

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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REGAL AIR ACCIDENT NEAR RAINY PASS,
ALASKA, SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

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Interview of: TONY BANNOCK, Vice President
Regal AirWednesday,
November 7, 2018

APPEARANCES:

JOSHUA LINDBERG, Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:30 a.m.)

MR. LINDBERG: Wednesday, November 7th, at just before 9:30, Alaska Time. Josh Lindberg, NTSB, and Tony -- Bannock?

MR. BANNOCK: Yep.

MR. LINDBERG: With Regal Air. This is an interview about the accident involving Dave Oberg on September 24th of 2018.

INTERVIEW OF TONY BANNOCK

BY MR. LINDBERG:

Q. So Tony, if you would, just tell me about your position at Regal Air. Explain to me your daily duties, things that fall under your realm.

A. The official title is vice president for the company. The daily duties would involve, the biggest part is scheduling, who's going to do what trip in what airplane to where, and then gathering information for pilots to make the decision on whether we're going to go or not.

Q. Okay. Now explain the process to me of how you make that decision, how an aircraft is dispatched and who's involved.

A. Well, it depends on where the trip is and what's happening. You know, for -- I mean, each case is different, I mean, as far as who's doing what trip. Obviously it's going to come into who's checked out in what airplane is going to be the biggest one. That's the easiest one to just, okay, we -- like you can't fly this one, so we'll go from there. And then who's checked out in

1 what spots as far as, you know, if that person's been to that
2 place before or hasn't been there before, do they have a rundown
3 for that place. And then, you know, and then obviously the
4 weather's a big, big thing as well. So --

5 Q. Um-hum. So when you go -- like say, for instance, the flight
6 that you dispatched this morning, since it was early, you had you
7 here to dispatch it, and who else from the company was involved in
8 it?

9 A. Mike the pilot.

10 Q. Mike --

11 A. Laughlin.

12 Q. Laughlin. Okay. So he took the trip this morning. And it
13 was just you two deciding, this is the trip we're going on, and --

14 A. Um-hum. We talked about it last night. I think he filed his
15 flight plan last night, and he -- it was an IFR flight plan. And
16 checked the weather in Galena this morning, and he was off.

17 Q. Okay. Now was Bruce, the chief pilot, involved in that
18 flight at all?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. And so is there a "three to go, one to say no" kind of
21 situation when you dispatch the aircraft?

22 A. We don't have that procedure.

23 Q. Okay. So it's just between the pilot and the duty officer?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Okay. All right. So you and Mike talked about it, you

1 decided the flight was good to go. Now what are the procedures
2 for checking weather? Is that the pilot's responsibility only?

3 A. For that one yes, because it was on an IFR flight plan and
4 I'm not instrument rated, so he just checked he was able to shoot
5 the approach into Galena and --

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. -- you know, that's -- you just follow the procedure. If
8 it's below minimums, then we don't go.

9 Q. Okay. So say it's one of your newer pilots and it's not an
10 IFR flight, but maybe there's some clouds, maybe there's some
11 marginal weather --

12 A. The webcams are the biggest tool that we use, and then --
13 but, you know, they can only tell you so much. And then getting
14 weather reports from people on the ground, what it's doing there.
15 And then on -- this is back to your getting other people involved.
16 On days that it is questionable, that's when we come over here and
17 that's why we have the big screen. And either Mike or Bruce is
18 always on the ground, so either the chief pilot or the DO is here,
19 and then the three of us will chat about it and then make a
20 decision on whether we want to wait, cancel, or go.

21 Q. Okay. All right.

22 A. But it it's a blue-sky day, and they've been to Lake Creek
23 10,000 times, you know --

24 Q. It's hard to question, right, why wouldn't you go?

25 A. Exactly. It's like, yeah, there's nothing -- no reason for

1 us to hold it back.

2 Q. Okay. All right. As far as any written documentation for
3 dispatching a flight, say, you get a request in like the one this
4 morning, what written documentation do you have that says this
5 flight is going, this is the pilot, this is who agreed to take the
6 flight, here's the passengers manifest?

7 A. I've got it all on the schedule, on the computer.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. It says which pilot takes -- has done which flight in which
10 airplane. It keeps track of all that stuff.

11 Q. Okay. So if you -- say you've got another pilot, Pilot A in
12 this morning, and you've got a flight for him to take, how does he
13 know that it's his flight? You put it on his schedule and he sees
14 that?

15 A. Yeah. So the night before, they'll get a -- I'll text them
16 to tell them what their first flight of the day is. And we have a
17 -- we use the app, WhatsApp --

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. -- and there's a, it's a -- we have a pilot thread that has
20 the game plan for the next day. So then that way in the -- but
21 it's -- in the summertime when we're super busy just cause things
22 change so much, like I don't tell them their whole schedule
23 throughout the entire day, but for their first flight, like you
24 have a 7 o'clock show for an 8 o'clock departure to Lake Creek or
25 something. So that way when they wake up, first thing they can

1 start looking at the cameras and be like, well, it's super crappy,
2 I'm going to drag my feet, drink some coffee, and I'll see at
3 7:15, or see -- you know what I mean?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Or it's, okay, it's good to go. So then they'll -- so that
6 way they can at least start looking a weather on their iPads at
7 home or something while they're still in bed or something like
8 that, so --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And we're big on the WhatsApp deal as far as communicating
11 with each other on -- you know, water levels is a big thing, beach
12 conditions, things like that, you know.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. If somebody said the beach got soft at Silver Salmon, they
15 can put it on the WhatsApp, and then all the pilots get it,
16 including me.

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. And that way it's like okay, well, let's stay off that beach
19 till we get another high tide, and then just be real careful on it
20 or something.

21 Q. Okay. So all the pilots are on the same page with WhatsApp.

22 A. Exactly. Exactly.

23 Q. You're all constantly monitoring that.

24 A. Everybody gets each text, yeah.

25 Q. Okay. All right.

1 A. Now in the wintertime -- I made a new one for just the winter
2 pilots because that way the people that move back south, like they
3 don't care what the weather's doing at Puntilla today, you know --

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. -- so they don't need to know.

6 Q. Don't bother me.

7 A. Yeah, exactly. Their phone would just be blowing up every
8 20-seconds, so --

9 Q. Yeah. Okay. How many pilots do you have this winter?

10 A. So right now, I've got Bruce, Devon, and Mike. And then I've
11 got Scott who's not -- he's not on the schedule, but like if a
12 tour came up or something, he'd probably take it.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But just those three right now.

15 Q. Okay, and because there's not that much demand in the winter,
16 that makes --

17 A. Exactly. There's -- especially this time of year. You know,
18 come February, once -- we can't land on any lakes yet or anything,
19 and that's pretty much all we do is off-airport stuff, so -- you
20 know, like today, we got a Galena charter, so we can do that one
21 any time. And then the occasional Kenai or Homer or Seward or
22 something like that. But for the most part we just -- we're
23 pretty slow this time of year. So --

24 Q. Yeah. So operating this winter, which airplanes do you
25 normally use? Are you using the Beavers or the 206s?

1 A. Mostly the 206s, just because -- the biggest reason,
2 honestly, is they're just easier to put away.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. Like it's a pain in the butt to put the wing covers on the
5 Beaver --

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. -- and push it around and pre-heat. I mean, with the 206
8 it's one plug-in and then the whole thing's warm. With the Beaver
9 you got like four extension cords and -- but we still -- I mean,
10 come March, then those'll be the ones on skis, so then that'll be
11 the ones that'll be going to -- you know, doing the lake stuff and
12 things like that.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. But right now for all the tours we just use the 206.

15 Q. Okay. The Beavers that you have, are those all on skis and
16 floats, or --

17 A. Well, right now, one of them's getting a pretty extensive
18 annual, so --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- it's in a bagillion pieces.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. The other one's just on bush wheels right now.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. But we'll put it on skis, but the -- I mean, we don't fly it
25 that much this time of year.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. But once the -- once it freezes up, usually around like
3 Thanksgiving or something, that's about when the lakes are hard
4 enough to -- or thick enough to land on. So --

5 Q. Okay. Okay. Yeah, I remember when I was out here last time,
6 the Beavers were all on their floats.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And so do you guys just transition them --

9 A. Yeah. So what -- I mean, they're a lot easier to work on
10 when they're on wheels, too, just because they're lower.

11 Q. Sure.

12 A. So that's the -- once we pull them out, that's like one of
13 the first things, is just take the floats off, winterize those,
14 and just put them on landing gear. Even if we're not going to
15 plug in the brakes or something, just to move it around, just to
16 work on it.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. But the -- and then -- but yeah, like I said, then next month
19 we'll go through them on skis and then they'll be ready to go.

20 But --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But, yeah, like I said, primarily we try to use the 206 just
23 because it's easier to maneuver and put the covers on and deal
24 with.

25 Q. Yeah. Okay. And the pilots that you've retained for the

1 winter, are rated in both --

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. -- the Beaver and the 206?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. Okay. All right. Do you have any scheduling challenges with
6 especially -- I guess we can talk about the winter right now. Any
7 scheduling challenges with your number of pilots and the different
8 aircraft that you fly?

9 A. No. Like Devon and Bruce and Mike can fly all of them, and
10 they're all our most capable pilots, so -- and we're -- and like,
11 and, I mean, I'll just be honest with you, like this time of year,
12 like it's like, we're not doing that. You know what I mean? Like
13 you're just so burnt out after the entire season, that it's like
14 somebody calls and they're like, oh, we want to go to this little
15 lake. Like no, no thanks.

16 Q. Can't do that.

17 A. They have to call Trail Ridge with their PA-12 and they'll go
18 take a look at it.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. But, and that's the same thing with the ski plane, like 95
21 percent of where that airplane goes is Puntilla Lake just to
22 support Rainy Pass Lodge. And then every now and then we'll do
23 like Shell Lake where there's a strip. But we don't get too
24 sporty with that, just because the thing weighs 5,000 pounds and
25 if it get's stuck in the snow, you're screwed big time.

1 Q. That's a -- yeah.

2 A. So we're pretty, we're pretty -- we don't explore too much
3 with that airplane. So --

4 Q. Yeah. Okay. That makes sense.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Gotcha.

7 A. So, but as far as the scheduling goes -- let me back on that.

8 Like we're so slow this time of year like we may have three to

9 five flights a week, you know, and then we try not to fly on

10 weekends unless, you know, unless it's a -- you know, the

11 weather's beautiful and people call for a Denali and it's a good

12 trip. It's like, well, you know --

13 A. Why don't (indiscernible) --

14 Q. -- we might as well just go do it.

15 Q. Sure.

16 A. But, you know, if the weather -- if it's a day like today,

17 then, yah, so -- but again, like that's just because it's this

18 time of year and it's, you're just so burnt out of --

19 Q. Exactly.

20 A. -- coming in to do it. So --

21 Q. Yeah. So you're busy season, when does that start and end?

22 A. So it -- so I start showing up here at about 7 o'clock in the
23 morning on May 1st until about October 1st.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And then like, you know, June, July and August it's 6:30 in

1 the morning. So that's -- yeah, from May to -- May through
2 September is pretty gung-ho. And even -- May really isn't that
3 busy flight wise, but you're busy training and you've got new
4 people, you know, between dock boys and office girls and getting
5 them -- you know, we'll take the new pilots and we'll throw the
6 office girls on there and go do a Knik tour, so we can show them
7 how to do it and then they can sell it better.

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. You know, and then the lot cleanup, and the phone's ringing
10 off the hook because people want to get their July trips booked in
11 May. So May, we don't do a lot of revenue flights, but it's still
12 starts to get ramped up just because you do so much training
13 because the Lake just went out and --

14 Q. You guys get ready.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Get ready for the season.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Yeah, that's understandable. So is it pretty hopping around
19 here then in the summer, in the busy months?

20 A. Oh, yeah. Like there'd be -- when we had all seven
21 airplanes, there'd be 40 people out -- like when they all go out,
22 and then the next group of people are here and that group came
23 back, like there'll be 40 or 50 people walking around out here and
24 everyone's talking to you. It's just like, ah --

25 Q. Chaos.

1 A. Yeah. I mean, it's -- yeah, it does get pretty hectic and
2 busy, but everyone knows their job and does their deal, and we've
3 got a great crew and, you know, you just deal with it, you know.

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. Just keep, keep her going.

6 Q. Yeah. Yeah. Well, you've got to run the business.

7 A. Right.

8 Q. Yeah. I'd like to see that in the summer, just to see how
9 it's --

10 A. Come by any day in July. It can get pretty crazy.

11 Q. That'd been cool.

12 A. Then there's some days in July, it's kind of nice when all
13 the airplanes go to Katmai all day and then it's just like, all
14 right, sweet, I'm going back to bed.

15 Q. Yeah, (indiscernible) --

16 A. You know, they're just -- they're back -- they won't be back
17 till 6.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Pretty hectic first thing in the morning, but once they're
20 gone.

21 Q. Where's Katmai?

22 A. That's where you see the bears standing on the waterfall
23 eating the salmon.

24 Q. Yeah, yeah.

25 A. I'm sure you've seen it on a postcard or --

1 Q. Oh, plenty.

2 A. Yeah. So that's becoming more and more popular every year.
3 So they're, you know, that's just -- so that's when the fish are
4 trying to jump over the waterfall and they all congregate right to
5 that spot.

6 Q. That's what everybody wants to see.

7 A. That's -- everybody wants a picture of a bear eating a
8 salmon.

9 Q. Yeah. Have you seen that up there?

10 A. Oh, yeah.

11 Q. Yeah? That's cool.

12 A. I've actually never done that trip on our airplanes, but I
13 used to work in King Salmon and we took a boat over there years
14 ago.

15 Q. Okay. Gotcha. I can't really think of anything else about
16 the operation, so we can transition into the accident flight. And
17 really just tell me anything that you remember from the beginning
18 of that trip, from talking about the trip the night before, and
19 any involvement that you had in it.

20 A. So that -- the night before, I'm sure I just sent a text.
21 I'm sure it was an 8 o'clock departure. I don't recall. I'd have
22 to look at the schedule and see.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So text Dave 7 o'clock -- actually, no, it was a 9 o'clock
25 because I wanted Dave to get -- we wanted to do a sleep in because

1 that was the only -- we only needed to do two flights that day and
2 they were only about 4-hour blocks, so there wasn't any sense in
3 getting here at first thing in the morning.

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. So I was like, hey, why don't you just show up at 8 and then
6 we'll shoot for getting out of here about 9. Because we just had
7 freight out of here and we were supposed to pick up passengers,
8 so --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So Dave shows up at -- actually he -- I remember he got here
11 early because he wanted to get done earlier and I came in just a
12 few minutes after him. And we were looking at the Puntilla
13 camera, which was the best source of information that we could get
14 for looking down the valley, and it didn't look that great but
15 didn't look terrible. And Dave and Bruce -- Bruce was going in
16 the same direction, but to a different spot. So Dave was like,
17 well, I'll tell you what, I'll go first, 15 minutes ahead of you
18 or something, and then you launch. And then that way I can -- if
19 we both have to boomerang, at least I can -- that's just 15
20 minutes less fuel we're burning.

21 That's a pretty standard technique, you know, technique that
22 we use --

23 Q. Sure.

24 A. -- is we'll send somebody and like, all right, this sucks,
25 and then -- and that way, that way we're not all -- and then if it

1 does get too bad, then you don't have all these airplanes in the
2 exact same spot trying to turn and get their way up -- you know,
3 they're spaced out a little bit and then they can still talk to
4 each other. And then it's nice because then when you've one
5 that's in, you know, way up by the S-turns or something near
6 Puntilla, can relay back to Bruce, and then Bruce can relay back
7 to me, and, you know, we can kind of communicate that way.

8 Q. Yeah. Okay.

9 A. Which is pretty nice, so -- so Dave came in. We loaded some
10 plywood. It was like 300 and -- it was less than 400 pounds, I
11 remember that. And loaded the plywood, got it all strapped in.
12 Dave took off. Bruce took off about 15 minutes behind him. Dave
13 made it through the S-turns, which is a pretty common bad weather
14 spot, and then a few minutes later Bruce got in there and didn't
15 like what he saw. So Bruce turned around. Dave made it through.

16 And then the Puntilla north/northwest camera didn't look that
17 bad. Like that was actually the camera that looked the nicest, I
18 remember. Like I was looking -- like when he got up there, I was
19 looking at it, and I'm just like, boy, that's not looking that
20 great. But then he made it past the -- but again, the cameras can
21 only tell you 10 percent of what's really happening, you know.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. So, but he made it through. I'm like, all right, cool. And
24 so then -- and then the northwest camera looked a lot nicer, but
25 again that one can't tell you what's going on around the corner --

1 Q. Exactly.

2 A. -- right where Goodman Pass was, where Dave went down just
3 south of there.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Which I'm guessing the -- I mean, who knows what happened at
6 that point, but -- oh, one other thing I was going to tell you.
7 So we did have weather on, on that side of the range at the Middle
8 Fork, from the Fithian Camp. They called, gave us the weather,
9 and they said it was really, really windy, and I forget what he
10 said for visibility. He said that visibility wasn't that bad and
11 he had a pretty decent ceiling, a couple thousand feet, and -- but
12 it was really windy. And so Dave held off -- I remember we did
13 hold off for a little bit. And then he called back, like 45
14 minutes later, right as soon as we got done loading, and said the
15 wind slacked off significantly. And I remember as soon as I saw
16 it came up, a sat phone, answered it, said, here, just talk to
17 Dave. And I handed the phone to Dave. Dave talked to Bob, who is
18 the guy boots on the ground out at the camp. Dave said, oh, okay,
19 sweet; well, I'm going to give her a go. And then that's when --

20 Q. Oh, okay.

21 A. That's how we did it.

22 Q. So with Bob Fithian on the ground, on the sat phone is how
23 he's relaying back the information?

24 A. Of the current weather conditions at the camp.

25 Q. Right. Where Dave was headed to?

1 A. Where he was heading.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And I didn't -- so, and that's the best thing for me to do,
4 is just -- like a lot of times I don't get to do that because I'll
5 get the phone call and then I'll just have to write down what they
6 said, you know, gather as much information as I can. Okay, when
7 Dave get's back from his next flight, hey, here's what Bob said.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. So it's kind of sweet when Dave's right here. I'm like,
10 here, just talk to him. And like -- and again, it's like at that
11 point like, I don't care; like cancel it, don't cancel it. Like
12 we're so late in the season right now, like if you want to go,
13 great; if not, like that's fine too. We can delay it. So --

14 Q. So there was no rush to get up there that day?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. No.

18 Q. And you said he was just delivering cargo?

19 A. He had freight out, but then they -- like that time of year,
20 that's at the end of the season, so everybody needs to come back
21 to town. Like all the meat and the racks and the guides and all
22 that. So --

23 Q. Okay. So he was delivering that plywood and then what was he
24 bringing back?

25 A. He was supposed to pick up two people and gear. I believe

1 that's what it was. I'd have to check it.

2 Q. Okay. And do you remember were they guides? Or?

3 A. Yes, because I -- because that was the, that was the big
4 thing is we only had a few of these flights across the range left,
5 but the weather was so crappy for the few days before then that --
6 you know, I talked to Mike and Bruce and I was like we had all --
7 we probably had 40 people, maybe, I don't know, maybe that's -- 25
8 people that all needed to come back to town.

9 But like this guy had -- he needed three flights because he
10 needed to get his meat out and all of his guides and stuff. I'm
11 like, no, we're going to get your clients out and then we're going
12 to get this guy's clients out. We need to get the clients back to
13 town. You idiots can stay out there, you know what I mean, and
14 eat moose meat and shoot guns and put the camp away.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. You know, the guides, and the meat and stuff isn't -- I mean,
17 it's hanging up in a meat shed. Like it's not going -- it's not
18 going to go bad or anything.

19 Q. Sure.

20 A. It's getting cold enough. But the priority was to get the
21 customers back into town. Well, technically they're all our
22 customers, but to get the paying people that went out on the
23 hunt --

24 Q. Right.

25 A. -- let's get them back to town first, and then we'll start

1 worrying about getting all their moose racks and everything.
2 Because, you know, we can move bags and guides -- and all the
3 guides live here in town. The clients have flights to catch and
4 they got to get back to work and things like that.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. But, you know, all the guides live in Wasilla, you know.
7 Like they're not missing out on anything so they can hang out for
8 a couple of days. So --

9 Q. So all --

10 A. That was the big thing with that flight is, I was like, Dave,
11 we got all the clients back, like there's no bug rush to get these
12 guys, I mean, other than if you want to get them. Like we need to
13 get them eventually, but I do not care one bit. Like, I mean, I
14 want to get them back, but it wasn't a -- wasn't like, hey, this
15 guy's got a flight or, you know, like, well, we need to try pretty
16 hard to get them.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. So --

19 Q. Okay. And so you, you have a late morning, you figure out
20 from Bob Fithian that the winds have died down so it's better to
21 go now than it was before.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. And you checked the Puntilla cam. Southeast is looking kind
24 of worse --

25 A. Down the valley, yep.

1 Q. -- than northwest. Northwest looking a little better. But
2 obviously you can't see around the turn.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. So as that flight is going on, what are you doing back here?
5 What's going on at the office?

6 A. Watching Spidertracks. Watching the altitudes.

7 Q. Okay. So you're just watching those guys fly out there?

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. So when the Spidertracks for Dave stops, what's the --

10 A. So what it -- when I first noticed that it stopped, the first
11 thing, you know, because it's not -- it's happened before where
12 they've gone offline. It's like it's pretty uncommon, but it's
13 not -- like two or three times a year a passenger will kick the
14 cord or something and unplug it, or hit some turbulence or
15 something, or it's a mechanical thing, like it's just -- it'll
16 just shut off, you know, and then you have to start it up again or
17 something.

18 So the first thing I did when I noticed it was, I clicked
19 around and noticed when it went off, noted the time. Okay, it had
20 been about 10 minutes since anything's happened. So I called my
21 buddy Keenan at the RCC and said, hey, do you guys have any ELTs
22 going off? And he wasn't at work at the time. He was like, hang
23 on, I'll call over there and I'll call you right back. So he
24 called his buddies that were in the RCC, and they said, no, they
25 don't have anything. He was like, oh, okay, well, let's give it a

1 couple more minutes.

2 And so then, after about another 15 minutes, it still didn't
3 come back on. And then at this point he should, he -- like a lot
4 of times if it goes offline, when you -- if you landed at
5 Fithian's and start it back up again, it would have came on.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And at his point, haven't -- it hasn't came yet. So then
8 that's when Rob Jones called. Yeah, that's when Rob Jones called
9 me from Farewell to ask about another flight or something. I
10 think moving some guides or something. And I said, can you -- he
11 was going from Farewell to his lodge down on the Big River, which
12 went right by the Fithian strip. So I say, hey, can you fly over
13 the Fithian strip and see if Dave's there? Tell him his
14 Spidertracks isn't working. See if you can roust 1738-Romeo on
15 the radio; it's Dave. Like Rob knows our guys. We do a lot of
16 work with him, so --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Rob said -- he flew over, and then he called me back from his
19 lodge. He said there wasn't a plane there and I couldn't -- he's
20 like, I did -- I was trying to, the whole time I was trying to get
21 ahold of him.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. And couldn't. And so -- and Dave's not one to turn the radio
24 down and not talk, so --

25 Q. Sure.

1 A. That's when I knew something was the matter. And so the next
2 thing I did was call -- I called Keenan again, because he flies in
3 there and like that's the back line is to get the, to get the ball
4 rolling. He runs the RCC over there. So then he told me, okay,
5 you got to call flight service, report an overdue airplane; I'll
6 start getting things going on my end. And so then we kind of got
7 that ball rolling, like, hey, we got an overdue aircraft. And
8 then Bob Fithian had called at some point and said, hey, where's
9 Dave? And I was like, well, I'd love to know that.

10 And so then, when Rob left -- Rob had to go somewhere. I
11 think he was going back up to Farewell, and he said, hey, do you
12 want me to go fly over his last known position with the
13 Spidertracks, you know, where the Spidertracks had pinged, on my
14 way back to Farewell? Which wasn't really on the way, like Rob
15 did us a pretty good solid. So he tanked up on fuel, dropped his
16 people at Farewell, and then jumped back over to where Dave was,
17 and couldn't get up because of the clouds, so he went to Puntilla.

18 At that point the helicopter was starting to ramp up, I
19 think. And that's when I had called Keenan back. I'm like this
20 is the real deal. Like I don't know -- I'm not sure why the ELT's
21 not going off, but he's not at Katina, he's not at Boy's Camp,
22 he's not at -- Rob flew over all the other strips that, you know,
23 if the weather got bad, Dave would've put down on somewhere.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. And then looking at his altitude at his last known position,

1 that's when I had thought to look and see like the direction he
2 would have been pointing and look at the terrain that he was
3 approaching and noticed that he was about 1,000 feet, I think,
4 below that hill that was coming in, you know.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. I don't know if you saw the Spidertracks or anything --

7 Q. Yeah. Yeah.

8 A. -- but like that's when I was like, okay, that's -- he's got
9 to be in there.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. And so that -- so I was able to get Keenan the coordinates
12 and they were -- that's when they were able to go out and --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- pluck him out of there.

15 Q. Okay. So about the time you noticed the Spidertracks go off
16 until Rob calls, like what's -- what kind of time are we talking
17 about?

18 A. That was actually pretty darn quick. That was -- so I -- so
19 it was probably about 15 minutes or something from when -- so I
20 noticed that it was off, and that was about, like I said, 5 to 10
21 minutes after -- you know, like I don't just sit there and stare
22 at it all day.

23 Q. Sure.

24 A. You know, like you go have some coffee. But it's always up
25 on my computer and you're always looking at it, especially on

1 marginal weather day. Like that's why we have them on a 1-minute
2 ping, so we know exactly -- I mean, they're within 1 minute of
3 where their last known position was.

4 Q. Yeah, you got know.

5 A. So it narrows the search quite a bit. So from the time it
6 went off to the time I noticed, it was probably about 5 to 10
7 minutes. And then kind of sat there and scratched my head for a
8 couple, you know, 2 or -- 2 to 5 minutes maybe.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. Called Keenan. In the -- while I was waiting for him to call
11 me back to see if any ELTs were going off, it was probably less
12 than 10 minutes later, that's when Rob called back. Or that's
13 when Rob called, and I say, you know, before we do this whole --
14 get the 30-million dollar helicopter up and going and everything,
15 like, can you go, you know, see if you can get him at Fithian's.
16 So --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. It all happened pretty, you know, pretty quick.

19 Q. Yeah. Now Rob, who is he again?

20 A. Rob Jones. He owns Big River Lodge and Hesperus Aviation.

21 Q. Okay. And what kind of airplane was he flying?

22 A. He's got a 206.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. All right. And now Bob Fithian, that -- I hear a lot about

1 that location and that place. Is that just a typical airport and
2 lodge that you guys go to for --

3 A. It's a hunting camp, yeah. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Just a couple cabins with an airstrip.

6 Q. Okay. A popular place for hunters?

7 A. For his hunters, yeah.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. Yeah, that whole area's got -- I mean, I think I counted it
10 up one time. Between Farewell Lake, Rainy Pass Lodge and Big
11 River Lodge, I think we service like 21 guides, or something.
12 It's a pretty busy area out there.

13 Q. (Indiscernible)

14 A. And that's just who we -- I mean, that's not counting Trail
15 Ridge or Rust or Sportsman's or --

16 Q, Yeah.

17 A. -- anybody. So --

18 Q. Okay. Yeah, I actually heard from the guys at Rainy Pass
19 Lodge that there were hunters at the cabin kind of near the
20 entrance south of Goodman Pass, the entrance -- a lake bed.

21 A. At --

22 Q. There's a lake bed there.

23 A. -- Sheep Lake?

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Right at -- there's a little camp right there, and there were
2 some hunter there, but evidently they didn't hear or see anything.

3 A. Right.

4 Q. So, you know, we didn't get anything from them, but that
5 would've been too nice.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. So as far as other weather sources besides the webcams
8 up there, is there anything good for you guys to use?

9 A. Just talking to people on the ground, and even then, like,
10 I'll be honest with you, like we take that with a grain of salt.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. Especially at the end of the season when you've got some
13 packer that's been out there for a month, that's cold and wet and
14 wants to see his girlfriend, like, you know, like it -- we take
15 into consideration how bad they want out of there.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Like even -- and some of them, some -- like Bob Fithian is
18 great. Like he'll call and be like, hey, Tony, I got a weather
19 report for you: It's blowing 40, zero miles visibility and can't
20 see my hand in front of my face. Like so when you get crappy
21 weather reports, then you know that the good ones that you get are
22 pretty reliable. You know what I mean?

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. So that's -- so Bob's one of them. Steve Perrins is another.
25 But there's some guides that like, you know, you'll be, hey,

1 what's the wind doing? Like (indiscernible) real squirrely,
2 like, Oh, it's, it's not too bad. And then all you hear is whoosh
3 (makes sound) in the sat phone in the background. So --

4 Q. Well, what's that?

5 A. Yeah. So there's a lot of people that we don't trust. You
6 know, they're just like, well, that's funny that you say you could
7 see the tops of the mountains because the cameras are terrible,
8 and I talked to a guy that's a mile away from you that said that
9 it's in the trees. So --

10 Q. Um-hum.

11 A. You know, like there's some people that'll try to get you in
12 -- I mean, that just comes from -- I mean, I've been doing it for
13 10 years and --

14 Q. You just know.

15 A. -- you just learn the guys and be like, no, this guy's a
16 prick, like I know he's going to try to get us into a situation
17 that -- you know, like, I'm not going to listen to him.

18 Q. Exactly.

19 A. But people like Bob Fithian, that his son flies an airplane,
20 you know, and like he's been doing this a long time and, you know,
21 I'm sure this isn't his first situation in this sort of deal. You
22 know, he's been up here for years and I'm sure he's lost pilots
23 before.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. So he doesn't want to be the one to give the bad report, you

1 know what I mean.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. So --

4 Q. So as far as picking Dave and Bruce for this flight, or these
5 two flights, why were they the ones?

6 A. More experience for those ones. And it's towards the end of
7 the season. The other guy -- they're more of our, they were more
8 of our full-time guys. So, you know, like we've got some first-
9 year guys that we wouldn't send to those air strips. They're just
10 -- they're shorter and narrow and take a little more --

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. You know, Dave's got, I don't know, 10,000 hours in a 206 on
13 wheels, you know. So he's pretty -- he can take that thing where
14 others can't. So that's -- that was a big reason why he did a lot
15 of those. He just had a -- you know, it's just all he's done his
16 entire life, is fly small airplanes. So --

17 Q. Yeah. So going in to that flight, do you schedule him for
18 that?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And then you talk about it the next day?

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. Okay. So you're the one that's always scheduling --

23 A. Exactly. So that -- I mean, and again, just from doing it
24 for this long, like you can sit here and I'll be like, well, I
25 know that this person isn't -- like, they're not going to --

1 they're not going to want to go to that spot because they've never
2 -- you know, they didn't like it, or something or whatever. Well,
3 I know Dave's been in there 15 times in the last week, you know,
4 so --

5 (Interruption)

6 MR. BANNOCK: Sorry.

7 And Dave knows Bob, and so when they were able to talk, like
8 they can communicate, and Dave's been doing it a long time, so --

9 BY MR. LINDBERG:

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. And just for those sorts of trips, you know, and then you get
12 the newer guys, then it's like, all right, well, you're going to
13 do a lot of Lake Creek's and a lot of Denali's and a lot of Kniks,
14 you know, the ones that are -- we do a lot of tours, so we usually
15 only do tours when the weather's nice. That's the whole point, is
16 so you can see the stuff --

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. -- you know, so. Yeah, so Dave was -- Dave and Bruce have
19 just been flying in Alaska a lot more and that was a better suited
20 trip for them as opposed to, you know, one of the other folks.

21 Q. Sure. Who else do you have that could have taken the flight?

22 A. For Fithian strip, I would only send Dave, Devon, Mike and
23 Bruce. Yeah, and then --

24 Q. Devon's assistant chief?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah. He's down in Vegas right now getting his CTP course
3 done.

4 Q. Okay. So you'd send one of those four because of the
5 complexity and --

6 A. And the strip mostly. It's just not a -- it's not a huge
7 strip. Like, you've got to know -- and for those guys too, like,
8 you know, them being able to put their foot down for some of these
9 pushy hunting guides. Just be like, --like who's going to tell
10 Dave that this -- that that's not a big enough load. You know
11 what I mean?

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. Where some of the -- you know, there are some guys that like
14 I won't even -- like there's one guy, I won't say his name, but I
15 won't put a new person on with him simply because I know this guy
16 -- like I can't be out there to tell him to F-off --

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. -- you know what I mean, when he's trying to -- when he's
19 trying to load too much stuff in the airplane because he didn't
20 want to pay for another charter.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. That's the thing with a -- the only thing cheaper than a
23 hunting guide is an airline pilot, you know.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. So that's the -- and we fly for some that are both, so then

1 it's really, you know --

2 Q. Oh, yeah, you got to watch it.

3 A. Yeah, exactly. They can stretch a penny.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. So that's the other thing. It's nice to send some of the
6 older guys, you know -- and Devon isn't that old, but he's been
7 flying those guys since he was 18, and he's 30-something now.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. He flew out of McGrath for years and that's all he's ever
10 done. So they've got a lot --

11 Q. They've got a different feel for it.

12 A. Exactly. They've got -- you know, again, who's going to tell
13 Devon that's got 5,000 hours in a 206 that, oh, you can take more.
14 Right?

15 Q. Yeah. No, not likely to happen.

16 A. Yeah. So those shorter strips, not only for the skill level
17 but just for the maturity level of the -- you know, when I say no,
18 that mean's no, that -- it's not a negotiation.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. You know, when I'm not there to -- when Mike or I aren't
21 there to go out and mitigate and -- because I have not problem
22 unloading the airplane and throwing it back in their truck, and
23 like, fine, fly with somebody else.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. If that's what you want to do.

1 Q. Yeah, exactly.

2 A. You know, I can only do that on this end.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. So --

5 Q. So what I'm getting out of this is that it's really a case-
6 by-case basis of who you send to which flight --

7 A. Absolutely.

8 Q. -- and there's a lot that goes into it depending on the
9 circumstances.

10 A. Absolutely. That schedule is like a puzzle.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. And, and this -- I mean, it wasn't nearly as tricky when we
13 had -- we used to have -- well, when we just had a couple of
14 airplanes and then we had three guys that -- we had three
15 airplanes and three guys, I remember when I first started. And
16 they all could fly all of them, and they all have been here for 5
17 years and could do every trip. Like it was like, all right, well,
18 which airplane do you want to fly today?

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. But now, you know, now the whole aviation industry's just
21 changed and it's like, okay, we kind of got to -- and I think, I
22 really do think, because we are really good at, okay, have you
23 been here before? Okay. So here's what you -- even if, like, you
24 know, Cold Steel, like it's a humungous lake and it's in a Beaver.
25 Like you're a floatplane pilot; we go to lakes, like, that's how

1 it goes. But before you go, we're going to have a rundown or
2 we're going to say, okay, here's where you park the airplane,
3 watch out because there's a rock right here, okay, when you take
4 off, then you're going to go to this spot, then dock the airplane
5 here. You know, like -- it's so nobody every goes to a spot, the
6 new guys, without getting a rundown from one of the senior guys,
7 which would be Mike, Bruce, Dave, or Devon.

8 Q. Okay. Whenever the schedule -- or whenever you're scheduling
9 aircraft like that, say you are not here, you're sick or something
10 happens to you, who takes over the duties of scheduling?

11 A. Mike.

12 Q. Mike takes over.

13 A. One of us is always, always in the hot seat.

14 Q. Okay. And is that just as the duty officer position or, I
15 guess, how do you distinguish who's in the hot seat?

16 A. I take 1 day off a week.

17 Q. Okay. And is that --

18 A. And you don't get sick.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. Like you just don't do it.

21 Q. It just doesn't -- you don't let it happen.

22 A. Yeah. You know, like your life style just kind of changes in
23 the summertime, and you just --

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. -- like that's not an option.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. You know. I remember one time when I was a dock boy, I was
3 so -- I had the flu and I couldn't even stand up without throwing
4 up. And, of course -- but that was before -- I mean, I was just a
5 kid, you know.

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. But that was the only time I'd ever had to call in sick here.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. In the wintertime, it's like you get a runny nose, it's like,
10 ahh, I don't think I'm going to go in today.

11 Q. Yeah, yeah, because you don't need to.

12 A. But in the summertime, it's like, I don't care if you've got
13 a broken foot, like you better show up, you know.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. I mean, for me. You know, that's the -- you've got to be
16 there, you know. And the big reason is, you know, for -- when
17 something like that happens. Like the girls didn't know to call
18 Keenan, or some -- or to know what to do, or anything like that.
19 Or be able to get ahold of Rob or any of that stuff. Like you've
20 just -- it's just from doing it for 10 years, you just know, you
21 just have -- know which resources you can pull from --

22 Q. Yeah, that's what you got to do.

23 A. -- to try to track people down.

24 Q. Okay. All right. So if you're not there, Mike takes over.
25 And then Mike is the duty officer.

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. And then, you've got Bruce still as the chief pilot. If
3 Bruce isn't there, you've got Devon. So you've got backups for
4 each position.

5 A. Right. And so, and then so how would this work? So Bruce
6 and Mike don't ever take the same day off, Mike and I never take
7 the same day off, and me and Bruce never take the same day off.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. So there's always -- so Mike, because Mike can do -- Mike can
10 kind of fill in as the chief pilot, you know, like --

11 Q. Sure.

12 A. -- when people have questions or something or -- about
13 whatever, Mike's always here when Bruce isn't. And then when
14 Mike's in the hot seat, it's kind of nice because then if anyone
15 has a question they can go there. But then Bruce is also
16 available if Mike's stuck on the phone with a flight seer or
17 talking to somebody about something else, Bruce can be over here
18 on the big screen. So the three of us don't take the same days
19 off.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. So that way, those two positions are always being filled.

22 Q. Gotcha. All right. So you're always making sure that
23 somebody's filling the roles of chief pilot, duty officer?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And if Bruce did have to fly or something, Mike could do both
2 sitting in the hot seat. You know what I mean? Like the pilots
3 just have to wait till he's off the phone to get the rundown for
4 something if Bruce had to take a trip or something. But --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. But most of the time, most of the time we do -- like I'll
7 look at the schedule the night before, and I'll talk to Bruce and
8 be like, hey, what do you think about this guy going to this spot?
9 Bruce will be like, oh, yeah, it's a -- that's a great spot. And
10 then I'll text them both, you know, do a group text, or put it on
11 the WhatsApp, and say, hey, Marie-Sophie, make sure you meet up --
12 come in a little early tomorrow and meet up with Bruce first thing
13 so you guys can chat about so and so, late drop-off or something
14 like that.

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. So I always try to put the people together. That way there's
17 no like, hey, where did you drop them off on this lake? Like
18 let's get all that -- so we try to forecast that the night before.
19 That way, first thing in the morning when everyone's getting their
20 planes ready, we can take 5 minutes and come over and chat about
21 it.

22 Q. Yeah. Yeah that helps.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. -- Make sure they've got the area briefed, flight briefed,
25 weather briefed.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay. For this flight that Dave took, I know that the
3 weather was marginal, we've already talked about that. Did you
4 have any bad feelings about this flight? Did you feel weird about
5 it?

6 A. You know, to be honest, with Dave, it's like -- you know,
7 looking at it and -- I mean, Dave's looked at those cameras since
8 they were put in, and Dave's been in there 50,000 times and knows
9 every nook and cranny of each rock and pass and everywhere to go.
10 So for him and I to sit and chat about it, I was like, well, Dave,
11 what do you think? And he's, oh yeah, I think it's doable. Like
12 who am I to tell him no, you know? Like, you know, other than,
13 you know, like if it was completely shut down and I felt like Dave
14 was trying to, to get it done and be too pushy, it was one of
15 those where it's like, oh, yeah, it looks, looks marginal. And
16 Dave's like, yeah, I think it'll work. Like, okay, well, if
17 you're cool with it, you know.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Now, if it had been somebody -- one of the newer guys that
20 had only been in there a couple of times, then it's like maybe we
21 should wait for that Puntilla camera to get up a little more.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. That doesn't look too promising right not.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. But, again, with Dave, it's like he was the guy that had been

1 in there for the last 30 years, you know?

2 Q. Sure. Yeah. So obviously you've got the three accidents
3 that have happened recently. I don't even want to talk about the
4 other two because I don't know anything about them. It's none of
5 my business, but -- I want to focus on this one. But I can't help
6 to say, why do you think these three have happened? What's going
7 on in Regal, in the aviation industry, what's going on that made
8 these three happen so quickly?

9 A. Dude, I ask myself that every single day. And the only thing
10 I can come up with is bad luck.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. I mean, because that's the thing, it's like, you know, had we
13 had a janky maintenance system or if I sat there with a gun to
14 every pilot's head, then I'd be like, well, shit, maybe I need to
15 -- maybe we need to figure something out. But like, that's not
16 how we run our operation. Like it is -- we chat about everything,
17 we talk about it, and we check the weather, we have great
18 maintenance, you know, we have awesome communication and we, you
19 know, we got good clients and great training and great pilots, and
20 that's -- I mean, like I said, if I knew the answer to that, I'd
21 be -- die a happy man.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. But I don't know. I mean, that's the thing, it's -- every
24 day we try, strive for perfection and we end up getting F'd on the
25 deal.

1 Q. Yeah, yeah. I understand. And sometimes these things can't
2 be answered and we can't really figure out, because like we always
3 say in accident investigation, it's like the swiss cheese model --

4 A. Right.

5 Q. -- where you've got all these different things that line up
6 and you step back and, yeah, it's easy to see from 10,000 feet,
7 but while you're in it you can't see each of them happening.

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. So it's pretty tough to really call that as it's going.

10 A. Right. Yeah, I -- you know, I wish, I wish we could pinpoint
11 it on something cut and dry, and just be like, right, well, let's
12 just do this. But again, it was -- all three of them were
13 completely preventable from what we can tell, you know.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. Obviously the report isn't out, but --

16 Q. Sure. For this one specifically, what I'm seeing is that,
17 yeah, the weather was marginal, yeah, there were clouds, yeah, he
18 was kind of picking his way through the area, but he got as far as
19 he did and he missed -- we assume he missed Rainy Pass, he missed
20 Goodman Pass. It just seems like, you know, how can you miss
21 those?

22 A. And how can Dave miss them?

23 Q. Right.

24 A. For somebody that's been in there -- you know, again, like,
25 if it was somebody that's only been in there a dozen times, it's

1 like, well, maybe they're not that familiar with it. But Dave
2 could tell you what tree it is, you know.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. And which one -- okay, take a left at the birch tree that
5 looks like -- you know, something like that. So --

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. And not only that, like he had his iPad and his -- and the
8 GPS is in the airplane. Like, you know, if -- that's got the
9 terrain on it and everything that, as you know, is pretty
10 reliable, you know --

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. -- information to have, so --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. You know, I don't know. I don't know. It's a, it's a freak
15 deal that I don't -- I don't understand it one bit.

16 Q. Yeah. That -- I don't even know what to call it, because
17 it's not a pass that he was going through. That valley that he
18 was going through, is that somewhere that if it were a clear day
19 that you would just cruise over because it's a nice view, or --

20 A. Well, on a clear day -- I mean, like I said, he was pretty
21 light out of here. He probably just would've went up to 8,000
22 feet --

23 Q. Popped over.

24 A. -- and just (whistles).

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. That's the way to do that trip, you know, because then you
2 don't -- now you're not down in it, you're up high and --

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. -- you know, a lot of times it's not as rough up there and,
5 you know, it's just -- yeah, that's the way to -- that's how -- if
6 it was a clear day, it just would have been the straightest line
7 between Power Line Bend and Fithian Strip, and that's how he would
8 have flown it. But that wasn't the case. That's why he was down
9 beneath the clouds and --

10 Q. Sure. So what are your rules for weather like that,
11 especially for Dave? Do you have any specific, if the clouds are
12 this low, nobody's going, or --

13 A. Well, it's a VFR -- I mean, it's a VFR flight.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. Like he's just got to maintain VFR, you know. And then
16 obviously, you know, in the mountains, like let's maybe extend
17 that a little more, you know. And that's one of the things that
18 we've talked about for this one, some changes that we're going to
19 make, is having some larger minimums or higher minimums --

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. -- for flying in the mountains, for flying in this, but --

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. But that was a VFR flight and he just had to maintain VFR
24 rules.

25 Q. Yeah. So for changes coming up, have you made any specific

1 changes yet? Are you still talking about them?

2 A. We're still working on it right now, but the one thing that
3 we have been doing just until we get a procedure set in -- I mean,
4 the one -- there aren't many good things that came out of any of
5 these, but the one nice thing that it wasn't in July.

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. Like that was, that -- I mean, not only is it heartbreaking
8 and it makes us look stupid, and it's such -- you lost your buddy,
9 you're down an airplane, like, but now you have to put a smile on
10 your face every single day and you got to keep the ball rolling --

11 Q. Finish the season.

12 A. -- and it sucks. It's the worst thing in the entire world.

13 Q. Um-hum.

14 A. But at least with this one it's like, sweet, we're canceling
15 all the flights tomorrow, and we can kind of -- so back to what we
16 were saying. So this, so we haven't set -- came up with exactly
17 what we want to say for next season yet, but like this last couple
18 weeks, it's like -- like a day like today, okay, well, let's see
19 where we're going; okay, I can see the tops of the mountains.
20 Like we have a good long chat about what we're doing before we
21 spin a prop.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. You know, with the Galina flight this morning, it's on an IFR
24 flight plan so Mike just looks at the weather and does that. But
25 as far as any of the VFR flights, like those are talked about

1 pretty thoroughly, especially if we're going into the mountains.

2 Q. Yeah. Yeah. For next season, do you have any pilots talking
3 about not coming back or any worries about the past?

4 A. I haven't really talked about it. I mean --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. -- that's kind of a loaded question this time of year because
7 everybody just says, screw this, I'm never doing it again.

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. But then come March, they're like, oh, I can't wait till the
10 lake thaws and we can start going. Like that's how we are every
11 season, you know.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. Like let's sell this stupid business and get rid of the
14 airplanes. And then after you sleep for a month and you get over
15 it, you're like, man, I want to go fishing again and get back into
16 the -- you know, so you're -- so come May, you're like, let's buy
17 every airplane and buy the whole Lake Hood, and keep it all going
18 and do the whole thing, and you get all excited about it, but --

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. And then September rolls around and you just want to shoot
21 yourself in the face, and like, this was stupid; I could have been
22 a, I don't know, a doctor or something instead.

23 Q. Yeah, I understand.

24 A. You know what I mean. So it's -- but it's one of those
25 things where you just love doing it while you're doing it, and

1 then -- so to answer the question. Like I -- nobody said anything
2 to me, but it's too early to tell.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. You know, everyone's just kind of taking a breather. I had
5 lunch with one of our -- one of the gals that flies for us
6 yesterday, and the mechanic. We went down and got a burger
7 yesterday and just hasn't really said anything about --

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. I haven't asked either, you know.

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. I don't expect anybody to make a decision right now.

12 Q. It's very tough, yeah. Okay. All right. Well, as you
13 probably know, one of the things I'm really interested in are the
14 procedure changes, anything that you guys do. At this point I
15 don't have anything to suggest or recommend specifically. I know
16 that Bruce showed me a list of procedures that you guys had from
17 the previous accident that you'd kind of put in to place.

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. So I'm looking for things like that. As they come up, just
20 keep me informed. Let me know what you guys are talking about
21 doing. Because as this pushes forward and as the report is ready
22 to come out, obviously we need to track those safety changes.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. And we can talk about other things that maybe other operators
25 are doing that you guys want to implement in your procedures,

1 whatever the case is.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Just kind of keep an open mind out there.

4 A. Yeah, absolutely.

5 Q. Talk to some other operators and say, hey, here's what I'm
6 thinking, how do you guys do it?

7 A. Right.

8 Q. What can we do better? You know, any kind of safety changes
9 at all, we're interested in tracking that, just so that we can
10 follow what's going on here.

11 A. Sure.

12 Q. Any questions for me?

13 A. I don't think so.

14 Q. All right. Well, I appreciate your time.

15 A. Yeah. Sorry I was late.

16 MR. LINDBERG: That's all right. I'm going to go ahead and
17 end this now.

18 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: REGAL AIR ACCIDENT NEAR RAINY PASS,
ALASKA, SEPTEMBER 24, 2018
Interview of Tony Bannock

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN18FA386

PLACE: Anchorage, Alaska

DATE: Wednesday, November 7, 2018

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


Deborah Dowling Sweigart
Transcriber