take a break, you could do that. Hopefully you won't need a break. We're only -- usually these only last about an hour. But I'm hoping it'll be a little bit shorter because we just have a few questions that we want to ask.

MR. SCHWEIZER: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So, why we're here. Okay, I haven't -- I'll do my introductions next. Sorry.

Why we're here. We are here conducting an air traffic control investigation into the fatal accident of Bering 445 that occurred on February 6th at, February 6th, 2025, local, so on that day.

Are you aware of that accident?

MR. SCHWEIZER: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: So here as the NTSB, we do invite parties to be a part, to participate in our investigations.

Even though I have air traffic controller experience, I deal with air traffic control procedures, I can pull things out of every kind of research item that's there, we need, we like to well round our investigations so we have subject-matter experts.

In this case, we have FAA and NATCA here to help us with this investigation. And in this setting, we are the NTSB team so when you see them, they are the NTSB in this kind of setting, even though they work at different agencies, it's part of that team.

I am going to let everyone introduce themselves. Let's start with Trevor.

MR. BOUSU: Great. My name's Trevor Bousu. Operations manager at Denver Center. I've been in the Agency 19 years; 4 years as a controller, 19 -- or 15 years of management.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Travis.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold. Omaha TRACON and NATCA ASI.

MS. KOSCHIG: Karena.

MS. MARINAS: Karena Marinas. Controller at Los Angeles Center, and a NATCA air safety investigator.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I want to make sure my phone was off. Sorry.

Okay. So this situation, we are the NTSB team so we're going to be taking this all the way from the interviews to factual reports to the time that it's published. That's the thing on that.

Another thing about the NTSB, what our purpose is, is to, in this, in any kind of accident, we are here to gather information and look for the facts. We want facts. I mean, there's so much speculation out there, but we're here for the facts.

The NTSB is a fact-finding, I mean, is an independent agency that determines the probable case of an accident and incident. We are not part of the DOD, FAA or DOT, anything like that. We have a very short chain of command. We have our chair and, then, we have Congress so it's very short.

But where our power lies, we don't have any regulatory enforcement. There is nothing I could do to anybody. I can't enforce anything. But what our products do is, our major products are safety recommendations.

So that's the reason we're here, to find out how the Flight Service operates. Anything that you know about this accident, you know, and what you did on your end, what kind of equipment. We've seen a lot of equipment, but like to hear from you about the equipment, what's helpful, what you need, if there's any, like, equipment outages.

So we're going to be asking you any of this stuff so that we can make sure that you have what you need here to provide service to the aviation community and make it as safe as possible.

So you'll get a, we'll get a little rounded information from different areas to ask you some questions.

But we really want to focus, part of it is on what happened with Bering 445, and we'll get to those in a few more minutes.

What to expect with this. Like I said, it'd take about an hour. I'm going to go through a few questions to get to know you a little bit better professionally to find out, you know, your history.

Then we'll move onto the accident and, then, we'll move onto just a gamut of questions about the Flight Service station.

Any questions so far?

MR. SCHWEIZER: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. You'll notice that we will probably be jotting down some stuff or typing. We're not texting or searching the internet. We're typing some things that you say so that we can go back and look at it instead of interrupting and say, oh, you know, could you repeat that. We don't want to do that. We want to go back and say, oh, we're looking and refer back to it so we can ask some questions.

All of that, whatever we jot down or type, that is not going to anywhere. That is -- that it will be destroyed. It will not become part of the record, just for this interview for our use.

And one of the things you will notice, we will ask questions, well, do you recall something. If you don't recall it, it's fine to say I don't recall. We'll ask, do you know something. If you don't know it, it's fine to say I don't now.

We'll also ask questions that may seem like common sense, and you're like, well, you should know that. Well, we may think we may know it, but we never want to make the assumption. So we want to hear it from you so that we're -- we don't want to put words in your mouth.

That's basic structure of this interview. Any questions so far?

MR. SCHWEIZER: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Let's get started if you're ready.

MR. SCHWEIZER: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right.

INTERVIEW OF MATTHEW SCHWEIZER

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. What are your operating initials?

A. Mike Alpha.

Q. And what was your age at the time of the accident?

A. Thirty-seven.

Q. Okay. When'd you start working for the FAA?

A. I was hired in October of 2018.

Q. Was that -- did you go to the Academy?

A. Yes.

Q. And where did you go from the Academy?

A. Anchorage Center.

Q. Oh, okay. And how long were you there?

A. I was at Anchorage Center from May 2019 until around December 2022.

Q. Okay. And, then, where did you go?

A. From December 2022, I went to the Flight Service Academy in Kenai. And after completing the Academy there, I was at Kenai Flight Service Station from, until about April of 2024 of last year. And I started working up here on a TDY assignment and was accepted as a permanent Nome employee in November of 2024.

Q. Oh, so you haven't been here too long.

A. No.

Q. You like it up here?

A. Yes. I love it actually.

Q. Yeah?
A. Yeah.
Q. So we'll talk about your schedule later because I'm anxious to hear about that too.
Let's see you did that. Yeah.
Do you have a medical?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Is it current?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you have any restrictions?
A. No restrictions. It is a special issuance for obstructive sleep apnea.
Q. Okay. Do you have a college degree?
A. No.
Q. All right. Do you hold any aeronautical certificates?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Are you fully certified here, qualified on everything?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Could you name all of those positions, please?
A. Inflight 1, Inflight 2, Controller in Charge, CIC; and certified weather observer.
MR. KELSEY: Pre-flight.
MR. SCHWEIZER: And, then, pre-flight.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. And current on everything?

A. Yes.
Q. Do you work overtime?
A. Yes.
Q. About how much overtime a month do you work, just a guess?
A. I'd say -- I could guess on a pay period.
Q. Okay.
A. It would be, I'd say between 10 to 30 hours. Sound about right.
Q. Okay. So speaking of pay periods, let me know what your, what kind of schedule do you work, how is your -- what's a normal work schedule?
A. A normal work schedule for me, I travel up on Thursday and, basically, work with our fatigue rules, we generally work straight shifts. So we either have the 7:00, 8:00 or 1:00 p.m. start. So just depending on what it is that week, I work that shift through the week; they're 10 hour shifts. And, then, on a normal week, I would travel back the next Thursday.
Q. Okay. Do you recall what shift you were working the day of the accident?
A. That day, I believe, I was the 8:00 a.m. start.
Q. So your normal shift?
A. Yeah, normal shift. It was a, it was an overtime day, though.
Q. But it wasn't overtime?
A. Yes.

Q. All day?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So do you have, like, regular days off during that time you're here, you're, like, a week on, week off, is that how that works?
A. Yes. Yeah, it generally works with the travel days, including the travel days, it works to, on a normal week, it would be 8 days of work, if you include the travel days, and, then, five days off.
Q. And so the accident happened on a Thursday, right?
A. Yes.
Q. And you didn't travel back that Thursday, though?
A. No. I traveled back Saturday so 2 days after the incident.
Q. Right. Did you work that Friday?
A. Yes, but later in the day.
Q. Oh, okay. All right. Do you like getting overtime?
A. Yes.
Q. I don't blame you.
A. It can be overwhelming sometimes, but yes, I do.
Q. What position were you working at the time of the accident?
A. I was working Inflight 1.
Q. Okay. Were you combined with any other positions?
A. No.
Q. Do you recall how long you'd been on position before the accident occurred?

A. I had just come back from lunch.
Q. How does your break schedules work, is there any -- a normal rotation, or do you guys just work that out with each other?
A. It's generally, yeah, the 7:00 guy comes in, the 8:00 guy comes in, and, then, we have the 1:00 p.m. start. When the 1:00 p.m. start comes in, they relieve the 7:00 a.m. shift for lunch.

And, then, we rotate that out so when the 7:00 person comes back from lunch, they relieve the person that came in 8:00 for lunch. And, then, the closing shift, which is the 1:00 p.m. shift, they get relieved for lunch after the 8:00 a.m. guy comes back. And, then, we just go from there and, then, everybody's back for a little bit.

Q. That sounds like a pretty good rotation, like that.

So let's see. I'll jump a little over here.

So do you recall that, about the time of the accident, what was the volume of traffic that you were working? On a scale of one to five, I should say it like that.
A. I'd say by that point, I would say the volume was probably a one to two. I don't recall it being -- in that preceding 10 minutes, I don't recall it, 10, 15 minutes, I don't recall it being that busy by that point.
Q. Okay. What about the complexity level of it?
A. I would say that day was probably, on a scale of five, it was probably a three to four.

I remember those few days were pretty busy, just the amount

of -- I want to say maybe a couple of days before that, they weren't flying too much so it was kind of, they were playing catch up in a sense so a little busier.

Q. Okay. Thanks. So after the -- oh, did you conduct a pre-duty weather briefing?

A. Yes. We basically self brief here.

Q. So you don't -- yeah, I was kind of wondering how that works out. How do you self brief, what are some of things that you do?

A. I take a look at the area forecasts, see what the area forecasts are calling for; the terminal forecasts for Nome and for any airports that have terminal forecasts. Take a look at weather radar, take a look at -- anything else?

MR. KELSEY: Current weather.

MR. SCHWEIZER: Yeah, current weather. What's currently going on, PIREPs that have been out there, anything like that.

We do pass pertinent information to each other as well, you know, if there's any pertinent information to pass along as well.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay. Great. Thanks. Do you have your cell phone with you in the room?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Where do you usually keep those?

A. In the locker. So it's adjacent to the room, but it's in the locker for me.

Q. Okay. Did you file an ATSAP?

A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Have you gotten any, I know I'm going to say this wrong, Karena, have you gotten any feedback from the ERC, is that the proper way to say it?
A. I haven't been able to check my email to see yet.
Q. Oh, okay. So do you recall who else was in the room at the time?
A. Yes. It was the controller on Inflight 2.
Q. And were you given the opportunity to review the audio or look at a replay?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. When did you do that?
A. I had reviewed some more today, and the other stuff was about a week -- I first reviewed some of the tapes, oh, about a week after. When I came back for my next rotation, I reviewed some of the recordings with my supervisor at that time.
Q. Okay. Great. I think that's all the basic admin-type questions I'd like to ask.

But, now, I would like to talk more about your shift that day and what happened, and leading up to the accident.

Let's start about when you came in that morning and walk us through your day of some of the things you did up until the accident and, then, even afterwards.
A. Okay. I believe that day I was on the 8:00 a.m. shift so that's the Inflight 2 position is usually what the 8:00 shift

works. That's going to be the position that answers the phone lines, some pilots calling filing flight plans. And, then, that position also talks to pilots on all of our remote outlet frequencies so all the other villages that have RCOs and things like that, is what that position is for.

And I'd say -- so for the most part, for most of the day, at that point, I was answering phones, taking flight plans from the Bering pilots, from Ryan Air, you know, the different companies that fly out of here. Taking flight plans from everybody.

I recall it being a pretty busy day on the phones. And, then, just kind of balancing that with any of the pilots talking on the RCOs close and canceling their IFR flight plans or getting their clearances out of villages and things like that.

So that was pretty much most of the day up to that point. And I don't -- you know, nothing out of the ordinary really.

Went to lunch, was relieved for lunch at -- and, then, when I came back, I relieved the person on Inflight 1 for their lunch break.

About 10 or 15 minutes into that is when I got the call from Center that they had lost the aircraft on radar, to see if I could get ahold of them.

Q. So walk us through what happened, what was going on here after they gave you that call, what are some of the things that was going on in the airport, the room, some of the things you were doing?

A. So they had called and asked if I could reach out on a frequency to see if I could get ahold of them. We did have -- both runways had been closed.

3/21, our north south runway, had been closed for probably 2 or 3 days up to that point. The 10/28 is kind of their primary focus since it's a precision runway. So DOT had been basically working all day to try and keep that runway open.

And so they had requested to close it, coordinated with us to close it since that's their prerogative to close it so they could put some liquid de-ice down on the runway so they had gone out to do that. We did have both runways closed at the time.

But I just remember getting a call from Center and, then, you know, saying that they lost him on radar and that they showed him in at a high rate of descent and to see if I could reach out for them.

I made several attempts on our CTAF frequency, the 123.6. I tried on guard to see if I could get ahold of them and never, I never had any response from the aircraft myself.

Q. Okay. What else was going on about that time?

A. Nothing that I can recall. I don't recall anything else, you know, on the other position going on. Nothing in the building itself was going on.

It's just working the position, trying to get ahold of them, and DOT was out on the airport surfaces working on the airport at the time.

Q. Okay. So let's talk a little bit about -- is it DOT, is that, like, state?
A. State DOT, yeah. Yeah, they're State of Alaska.
Q. And they are the ones that do what?
A. Out here, they do everything with snow removal, making sure the runways are clear of snow, any de-ice, sanding of the runways.
Summertime, they do painting, brooming, anything like that. That's all kind of their, what they take care of here.
Some of the lighting systems are under their responsibility as well.
Q. Oh, okay. So on the, about the time of the accident, so the runway was closed at that point, is it normal to close the runway when they de-ice?
A. I would say it's not normal except for when it's liquid de-ice just because they have to, from what I understand, they have to lay it down and it kind of, they don't want it disturbed for the few minutes that it's kind of settling before that.
Q. All right. So is it normal to use the liquid de-ice, I mean, from your experience?
A. No. I'd say generally, they're either sanding or putting solid de-ice down and, then, scraping the slush and brooming the slush when they've done the solid de-ice.
So the liquid de-ice is kind of out of the norm.
Q. So do you know why the decided to de-ice, I mean, do you ever get that information, I mean, yeah, with the liquid de-ice?

A. You know, I don't -- I don't know exactly why they felt like they needed to. The weather wasn't great that day, that was the main thing. So it was probably -- it was definitely, we had light snow on and off through the day.

And I know about that time, I recall, I believe I recall the ASOS was calling mist at that point maybe, and it was below freezing that day so I think that was kind of the driving factor for them.

MR. KELSEY: I think it was VP (sic.) I know I'm pretty certain.

MR. SCHWEIZER: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. When they -- who officially closes a runway?

A. It would be state DOT.

Q. Do they give you a time estimate, or how does that work?

A. Yes. So when they wanted to -- since we had the north south closed, when they asked to close the east south, you know, the east west, 10/28, which would make it to where we have no runways open, you know, I was, like, well, I need a, you know -- they're kind of just going through me to coordinate.

They're trying not to close the airport in a sense with somebody 10 minutes out, you know, or something. So they kind of coordinated it with me. And I said, you know, how long do you need it closed. And they said, about 20, 30 minutes.

So I, you know, because then I have to, do on my chain, I have to put in the NOTAM that the runway's closed then I have to inform Center of that and all that stuff.

When I talked to them and they decided to show the runway closed, I believe I put the NOTAM in for 30 minutes and kind of coordinated with them, you know, on, do you need to open longer.

Because I do recall when they were out there, they were having problems at first with their de-ice truck. And so, you know, I was kind of checking in, do you need more time. And they, you know --

Q. Okay. How do they call you to do that? Do they call you on the phone, or do you they call you over the radio?

A. They do a mix. I would say sometimes it's over the radio and, then, sometimes -- that day, they had come upstairs to ask.

So they do sometimes come upstairs to kind of facilitate things with us, you know, if it's easier for them to do it that way sometimes.

Q. Where are they, where do they generally stay? Where are their -- I mean, they've got a place around here some where?

A. Yeah, downstairs.

Q. Okay. All right. Well, that's close.

A. Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Great. I know there's something else, I just meant to ask.

I'm having a brain fog right this minute so I'm sure I will

think of what I wanted to ask you, but I am going to let Karena ask some questions, please.

MS. MARINAS: Perfect. Mine are going to be little bit all over the place. Bear with me.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. Do you ever update the AFIS based on PIREPs that you receive?

A. I don't believe -- I generally haven't. It's kind of based off of, you know, what you're seeing as a weather observer yourself.

You may take into account what you're hearing out there, I would say, but for the most, it's what you're observing yourself if you're having to augment anything.

Q. Okay. When we did our tour, we saw that you guys use NEXRAD in there for some of your weather products, what do you see with NEXRAD in those products?

A. You know, it's -- I don't really recall right now off the top of my head.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah.

Q. And do you know if NEXRAD is out, what you would expect to see or not see?

A. No.

Q. No, okay. How often do pilots give descent PIREPs to you after they land?

A. I would say not very often, I feel like. I, a lot of times,

feel like I have to ask them more than anything for PIREPs.

Obviously, you know, we have the duty to ask during -- certain weather things, but I feel like a lot of it is, you know, you kind of have to pull that information from them sometimes.

Q. So when do you pull it from, try to pull it from them, or do you?

A. I try to get it from them once they're, once they've landed and they're clear of the active runways, you know, if they have time.

I may mention it to them once they're on the landing roll out, hey, you know, when you're ready, can I get a PIREP from you, kind of thing.

But I generally don't try to ask them when they're, you know, in the middle of a critical phase.

Q. Yeah. What conditions kind of spur you to do that?

A. If we've had any reports through the day for turbulence. If we've had, you know, we get high winds here quite a bit so any low-level windshear information, any turbulence for when it's windy, anything like that.

If it's any kind of freezing information, you know, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, anything like that, we have that kind of precipitation out here, things like that.

We ask for braking action reports a lot too.

Q. When you do get PIREPs, what do you do with them?

A. For standard PIREPs, our OASIS system, we enter those PIREPs

into the system, and those go out to the NAS.

If it's an urgent PIREP or something we feel is important to pass along, urgent PIREPs are, we have to call into the Anchorage Center Weather Advisory Unit.

And, then, I generally also pass those along to the sector just because, it's a wide sector, you know, so they're talking to more airplanes that may be farther out so they can pass that information along, you know, so those pilots that are maybe coming to Nome but are 150 miles out can make a decision whether they want to continue or divert to somewhere else or return to where they came from.

Q. Do you -- okay, so you're saying you just pass the urgent ones typically?

A. Typically.

Q. Or do you pass -- do you pass any others?

A. I mean, it just depends, it kind of depends on what the information is, you know, and I would -- I'd say, it just depends on what I'm getting passed along, like, if I feel it's something that's pertinent or if it needs to be.

Q. What would be some examples of that?

A. I can't recall off the top of my head.

Q. Okay. Do you recall having any PIREPs before Bering Air 445 that day?

A. No. I'd just come from lunch not too long ago, though, but I don't recall taking any.

Q. How about after?
A. I don't recall after either.
Q. Do the Anchorage Center controllers ever call you and ask about the weather and what the descent looks like and stuff like that?
A. Yes. They sometimes call and get -- I'd say the main thing for them on descent PIREPs is maybe asking about bases and things like that, you know, because they're only talking until a certain phase to that aircraft so they may ask on, you know, if they reported bases or anything like that.

But that's, I'd say, about it for the most part on a descent PIREP.

Q. About what altitude are the pilots usually checking in with you?
A. A couple thousand feet up, like, 4,000, 4 or 5,000.

On an IFR day, it's 10, 15 miles out, I think.

On a VFR day, it's about -- they usually check in 10 miles out on a VFR day.

MS. MARINAS: I have a few more, but I feel like I'm taking everything. I have so many more questions.

MR. BOUSU: You hammered about half of mine.

Thanks for talking with us. I only have a few left actually. Let me see.

BY MR. BOUSU:

Q. Do you recall, by chance, I know it was a long time ago, what

the forecasted weather conditions were for the Nome area that day?
A. I don't recall.
Q. I just want to clarify one of the questions that Betty asked. When DOT coordinates with you guys to close runways and so on, you said sometimes it's over the radio, sometimes they walk up the stairs. Do you recall that day what they did? Did they go over the radio or up --
A. They came upstairs.
Q. They did come up the stairs?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. I'm sorry, if I missed that. I apologize.
MS. KOSCHIG: No. I was going to ask that one too. Thank you. I forgot.
MR. BOUSU: Let's see.
BY MR. BOUSU:
Q. Just because I saw you guys maybe confer a little bit there, I have a question about, you said, I think in the METAR, it came out with mist or unknown precipitation maybe, or something like that. And, specifically, I think we had some question about the AFIS was showing haze or possibly augmented with haze that day, do you recall why?
A. No, I don't.
Q. Okay. When the observation comes out with unknown precipitation, is there -- is it expected to augment the observation with some type of observed phenomenon out the window?

A. Yes.
Q. Do you know why?
A. I don't recall off the top of my head why.
Q. Okay. About how far out, let's say, aircraft flying 10,000 feet and below, about how far out do you think or do you believe that aircraft could pick up the AFIS?
A. I don't know, honestly.
Q. Okay. That's okay.
A. Not having been in the air to test it, you know.
MR. BOUSU: Sure. You know, every one of my questions was already taken so I think that it's for now. Thank you.
MR. SCHWEIZER: Okay. Thank you.
MS. MARINAS: You just took one back from me if that makes you feel better.
MR. ARNOLD: I just have two quick ones, Karena. He took mine as well.
BY MR. ARNOLD:
Q. When you work in the Inflight 2 position in the morning and when you work on the Inflight 1, do you remember putting in any PIREPs at all during that day?
A. I don't recall off the top of my head.
Q. You don't recall, okay.
Would there ever be a time that you guys would put in a negative report, a negative PIREPs? Have you ever done that?
A. You know, like, I've done it before, yeah, when I've asked a

pilot for PIREPs. So I'm just -- they give you very generic, you know, negative icing, negative turbulence, and I'll still put those in just because it's pilot report.

Q. Do you remember if you guys put any of those in, or if those were in the system at all that day?

A. Not that I recall.

MR. ARNOLD: Okay. That's all I had.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I did recall what I wanted to ask you about. There's a few things.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. There was a -- was there a truck driver that thought he had heard or one of the drivers thought he had heard Bering 445 call or try to contact you?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall that?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So what do you think was going on there? I mean, just your thoughts on that.

A. I honestly, I don't know. Thinking about it, for me, at that point, you know, I don't know that the aircraft by that point was even in the air so, you know, I don't know. Because I want to say that was probably 5 to 10 minutes after Center called me, you know, I don't recall exact timeframe.

So, I don't know if it's just, you know, I noticed that sometimes when -- the way we kind of do a radio call, who you're

calling, who you're -- and sometimes some, it seems, like, maybe some of the state guys do it the opposite way.

So I don't know if it's just one of those things that he -- I was broadcasting and maybe he thought that was them. I don't, you know, I don't know.

Q. Oh, okay. That kind of makes more sense. We're just kind of curious about that because --

A. Yeah. I mean, he's the only one that said he had heard anything so, you know, I don't know whether he had actually heard the aircraft or not.

None of the other -- I think there was three or four trucks out there that day, and nobody else reported they heard anything.

Q. Did you reach out to anybody else to see if they had heard, I mean, just on the airport, you said you reached out to the pilots?

A. Yeah, I don't -- I don't think I had any other aircraft out there that I can recall in the immediate area, like, right at that time of the incident.

I did make a few phone calls to Bering Air, the company across the way, to see if they -- because they have the company frequency and everything. And they, from what I understand, they don't, you know, they never talked to him either.

Q. Okay. Another question. As far as when you -- as far as pass downs, what do you guys do for, when you pass down, you're relieving someone from the position, do you have a regular pass down checklist?

A. Hm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah, we have a checklist on position there.
Q. Okay. Do you recall if there were any PIREPs that were part of the checklist that night, that afternoon?
A. I mean, it's part of the checklist. I don't recall exactly how the briefing went for that time.
Q. The other question, and I know you were not on at this time, but I just wanted to get your take on it because there had been a Ryan Air earlier, I think it was a Ryan Air, I mean, because you had just gotten back from lunch so you may not have been in the room at that time.

I think it was, like, a Ryan Air 40 that had come in and it reported -- he was, like, 10 miles northwest of somewhere on an RNAV to Runway 10 into Nome, and do you have any knowledge of this kind -- what was going on with that transmission?
A. No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. I am going to let someone else ask some questions and, then, I'll have another question I want to ask.

MS. MARINAS: Okay.

BY MS. MARINAS:
Q. If you put a PIREP into AISR or OASIS, I guess, and, then, it goes into AISR, do you expect the ZAN controllers would see that?
A. No. That's kind of -- I believe the duty of us passing things on to Center weather for, one, is to see if they can put out a CWA or anything like that.

But as far as what I understand of how it works is all that information goes to Flight Data and, then, Flight Data passes kind of paper, you know, paper NOTAMs along to the sector.

So that's why, you know, if we have anything pertinent, like, an urgent PIREP or anything, that's why I always call the sector too so that way they're more aware of what's going on.

From having worked at Center and working in that sector it's, like, I kind of know, you know --

Q. Oh, okay.

A. -- how those things work.

Q. So there's that.

A. Yeah.

Q. So you worked at that sector?

A. Hm-hmm.

Q. Okay. All right. Good. Well, let's see how this question goes then.

Do you get to interact with ZAN controllers, do you guys get any cross training with them at all, get to see things from their perspective?

A. No. There's no cross training. You know, there's never any, go to Center and see how they do things.

And so kind of based just off working over the phone. And that's why, I guess, for me, it's having been there, you know, I kind of know what their expectations are, what information they're going to need and things like that.

So, yeah, we have a pretty good working relationship, though, but there's no cross training or anything like that.

I know I still talk to quite a few of them there so I get a lot of questions of, you know, why don't you guys do this or that kind of thing.

Q. Do you get that from the other controllers here too?

A. Yeah. I've gotten it from Flight Service people as well coming from that, from the Center to the Flight Service environment.

I try to pass along any knowledge that I've kind of learned that would maybe help somebody in either Center or in the Flight Service capacity from just what I've learned, I guess, over the years.

MS. MARINAS: Yeah. Yeah, I bet that's really helpful.

All right, well, my last question's not important then. That's it for me.

MR. BOUSU: Just a follow on to one of those questions.

Just want to clarify, urgent PIREPs, those PIREPs that you want to make sure that the Center gets, is it a requirement to call the Center with those, or is that just your preference or what you do as a technique?

MR. SCHWEIZER: I don't recall, but I believe it's a requirement in our 7110.10.

MR. BOUSU: That's it.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Trevor.

MR. ARNOLD: I do not.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. There's just one piece of information that maybe if I play an audio because I just need to know what it says, and I realize that you may have been in the room at the same time, I mean, been on this audio.

I'm trying to ride a thin line here because you're the representative so I -- but if you'll listen to this -- if you don't mind me playing a piece of audio so you could try to tell me what you think it says because I need to know what it says, just for clarity.

So let me make sure I've got the part right. I don't want to play you a whole lot of audio.

Well, better, I guess, if I turn my volume on.

MR. KELSEY: Can I ask you if it was on the radio that this audio was played?

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes.

MR. KELSEY: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes.

MR. KELSEY: I want to make sure we didn't have a hot briefing about this or something.

MS. KOSCHIG: No. No, this all professional. No.

MS. MARINAS: It's, like, what are you about to hear.

MS. KOSCHIG: It's just -- it's a transmission that I just want to understand for record.

MR. KELSEY: Understood.

MS. KOSCHIG: And since it's your interview, I'm just going to ask you.

Give me just a second, please, so I can get this up and I hope it --

MR. SCHWEIZER: Of course.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- plays correctly.

MS. MARINAS: I'll ask a question real quick, if that's okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

MS. MARINAS: Do you guys get calls or notifications when NEXRAD is locked up?

MR. SCHWEIZER: No, not that I'm aware of.

(Audio recording played.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Here's it playing. Sorry

(Audio recording played.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

MR. KELSEY: Yeah. He wasn't on position then.

MR. SCHWEIZER: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right. But I really would -- oh, I'm dreading this one.

MR. KELSEY: Well, I'll just tell you. I'll tell you. I don't mind telling you. I was working position.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. But I just want to make sure that you don't -- I mean, this is not to interview you.

MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: I just --

MR. KELSEY: But you want to know what he said right there --

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes, I just wanted his --

MR. KELSEY: -- because you haven't talked to Kevin Locke for 35 years?

MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

MR. KELSEY: He said I'm at SPYVY, and I can see the airfield from there.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.

MR. KELSEY: SPYVY's a reporting thing up here on the approach to Runway 10.

MS. KOSCHIG: I'm at SPYVY.

MR. KELSEY: And we have been down below VFR minimum.

MS. KOSCHIG: Uh-huh.

MR. KELSEY: And, then, he's like, are you guys still calling an IFR because he wants to cancel his IFR so that people behind him can keep moving.

MS. KOSCHIG: You have no idea how I've tried to figure out what that says.

MR. KELSEY: I'm going to say one other thing. Kevin Locke's been up here longer than me. He's an old guy. He's been flying forever. He flies only the CASA, and he flew one flight from there to Teller, not very far, and came back and said, I'm done for the day. He wasn't going to fly anymore.

And so I was working position before Matt came back, and I said, that says a lot right there because Kevin Locke will fly in

just about anything.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.

MR. KELSEY: Yeah. Since we're on a gathering information, and I know I'm the representative so --

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you. I know this is where I wouldn't --

MR. KELSEY: -- I wasn't sure if I even wanted to say anything, but it really is kind of important.

MS. KOSCHIG: It is, and I have to tread a very thin line there.

MR. KELSEY: Yeah, but we both do.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right. And so that's why I'm treading the line because you're here to support him. I'm not here to interview you, but I do appreciate you providing us that information.

You have no idea how I was trying to figure that one out, but it totally makes sense now.

And let me make sure I got the rest of that right too. I think there was something else but -- because we can't send those up for transcriptions so that's the reason we have to -- we do this. And I just wanted to make sure I got it right.

Was that Ryan Air 40?

MR. KELSEY: Ryan Air 40, yeah, and the intersection's SPYVY, S P Y V Y.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, my gosh. Okay. I'm going to ask you, but if you wanted to answer, that's fine.

Do you recall if he reported 10 miles, he was, like,

reporting 10 miles west, a little bit before that 10 miles northwest or something of the, for the RNAV 10 into Nome?

MR. KELSEY: Yeah, correct. Yeah, that's where SPYVY's at.

MS. KOSCHIG: And so he just said 10 miles northwest of the field or --

MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- yeah, of the airport?

MR. KELSEY: Yeah. And, then, he said that, if I read it, listened to it correctly, he said I'm at SPYVY, and I can see the field.

It's one of those conditions where it got good really quick.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Thank you. All right. I'm great now.

I'm sorry, Karena, if you have anything else.

MS. MARINAS: No, that's it.

MS. KOSCHIG: No.

MS. MARINAS: Travis.

MR. BOUSU: I'm good.

MS. KOSCHIG: Trevor.

MR. ARNOLD: I'm good.

MS. KOSCHIG: I've only got a couple more questions. One of them is, is there anything else you would like to add? No?

MR. SCHWEIZER: Not that I can think of at this time. No.

MS. KOSCHIG: And here's the real tricky one. Is there anything that I didn't ask you or none of us asked you that you thought we were going to ask you?

MR. SCHWEIZER: No, not that I can think of.

MS. KOSCHIG: Because I know expectations are a little bit different and it's --

MS. SCHWEIZER: Yeah.

MS. KOSCHIG: We end up learning quite a bit sometimes off that question.

Well, I cannot think of anything else that we need to ask.

Just to let you know, we appreciate this very much, you have answered a lot of great questions

It was great to see the Flight Service here and learn about the equipment and everything that you guys do here, it's great. It's really changed my whole view of Flight Service.

So appreciate you today, and we are going to go ahead and end the interview at --

MR. SCHWEIZER: 3:43.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, 15:43 Alaska Time.

(Whereupon, at 3:43 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Matthew Schweizer
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Nome, Alaska
DATE:	February 28, 2025

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.

[redacted]

Christina H. Neilson
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025	*	Accident No.: ANC25MA018
	*	

Interview of: ERIC ABBOTT, Inflight 2 Controller
Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center

Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,
February 26, 2025

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:42 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, time now is 13:42 Alaska time. Oh, good afternoon, again. So just to let you know who I am, I'm Betty Koschig, the NTSB, I'm an air traffic investigator, been working at the NTSB 16 years right now, so my background is basically military air traffic, so -- what's your name?

MR. ABBOTT: Eric Abbott.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Could you spell your last name, please?

MR. ABBOTT: Yeah, A-b-b-o-t-t.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. So before we get started with everything, I just wanted to let you know that we are audio recording this and I want to make sure that you are aware of that, right?

MR. ABBOTT: Um-hum, I am.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. So what we'll do is we will take the audio, have it transcribed, and then we will send you a copy of the transcript. We will go through the transcript first to make sure they got all the acronyms and everything as correct as possible and then we'll send you that copy. If you have any comments or anything like that, that you would like to add, we won't change the actual transcript but we will write -- will put a footer, or a footnote, rather, so that you can add comments, so that way if something was -- if you meant something a different way or you misspoke, you can always put that in there and that

will be like your correction to it, so --

MR. ABBOTT: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: But it won't correct the whole transcript. All right, so I see you have a representative, is this the person you'd like to represent you today?

MR. ABBOTT: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. And will you please state your name?

MR. McDONALD: Elijah McDonald.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Okay, the reason why we're here. We're here to investigate the accident that occurred with Bering 445 on February 6th, were you working at that time?

MR. ABBOTT: Yes.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. So as the NTSB, one of the things we do is -- so we're the NTSB group, we have -- we invite party members to join us here so that we can have expertise, so everybody in this room is an air traffic controller, so we pretty much know all of the information with air traffic, but we are hoping to glean a lot of information with Flight Service, because it is a unique area for all of us, but in this room we do have expertise with the center and other areas, but I am going to let everybody introduce themselves and tell you where they're from.

Casey.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, Casey Ogden, my background is primarily military, so eight years in the Air Force, transitioned over to

the FAA for a short time before moving into my role as an air safety investigator.

MR. BOUSU: My name is Trevor Bousu, I'm an operations manager at Denver Center, 19 years with the agency, four as a controller and 15 management.

MS. MARINAS: Hi, Karena Marinas, I'm a controller at LA Center and a NATCA air safety investigator.

MR. ARNOLD: Travis Arnold, I'm a controller at Omaha TRACON and a NATCA ASI, as well.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right, so that's us, we're the NTSB group and what we'll do is go through all the interviews and then we will come up with the factual report in a few months so that we can put that in with all the other NTSB group chairs' reports and come up with a probable cause. So that's our whole goal here is to gather information and so we can have that -- so we can parse it out with all the other groups, like we've got the group that has pilots, we got structures, avionics, so many different groups, so it's kind of interesting how it works, but we're here on a fact-finding mission.

As the NTSB, we're not part of the DoD, FAA, any other organization, and we actually have very little or we have no regulatory or enforcement powers, but our whole goal is our product, safety recommendations and searching for any kind of safety issues. So we'll be picking your brain a little bit about some of your procedures, equipment, and it's a good opportunity to

find out what you have, what you don't have or what would be helpful for you, so that's really, really interesting. So what we're going to do today is first of all, I'll start going over some admin information, just seeing, you know, a little bit about your history, of how you -- the different things that you've done in your career and so we can learn a little bit about you and that will give us a little bit -- that will give us some more insight.

Then we'll start talking about the accident and see how much, you know, what you recall and what was going on in your mind at that point and some of the things you were doing behind the scenes because although we have the factual data of audio, I mean, the stuff that was -- you were doing that is not on some kind of audio, that we really want to understand what you have to go through as a controller on that side, so --

MR. ABBOTT: Um-hum.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- looking forward to that. Generally, these things -- they last about an hour, so it shouldn't take too long.

MR. ABBOTT: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: But at any point that you want to take a break, we can stop the interview and you can go out and take a break. Your representative is there for you, if you want to go out and talk with your rep about anything, that's fine. As far as the questions we ask, if you don't know something, you don't know it, if you don't recall it, you don't recall it, those are fine answers. You're more than welcome to give your opinion on

something but, you know, we're not asking you to speculate unless you want to speculate because we just want to know what you know. So, questions so far?

MR. ABBOTT: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Ready to get started, huh?

MR. ABBOTT: Um-hum.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Did I forget anything?

MR. OGDEN: No, I don't think so.

MS. KOSCHIG: Thank you.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, no problem.

INTERVIEW OF ERIC ABBOTT

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. So what are your operating initials?

A. Echo Alpha.

Q. Echo Alpha. And how old were you at the time of the accident?

A. Forty-four.

Q. Okay. And just to verify, you are working for the FAA?

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay. How long have you been working for the FAA?

A. Just over 12 years.

Q. Okay, so what was your -- when you started working with the FAA, tell us how you began working for the FAA.

A. Well, I started out in the military and then after I got out I used the GI bill, went to UAA. When I graduated college I was

just looking for a job and there happened to be an off-the-street bid for Flight Service in Alaska, so I applied for it and got it and have been doing that ever since.

Q. Oh. And so with that bid, I mean, did you -- and you came straight to Alaska?

A. Well, I lived in Alaska --

Q. Oh, okay, so --

A. -- I grew up in Alaska, but yeah.

Q. Oh, okay. So did you go through any training for Flight Service?

A. For Flight Service, yeah, so it's changed in the last -- since I've been through, when I did, they sent us to Oklahoma City and we did air traffic basics with everyone else who's, you know, a new hire air traffic controller.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. The difference was when I was done with that, I went to a weather school down there when everyone else went to their center or tower training or whatever their specific job was, so did that for like another month or so and then we went to Kenai and then there's a -- the Flight Service academy is in Kenai Flight Service, so there was some more classroom training there and then I started on-the-job training in Kenai.

Q. Oh, that's -- that's really interesting. So what year did you go to the academy, do you recall?

A. Twenty thirteen.

Q. Great. And then that's when you went straight to the weather school and then went to Kenai all within --
A. Yeah, correct.
Q. Cool. So you mentioned you were in the military --
A. Um-hum.
Q. -- what service were you in?
A. Marines.
Q. Oh, okay. How long were you -- what years were you in the Marines?
A. I enlisted in '99 and I got out in 2004.
Q. And what was your MOS or your --
A. I worked in the avionics shop in the Harrier squadron.
Q. A Harrier squadron?
A. Um-hum.
Q. Oh, cool. Yeah, I was in the Navy, we had Harriers on our ship.
A. Um-hum.
Q. And you said you went to UAA?
A. Yeah.
Q. And got a degree?
A. Correct.
Q. Was it a bachelor's?
A. A bachelor's degree, yeah, aviation technology.
Q. Do you got any other education, like degrees?
A. No.

Q. Do you have any aeronautical certificates?
A. No.
Q. Do you have a current medical?
A. Yes.
Q. Any restrictions?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Who's your supervisor?
A. Brenda Helmuth.
Q. Can you spell that last name, please?
A. H-e-l-m-u-t-h, I believe.
Q. All right. So what positions are you qualified on at Flight Service?
A. So in-flight, preflight, flight data, there's just the three now. I mean, we kind of -- it's combined usually, so we don't really separate them into different positions, but --
Q. Okay. And do you work at -- just at Nome or do you go to different places to work?
A. I mean, I've worked in quite a few different Flight Service stations, I've been specifically at Nome for about four years now.
Q. Oh, okay. Are you current on all your positions?
A. Yes.
Q. What I meant to tell you, we may ask some questions that should be kind of -- you might think well, that's common sense, but we just have to ask them to hear you give us the answer --
A. Okay.

Q. -- just in case you're like well, that's stupid, no, that's the reason.
A. Okay.
Q. So how many -- do you work overtime?
A. Yes.
Q. How often and how many hours a month, let's just say?
A. A month, typically, at least 40 hours a month of overtime.
Q. Oh, wow.
A. Sometimes more.
Q. Okay. So tell me about your schedule, what hours do you -- what days do you work and what hours do you work each day?
A. So we do a rotation, it's eight days on and eight days -- or six days off. My travel day is a Wednesday, so typically I'd fly up on a Wednesday, I would work, you know, the rest of the week until Wednesday, the next Wednesday, and then fly back. While I'm there, our daily shifts vary, we have three, so we just trade between them, however the schedule works out, you know, so -- so basically, there's a 7:00 a.m. starting shift, an 8:00 a.m. and then a 1:00 p.m. So it just varies on what daily shift I have up there.
Q. Oh, okay. Do you recall what shift you had on the day of the accident?
A. Yeah, I was the opening shift, so I opened at 7:00 a.m.
Q. Was that an overtime shift?
A. No.

Q. And do you recall what position you were working at the time of the accident?
A. At the time of the accident, I was in what we call the In-Flight 2 position.
Q. Oh, okay. Were you combined with any other position?
A. I mean, like I said, we don't really even separate them, I mean, I guess that could be -- could've been preflight and flight data, I mean, typically, the In-Flight 2 -- In-Flight 1 does most of the -- you know, radio work, so they're talking to the airplanes on the airport. In-Flight 2 is more telephone, you know, ASOS, any of the other duties we do, preflight duties or flight data duties, that usually goes to In-Flight 2.
Q. Oh, okay. Do you recall how long you'd been on the position before the accident occurred?
A. Well, I had just returned from lunch at 2:00 p.m. --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- and I believe the accident was somewhere around 2:30 to 3 o'clock time frame, I believe.
Q. About 3:20.
A. Was it that -- oh. So yeah, I would've been back from lunch at 2 o'clock.
Q. Okay.
A. I think what I most remember calling was when I activated his flight plan, that was like 2:35 or something like that, so yeah, the accident would've been a half hour or so after that.

Q. All right, so -- yeah, I'll ask you -- I don't want to jump ahead, so I'll ask you a little bit more questions about --
A. Okay.
Q. -- what happened a little bit. So complexity of traffic that day, do you -- I mean, was it -- rating from 1 to 5, was it light to heavy?
A. I mean, it was moderate to heavy, typical for Nome on an IFR day. I'd call it moderate.
Q. Okay. And -- all right, so that was the -- the traffic level, the complexity, that was the complexity or is it traffic, what's the traffic level?
A. Moderate, yeah. Complexity, too. I mean, like I said about a moderate all-around day for what Nome flight services.
Q. Oh, okay. Did you conduct a pre-duty weather briefing?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. How do you like those?
A. I enjoy the weather side of my job, it's probably my favorite part of it.
Q. Oh, that's great. And do you get those -- where do you get those pre-duty weather briefings from?
A. I mean, it's all the products from the National Weather Service, we get them on our own -- it's our own specific system, it's called OASES, it's --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- just Flight Service specific, I believe, but yeah, it just

gives us all the weather products and then I -- you know, one package deal so I can, you know, flip through them and look at the -- you know, observations and forecasts and other products that the National Weather Service puts out.

Q. Oh, that's pretty cool. Do you have -- did you have your cell phone with you at the time of the accident?

A. I mean, it would've been in the building, but yeah, usually in my locker.

Q. Okay. You didn't have it on, right with you, I mean you didn't -- you weren't -- did you have it on and -- on with you at the position?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Do you recall anything going on in your facility that was distracting in that area that you were in?

A. No, I don't recall nothing unusual.

Q. Oh, okay. Did you file an ATSAP?

A. No.

Q. Okay. I mean, how come you didn't? If I may ask.

A. I just didn't feel it was necessary, I didn't feel I had anything specific to add that would've, you know, met the ATSAP criteria or been important to anything.

Q. Okay. And do you recall how many people were in the room at that time?

A. Just myself and my coworker.

Q. Oh, okay. And your coworker was on In-Flight 1?

A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And have you had an opportunity to review the audio?
A. I got the audio of myself activating the flight plan, that was it.
Q. Okay.
A. It was just a quick -- you know, the pilot called up, requested a flight plan activation, I responded I have your flight plan, it wasn't -- that's the only recording I've been -- I've heard.
Q. Okay. Yeah. And yeah, so now that's what I kind of want to get into, that's all the admin-type questions about it, so yeah, now I would like to talk to you about that, so you -- tell us what you did, I don't want to put any words in your mouth, your interaction with the pilot.
A. Um-hum. So on the In-Flight 2 position we also cover outlying, like RCOs, remote communications outlet, I believe is what it stands for, so other airports, so Unalakleet has one at the airport, so the pilot called up on the Unalakleet RCO, requested his VFR flight plan activation and basically I responded that his VFR flight plan was active, that was -- that was it for me. Other than -- I believe first thing in the morning, when he departed Nome, I would've talked to him, but that would've been, you know, hours before. But typically what they'll do is if Bering Air wants to operate out of, say like Unalakleet, they'll fly out in the morning, they'll go to someplace like Unalakleet or

whatever, they'll operate out of Unalakleet for the day --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- and then they'll fly back to Nome at night.
Q. Okay.
A. So I believe I talked to him on his way out of Nome early in the morning --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- but that would've been 7:00 or 8:00 in the morning, I don't recall the exact time.
Q. Is this a pilot that you're fairly familiar with, coming in and out?
A. I mean, familiar with like, their voices. It's kind of funny, I talk to the same pilots practically on a daily basis. In terms of like nothing, no type of close friendship or anything like that, you know, but I do -- we do interact with the same pilots, you know, it's pretty small crews, you know, Bering Air. And then, of course, the Nome Flight Service station, there's -- you know, you're going to talk to the same pilots often. So I recognize their voice, you know, I recognize their -- you know, they have their own kind of operating initials that we put on their flight plans, so I recognize those, but no, I don't -- didn't know him personally.
Q. Oh, okay. There was something I was going to ask. Tell us a little bit about your -- so with -- he files a -- so he didn't file his -- did he file his VFR with you that morning?

A. He didn't file his flight plan with me, no.
Q. No.
A. I believe my coworker took his flight plan.
Q. Okay. So I just want to find out a little bit about -- let's just say that when someone files a VFR or files a flight plan with you, what are some of the things that you have to do to get everything activated and -- or put in the system or -- and then what happens when you activate it.
A. Um-hum.
Q. So if you'll just kind of go through that process --
A. Okay, like -- well, strictly with Bering Air, I mean, they file -- they typically always file a VFR flight plan, even if they're going to fly IFR the whole way --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- they'll always have an extra VFR flight plan, it gives them the opportunity if they do want to cancel their IFR clearance at any point, they're still covered for search and rescue purposes by a VFR flight plan --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- and I think it's just their company policy if not just the habit of the pilots, whenever they file, even if they know it's going to be an IFR day all day long, they always put on a VFR flight plan, also. So yeah, no, typically they call up on the phone, but they can also do it on frequency, we have a bunch of different frequencies they can use to file flight plans with.

Typically, it's over the phone. You know, with Bering Air pilots, you know, they just rattle it off, you know, they know exactly what we need to know and so we take it down at that point, we enter it into our OASES system which then, you know, enters a proposal, you know, VFR proposed flight plan. And then typically, when they depart, they will be on the radio and they'll ask for activation and at that point we activate the flight plan, same thing through OASES, you just hit activate and now it's an active flight plan, so it goes to our inbound list so now we're monitoring that flight plan for search and rescue purposes, make sure that they cancel it on time or start search and rescue if they don't.

Q. Okay. And will they call you to cancel?

A. And then typically they'll call us on the radio frequency, they all have SAT phones on their planes, too, so if they're in an area where they can't reach us on an RCO or if the RCO is out of service or whatever reason, they typically -- I believe every airplane has a SAT phone on board so they can call us on their SAT phone to cancel their flight plans if they need to.

Q. That's great. Just tell me a little bit about what kind of equipment you have, we haven't been out there yet, so give us an idea since we are -- we have not seen it, what are some of the types of equipment that you use to do your job?

A. Um-hum. So our main system, OASES again, it's a two/two computer screen kind of system there, one half of it is weather

products, half of it's like flight data-type stuff, you know, our proposed list, our inbound list, notices to airmen list and various other things. Other than that we have kind of a bank of frequencies because not only do we, you know, monitor Nome's CTAF and other frequencies, we have outlying RCOs throughout our flight plan area, so you'll see a bank of basically frequencies and then -- the ASOS for the weather system is right there, that's one of our jobs is to monitor that and augment it, if necessary.

And then another computer behind us, which is more admin stuff, you know, time accounting and whatnot. We do have a preflight position, but it's not staffed typically, it's beyond the front desk as you walk in, that would be available for pilots if they want to do a walk-in briefing, but we don't get very many walk-in briefings anymore.

Q. Okay. And do you use any, like, third-party stuff, like FlightAware or do you use like -- use any --

A. Typically, we do have FlightAware up, you know, it's not official --

Q. Yeah, right.

A. -- it's just a reference.

Q. Yeah.

A. But it's helpful, just as a reference. So typically, we have one of our computer -- our admin computers has FlightAware up.

Q. Oh, okay. Do you use ADS-B Exchange at all?

A. No.

Q. Oh, okay.
A. I don't recall, I'm not sure what that is.
Q. Yeah, it's -- it kind of like gives you live flights and shows where airplanes are, I don't know what the coverage would be --
A. Oh, okay.
Q. -- up here, but -- do you have anything that would -- that you can see where the airplanes are?
A. No, we don't have any form of radar or even -- you know, even a display that shows other radars, you know, we don't have it. So when we do airport advisories, it's where the pilots report they are and we're just repeating what they say so if they say they're 10 miles east, we say report 10 miles east.
Q. Okay, yeah.
A. But we have no radar or anything that actually, you know, that we can see them.
Q. Oh. Wow, that's pretty -- pretty neat. To find out, you know, how you work things, that's -- yeah. Do you use flight strips, anything like that, or do you just go off a screen?
A. Yeah, we have what's called the electronic flight strips, it's --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- been a fairly recent addition, you know, when I first got to Nome we used just paper strips --
Q. Um-hum.

A. -- but they have a new one so, again, if you walk in, you'll see an In-Flight 1 position, In-Flight 2, each one has two monitors with our OASES system and then in between the two on the table is more of a flat screen, that's our electronic flight strips. And basically, it just looks just like a paper strip, it's just done electronically so you can grab them from, you know, a proposed list or inbound list and then you can work the strips just like you would if they were paper, it's just basically a replacement of the paper strips, is all.

MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, all right, so -- I've got some more questions but I don't want to -- I don't want to take up everybody's time so I'm going to pass to my colleague.

MR. OGDEN: Yeah, thanks, Betty.

MS. KOSCHIG: Casey. Um-hum.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Yeah. So I'm curious about the process, there was previous arrivals prior to Bering Air 445's proposed arrival, I believe Ryanair 40 was the previous arrival, they came in and they shot, I believe, the RNAV 2-8 approach, later cancelled, can you walk me through the process, a pilot comes in, they're shooting the approach and then what your duties and responsibilities are from there?

A. Okay, so assume Ryanair was probably on an IFR clearance when they're inbound, so Anchorage Center would call us and give us an inbound --

Q. Um-hum.
A. -- you know, aircraft, aircraft type, and ETA, so that would give us an idea that they're -- you know, they're on their way. At some point then, Ryanair would get on our CTAF frequency and contact us, at that point we give them the airport advisory, which is essentially they listen to the AFIS, they verify they have the code, you know, and then we give them traffic.
Q. Um-hum.
A. Yeah, it's a -- we don't have radar so our traffic is what the other pilots said to us and we're just repeating that to the -- you know, the inbound aircraft. At that point, I mean, if it's VFR conditions on the field, they can cancel their IFR at any point or all the way to the ground IFR at that point, whenever the IFR cancellation happens, we will then contact Anchorage Center, give them the cancellation and that's typically it. If we're covering them under a VFR flight plan, that's when we would cancel the VFR flight plan, also, at the pilot's request. Does that answer your question?
Q. Yeah, absolutely.
A. Okay.
Q. For the aircraft coming in on IFR, is it normal that they would relay flight conditions to you or have you ever, as Flight Service, prompted a pilot to say flight conditions while on arrival?
A. Like a pilot report?

Q. Um-hum.
A. Yeah, part of our job is to solicit pilot reports so yeah, typically, on our AFIS, on the recording itself, I mean, that's one of the things that's on every single hour is, you know, requesting pilot reports. We also can solicit them individually, especially when we have specific, you know, weather conditions we're interested in.
Q. Um-hum.
A. But typically, when they're inbound, they listen to the AFIS, they say they have the AFIS code, there's a solicitation for pilot reports on the AFIS.
Q. Understood.
A. So I mean, if we're really trying to get something, maybe we could ask them specifically again, I mean, we can do that if we want to, but -- but yeah, that's it.
Q. I see. So typically you would not prompt the pilot, it would be the AFIS?
A. Typically, we wouldn't -- yeah, it's not part of our airport advisory that we give them, yeah. Once they say they have the AFIS code, really what we're giving them is traffic.
Q. Understood. So from the time you came back from your break until the accident, do you recall any pilot giving you any field conditions or had you solicited any field conditions that were perhaps not on a recorded line?
A. I don't recall. If we were given a pilot report, we would

enter them on our OASES system which then distributes it, just like any other pilot report --

Q. I see.

A. -- or just like any other air traffic facility has the ability to, you know, input pilot reports which then makes it available for everyone to see. We wouldn't take a pilot report and not enter it.

Q. Understood.

A. You know, we would disseminate one specifically, you know, if you had a pilot report for something, especially if it felt like it would be pertinent for that flight, you know, we could say oh, yeah, and we had a pilot report, you know, and give them the pilot report, but typically you take a pilot report, you enter it in the system, that makes it available for everyone.

Q. I see. So forgive me if this is a silly question, I'm not innately familiar with Flight Service, but are you aware of the conditions that would warrant a PIREP?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Knowing that, what is, to you, a significant PIREP?

A. Well, I guess, to clarify your question, so when you have a pilot or you have a pilot report, then you have certain conditions that elevate it to an urgent pilot report, is that -- when you say significant are you talking about an urgent pilot report or are you just saying me, personally, what's significant?

Q. You, personally, what's significant.

A. Okay. Yeah, I mean, icing, wind shear, low-level wind shear, you know, moderate or greater turbulence, obviously, you know, reduced visibility, especially when you're talking visibilities to a mile or even less than that would be, you know, significant to me. Yeah, I think that's it.
Q. I see. Are you a certified weather observer in your position?
A. Yes.
Q. So on the day of the event there was an augmentation made especially that came out that had called for haze, it's been a while and if you don't have perfect recall here, I totally understand. One of our weather observers had made a note of that and was wondering what conditions warranted inputting haze into that report, if you recall.
A. I don't recall specifics, but sometimes when we enter the haze it would be like -- because sometimes the ASOS will come up with unknown precipitation, so --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- we typically don't want it to say unknown precipitation, you put in something, the most accurate you can come up with.
Q. I see.
A. So a lot of times you'll augment that and not leave it unknown precipitation, I mean that's part of the reason why we're there, you know, with human eyeballs, is to see it.
Q. Right.

A. The machine might not know, but we should be able to know and enter something, that would be my guess of what it was.
Q. I believe that would account for your question, you know, that manages that perfect. In your experience, so based on technique that I'm hearing in this facility, it is -- would be normal for a controller to issue an approach clearance and then they would say something along the lines of relay flight conditions to Flight Service on the frequency switch and then in part, the aircraft would call you, give you the flight conditions, you would input it, relay it, is it ever normal, abnormal or it just doesn't happen that a controller would call you and say hey, I needed flight conditions from this guy, are you getting --
A. It's happened, it's not a typical thing, interaction with Anchorage Center, but yeah, I've had -- when they've given an approach or we've gotten an IFR departure clearance that says the same thing we had said, coordination with Anchorage Center --
Q. Um-hum.
A. -- after they've given us the clearance, they'll say oh, yeah, and we're requesting a pilot report for, you know, maybe this condition or that, so it happens, it's not a routine thing every time we, you know, coordinate with Anchorage Center, but it happens from time to time.
MR. OGDEN: Okay. That's all the questions I have for now.
MR. ABBOTT: Okay.
MR. OGDEN: Thanks.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, Trevor.

MR. BOUSU: Nothing.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, Karena.

BY MS. MARINAS:

Q. Do you ever get notified of NEXRAD outages?

A. Typically, we get a call from SOC when we have any outages that affect our facility, I believe NEXRAD is something we would get informed -- I'm not a hundred percent sure, though.

Q. Okay.

A. Usually, like -- like if it's one of our ROCs or like, you know, a NAVAID or something like that, we definitely get those. I'm not a hundred percent -- I mean, I can't recall a time when I got a call that was telling us hey, you know, heads up, your NEXRAD is out.

Q. But all of the outages that you get notified about are usually via phone call?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Do you get PIREPs passed down to you from Anchorage Center?

A. I mean, from time to time, yes, but normally, like I said, if Anchorage Center gets a pilot report, they're entering it so we see it then, you know, we have our little -- like you'll see on OASES when you get there, it will have like kind of a map and we can, you know, change it up where we want, so like mine has like the whole state of Alaska and then one of the many things that

happens is when a pilot reports and it will put exactly where the pilot report was and then I can cursor over it and read the pilot report so, you know, whether -- even if they didn't specifically call me and say oh, yeah, we just entered a pilot report for this, I'm always going to get it on my system and I can look at it and see it.

Q. Because they're reporting it into --

A. Exactly.

Q. -- AISR and that's going into your system.

A. Um-hum.

Q. Perfect, okay. That is what I was wondering. And then in turn, you're -- are you typically passing the PIREPs back the same way as you're entering it into the system?

A. I'm entering -- yeah, on a routine pilot report I wouldn't call Anchorage Center for it. Like I said, if it's elevated, if it meets the criteria for an urgent pilot report, we do have a procedure where we call the Anchorage Center Weather Service or weather something, I forget the name of it, but I think -- believe it's somebody in the National Weather Service here in Anchorage Center, so if we do get an urgent pilot report, then that is -- that's an additional step that we do, we call them and say we just entered a pilot report for, you know, whatever it would be, you know, whatever meets the urgent pilot report criteria.

Q. Okay. Do you guys -- you guys put together the AFIS, right? Or -- yeah, okay.

A. Yes. Yeah, we record it on the hour.
Q. And so what do you typically put in that?
A. Oh, well, probably rattle it off.

MR. ABBOTT: The, you know, activities of weather, so you have wind, favored runway, the rest of the METAR, you know, visibilities, temperature, dew point, altimeter setting, notices to airmen for the airport, there's a solicitation for pilot reports. And that's it. And then contact Nome radio on our CTAF, basically, for -- and then advise you have information and then we'll give them the code.

BY MS. MARINAS:
Q. If you have PIREPs for low-level wind shear or something significant, you know, moderate or greater icing or anything like that, are you putting that into AFIS ever?
A. Yeah, that would be something we'd put in there, so we will give -- that would be another thing I don't think that was mentioned earlier was, you know, weather advisory, so AIRMETs, SIGMETs, any other things like that and then yeah, especially if there's an urgent pilot report or something that was local to the airport, then we could also add that into our AFIS recording.
Q. And how often is that obtained?
A. Well, hourly unless there is a reason to update it more often. It goes -- basically, when the weather observation goes out on the hour, that's when we redo the AFIS to match the weather

observation.
Q. Um-hum. Do you have any recollection if there was anything about icing on the AFIS that day?
A. I'm pretty sure early in the morning there was not, but in the afternoon I believe I do remember there was an AIRMET for icing.
Q. Afternoon, like before the accident or after the accident, do you remember?
A. I believe before, I think. I don't remember specifically which one it was. They wouldn't have heard it, anyway, they wouldn't have been -- they were 40-some odd miles out, I don't believe they would be --
Q. They wouldn't have had it?
A. Typically, I don't think they would've tuned in to that yet.
MS. MARINAS: Um-hum. That's all the questions I have.
MS. KOSCHIG: Travis?
MR. ARNOLD: She took the one that I had ready to go.
BY MS. KOSCHIG:
Q. So you said typically they probably wouldn't have heard it, how far out do they -- are they before they really can start getting communication --
A. I mean, depends on the speed of the plane, obviously, like Alaska Airlines with a Boeing -- they're going to call us further out than a Caravan.
Q. Um-hum.

A. I don't know the requirements, exact requirements, typically, like for a Caravan, I would say we're not going to hear from them until they're at least 10 miles --
Q. Oh, okay.
A. -- from the airport. At that point that's when they'll call us initially, you know, they'll say, you know, we have information, whatever the AFIS code is, at that point we give them traffic and they stay on our frequency from that point on.
Q. Oh, okay. And then they report when they land?
A. Yes.
Q. Oh, okay. I think that answers that. A question I do have, who closes, like, you did -- deicing, when you're getting ready, they're getting ready to deice, is it -- who calls you to let you know that they're going to deice the runway?
A. State maintenance does, so typically, they have radios in every one of their vehicles --
Q. Okay.
A. -- so yeah, when they're -- if they're going to go out on the airfield, they would contact us even if they're just going to go out there, just to give us -- let us know we're going to be on the runway, then we would give them traffic, too, you know, like --
Q. Okay.
A. -- not a good time to come because we have somebody on final, you know, or something like that. So they'll contact us on the radio, we'll give them traffic. If they want to close the runway,

they can contact us on CTAF, also, and close the runway, that's what happened that -- that day. They were going to go liquid deice the runway and he brought the truck out there. At that point we had no inbound, so that's typically what they do, they ask, you know, is this a good time, basically, is what they're asking --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- and so at that time we had no inbounds, so it appeared to be a good time to go out and do it.

Q. Okay.

A. But yeah, typically it's on the radio, they will call us and then they could close the runway, whatever they want to do. It's not typical to close the runway, to have work in progress.

Q. Um-hum.

A. It's only in a situation where they feel like that would be necessary, so on that day, for some reason -- liquid deice is not a very common thing and I don't know why he decided that that would be -- just go ahead and close the -- I think they want it to set for a while and they don't -- maybe they don't want the liquid on the runway right away, like they want to give it some time --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- or something, I'm not a hundred percent sure how that works.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. But typically, if they're just taking a plow truck or grader

or something on the runway, they'll just call us and inform us there's going to be work in progress, so it doesn't close the runway, it's just another level of advisory so that we can give any inbound air traffic, let them know that there's work in progress.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. Closing, it's not typical.

Q. All right, so if they -- yes, and that totally makes sense, so -- but if, like, in this case if they closed it, are they officially the ones that close the runway?

A. Yeah, only the air traffic manager or the people designated by the air traffic manager have -- airport manager, sorry --

Q. Uh-huh.

A. -- airport manager has the ability to close the runways. Like, I can't close the runway.

Q. Oh, okay. All right, and then a follow-up question on that, so who decides how long it should be closed?

A. The airport manager.

Q. Airport manager.

A. He'll advise us, that way we can issue a notice to airmen for the closure, our procedures then are call Anchorage Center, let them know that the runway's closed so that they can coordinate with their -- any inbounds they have, like on that day, the Bering 445 was on the way to Nome but, like I said, we did have -- he was far enough out we hadn't even gotten the inbound from Anchorage

Center yet.

MS. KOSCHIG: Right. Okay. I can't think of anything else. Let's go around the room again.

BY MR. OGDEN:

Q. Yeah, I've got a few, we have weather specialists and they had some questions they'd like to relay. Were there any PIREPs recorded when you had assumed the position, maybe a physical manifest, I know you had said that if there was a PIREP you would input into the system, but --

A. Um-hum.

Q. -- anything that you know?

A. Not that I recall, no.

Q. Okay. The weather that you had encountered that day, was that unusual, usual?

A. It was fairly unusual, unfortunately, a lot of what -- the really odd weather that showed up was after the accident, you know, but we did have freezing rain, it was -- it was cold, it was like 15 degrees Fahrenheit and we had liquid rain come down. Unfortunately, this was after the accident.

Q. Right.

A. We had a rainstorm on the airport, itself, which caused the airport maintenance -- airport manager to have to close the runway. I think it went on -- maybe I'm getting my days mixed up. But no, it was -- it was definitely a rainy -- no, it was just a -- I don't know how to describe it. Yeah, it was a little odd.

Not too odd for Nome, I mean, we get weather like that, it's coastal, so you get -- typically, we can get some -- some odd weather, but --

Q. Yeah. So I listened to the recordings and I didn't note it, but just to eliminate it, do you know if the pilot of Bering Air 445 or anyone in the flight crew had requested a weather brief or were they offered one at any point?

A. Well, typically, if they file their flight plan, that's the best time to give weather briefings because it's on the phone --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- you know, it's just clear communication, so typically that's when, if they have any requests for weather or a weather briefing, that's when they would request it. I would say almost always with Bering Air, you know, they specifically tell us we have weather NOTAMs and advisories, like all they want to do is file the flight plan because they're professional pilots, they've self-briefed, you know, and they're basically telling us we don't need -- we don't need a weather briefing, thank you.

Q. I see.

A. So they'll rattle off their flight plan and as long as -- we have all weather NOTAMs and advisories, yeah, just to let us know.

Q. Now, if they didn't state that they had the weather NOTAMs and advisories, would you -- would that prompt you to prompt them hey, here it is or --

A. Oh, yeah, yeah. So our procedure is, at that point, even if

they just want to file a flight plan, is to offer them adverse conditions.

Q. And is that driven by the 7110.10 or is that --

A. Yes.

Q. -- an SOP?

A. Um-hum.

Q. Okay, so that's overall --

A. Um-hum.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah, I think there's a specific line in there that says, you know, if a pilot calls up just to file a flight plan and does not state they have adverse conditions, that we are to offer them adverse conditions.

Q. Okay.

A. Or just give them. Sometimes it's easier just to give them, but --

Q. I see.

A. -- it is part of the procedures, yeah.

Q. Got you. If you need additional weather support while you're on position, where can you get that support from, what tools do you typically use?

A. I mean, I don't -- like I said, I think the OASES system has just about every weather product that's put out.

Q. I see.

A. It's an aviation weather, you know, product.

Q. Understood. So that would be the main weather resource you use to perform your daily functions, is OASES?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Last question, money is no object, whatever you want, is there any weather tool or any tool, for that matter, that you would like to perform your job better?
A. No, nothing that I can think of specific for the Nome Flight Service station that would --
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, I think that the -- like I said, the OASES is pretty inclusive of everything that we could need to understand what's going on.
MR. OGDEN: Fantastic. Okay, that's all the questions I have. Thank you, Betty.
MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum. Karena, got any yet?
BY MS. MARINAS:
Q. I just want to go back to something he said just to make sure I understand it, so when he was talking about -- he was talking about the weather and then you kind of were saying that it was odd, was it -- it sounded like you were saying it kind of went odd after the accident, before that it was kind of like winter? I'm just trying to understand.
A. Yeah, I would say that the conditions were deteriorating from that point on, even for the next couple days --
Q. Um-hum.

A. -- it got worse.

MS. MARINAS: Okay. I wanted to make sure I understood that right, and that was it.

MR. ARNOLD: I have a piggyback on that, actually. Sorry.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, go ahead.

BY MR. ARNOLD:

Q. This may be a weird question for you, you said it deteriorated, we just discussed that, offhand, do you recall which way the storm was coming in from?

A. Typically, it's from the south or southwest or --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- but yeah, the southerly flow of the weather.

MR. BOUSU: Sure. Okay, that's it.

BY MS. KOSCHIG:

Q. Okay, so how did you learn about the accident, that you found out that it happened?

A. I mean, initially it was when Anchorage Center called my coworker in In-Flight 1 position and requested that we broadcast for this aircraft, I believe all -- it was just secondhand from him, but he said, you know, they noticed a rapid descent and this is the location and just asked us to broadcast on our frequencies to see if we could contact that aircraft. At that point we didn't know if it was an accident or what, we just knew that Anchorage Center was calling us to help try to find an airplane, so --

Q. Okay.

A. -- I don't believe -- it was the next day, I think, by the time the aircraft was found, but --
Q. So were you doing anything behind the scenes that -- in support of this, that -- I mean, because I know In-Flight 1 was basically the one that was handling it all?
A. Yeah. I mean, I would say it was my job -- I'm In-Flight 2, typically what I would do in a situation like that, and if we have, like, that or if it was a search and rescue or something that we're doing that's kind of abnormal and requires a lot of focus, I would just kind of take on everything else, you know, so I'm answering the phone, I'm, you know, taking care of the ASOS and the AFIS and just letting -- so that he can focus on that one job. So yeah, as an In-Flight 2, that's kind of our role is kind of a support role to allow the one who's primarily on the radio to focus on that.
Q. That sounds like a good plan. Do you have any questions for us yet?
A. No.
Q. Did we ask -- is there any questions you thought we were going to ask you that we didn't ask?
A. No, I can't think of anything.
Q. Yeah. That's always a loaded one. Because you never know, because it's always interesting to find out what the people expect for us --
A. Um-hum.

Q. -- to ask and we find out some really, really good stuff.
A. Um-hum. Yeah, it's hard to recall, you know, like it was such typical day-to-day things, nothing I did that day was abnormal, you know, I mean, filing flight plans, activating flight plans, you know, so even like the next day when I tried to recall, I was like, I have a hard time remembering --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- because I have activated a flight plan off of Unalakleet hundreds if not thousands of times, you know, so it's just such a routine thing, it's kind of hard to remember, so some of my recollection might not be a hundred percent accurate, but that's why the tapes and stuff help, obviously, to bring all that back, but --
Q. Right. But oh, yeah, we definitely --
A. Like, I was trying to think about the weather and I think -- it was just pretty much that day, I think, and that evening that the weather was bad because I think the next day was improved, but I think I said the weather was bad for the next two or three days, but --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- it was particularly that day and that evening, I think --
Q. Okay.
A. -- and the next day was improving conditions, but it's hard to -- for what we do, it's mostly just like right now is what's important, you know, like --

Q. Yeah.
A. -- obviously forecasts and like that for giving weather briefings, but --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- primarily, it's just what I'm doing at that time, you know, is what's important.
Q. Yeah. Yeah, I know, it's -- you know, we definitely realize, you know, when you do routine tasks all the time and then something happens and we come in and ask well, what happened, it's like, you know, it's difficult because it all runs together, especially when you've done several more of the same routine day after day, so -- but appreciate you recalling what, you know, what you've gotten so far, that is very, very helpful for us and it does help us put the pieces of the puzzle together because we're -- we want to make sure that we get -- we get to the bottom of what happened on this one. So no "oh, by the ways"? No questions for us yet, I mean --
A. No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, then we'll go ahead and we'll end the interview and the time now is 14:34.

(Whereupon, at 2:34 p.m., the interview concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL COMMUTER PLANE CRASH NEAR NOME, ALASKA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 Interview of Eric Abbott
ACCIDENT NO.:	ANC25MA018
PLACE:	Anchorage, Alaska
DATE:	February 26, 2025

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.

[redacted]

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Karen D. Martini
Transcriber