

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL PLANE CRASH NEAR KEARNEY,
MISSOURI ON JULY 20, 2023

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Accident No.: CEN23FA314

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Interview of: WILLIAM JOSEPH BROWN, Aviation Safety Inspector
Kansas City Flight Standards District Office

Kansas City, Missouri

Wednesday,
September 20, 2023



APPEARANCES:

ANDREW FINNE, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JOHN BRANNON, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT SMITH, Representative
Federal Aviation Administration
Office of the Chief Counsel
(On behalf of Mr. Brown)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. FINNE: Okay. The recording has started. All right.

So, the purpose of this interview is to conduct FAA interviews pertaining to accident number CEN23FA314, which is the accident of November-2-0-0-Romeo-Alpha in Missouri. Today's date is 9/20/2023, and we have myself, Andrew Finne. That is who is the investigator in charge. We have John Brannon, an investigator with the NTSB. Then, you all can introduce yourselves.

So, go ahead, Matt.

MR. SMITH: Okay, sure. Matt Smith with the FAA's Office of the Chief Counsel.

MR. BROWN: And William Brown, ASI Flight Standards District Office in Kansas City.

MR. FINNE: Okay. Again, today's purpose is to speak with the FAA inspector who issued the Ferry Permit that November-2-0-0-Romeo-Alpha was operating under on the day of the accident. These questions will pertain to that ferry permit issuing.

In terms of the interview, the NTSB interview mandatory briefing items, the purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not assign fault, blame, or liability. NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate actions. A transcript or a summary of the interview will go into the public docket. In this case, it'll be a transcript.

1 The interviewee can have one representative of the
2 interviewee's choice. That is Matt Smith. The representative may
3 be an attorney but is not required to be an attorney. The
4 representative may not testify for the interviewee. Note:
5 representative comments should be limited. Legal evidentiary
6 objections are not grounds for NTSB to refrain from asking
7 questions. Does that make sense to both you, William, and you,
8 Matt?

9 MR. BROWN: Yeah, it does to William.

10 MR. SMITH: Yep, understood.

11 MR. FINNE: Cool. Awesome. Thank you. All right.

12 INTERVIEW OF WILLIAM BROWN

13 BY MR. FINNE:

14 Q. So, Mr. Brown, what's your name and position at the FAA?

15 A. William Joseph Brown. I'm an air worthiness safety
16 inspector, air worthiness.

17 Q. Okay. How long have you held this position at the FAA?

18 A. Let's see. Since -- well, I got hired on Father's Day of
19 2020.

20 Q. Nice.

21 A. That was my first day.

22 Q. What's your background prior to coming to the FAA?

23 A. I owned and operated a Part 65 repair station in
24 Saint Joseph, Missouri for 20 years. I was --

25 Q. So, you -- oh.

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 Q. Go ahead.
- 3 A. I was a designated mechanic examiner and a 147 instructor for
- 4 six years at a school here in Kansas City.
- 5 Q. Okay. So, you hold you're A and P certificate?
- 6 A. I do, and an inspection authorization.
- 7 Q. Okay. When you joined the FAA, do you recall when you
- 8 completed your AFS500 training, also known as string training?
- 9 A. Not exactly. I did it all virtually. We came in at the
- 10 height of COVID, so --
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. -- all of those classes were virtual. But, yeah, I don't
- 13 remember the exact date. I could probably get that for you,
- 14 though.
- 15 Q. Okay. But you completed string training and everything --
- 16 A. Oh, yes.
- 17 Q. -- for --
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. -- for your position? Okay. All right. In relation to the
- 20 special flight permit for November-2-0-0-Romeo-Alpha, when did you
- 21 first become aware of the request?
- 22 A. The owner/agent called me on the phone. I believe it was the
- 23 28th of June.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. 2023, yeah.

1 Q. Okay. So, when he called you on the phone, what was your
2 next step in getting that request fulfilled for the owner?

3 A. Well, it was actually the wife. It was a husband --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- and wife team that owned the LLC. She was an agent for
6 the LLC. And they were wanting a special flight permit. So, what
7 I did is, I instructed her to the AWC program, which is the online
8 program for such, and, you know, I gave her the external portal
9 link and, you know, told her to go there. She could make all the
10 application there, and then refer to the office, and we'd follow
11 through. But when she went there, she was having some serious
12 issues with the animation -- or, the automation, I should say.
13 And so, I just thought it'd be easier just to follow through, help
14 her through it, and do it.

15 Q. Okay. What's your familiarity with AWC?

16 A. What is my familiarity with it? What do you mean by that?

17 Q. So, in terms of AWC, the air worthiness request portal, is it
18 something you deal with all the time? Is it something that's kind
19 of like in the back burner part of your job? That type of thing.

20 A. Everything that has to do with air worthiness certificate
21 special flight permits goes through the AWC, so I'm fairly --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- familiar with it. I use it pretty frequently.

24 Q. Okay. When AWC was rolled out, were you given training on
25 how to process applications received through the portal?

- 1 A. AWC was rolled out when I got hired.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. So, it was part of the training, was the AWC.
- 4 Q. Okay.
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. My original training, I should say.
- 8 Q. Okay. No worries. So, when you are trying to complete this
- 9 task for giving her the special flight permit, what guidance do
- 10 you use to help you accomplish the task?
- 11 A. Well, there's a couple places. One, the AWC itself has a
- 12 help button in the upper right-hand side, and if you're having any
- 13 trouble with the process or exactly what you need to do, you can
- 14 just go up and click on the help, and it walks you through step by
- 15 step what needs to be done. As far as the guidance for
- 16 requirements and such, that's Order 8130.2J that I use.
- 17 Q. Okay. At any time, did you use the 8900 guidance for volume
- 18 four, chapter 13, section one for issuing a special flight permit,
- 19 or volume eight, chapter five, section one for issuing an air
- 20 worthiness certificate?
- 21 A. Yes, I view those, but my primary source is the 2J.
- 22 Q. Okay. Has the process of having the applicant request it
- 23 through AWC, you completing the application in AWC, has that
- 24 process been incorporated into the 8130.2J or the 8900?
- 25 A. I don't believe it's in the 2J, no, and honestly, I don't

1 think it's in the 8900, either.

2 Q. Okay. So, if you're having a problem with AWC, if the
3 applicant's having an issue or you yourself as the inspector is
4 having an issue, you have to refer to that help button that's up
5 in the --

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. -- one of the corners?

8 A. And there's some contact information, too, there, that you
9 can call the AWC people, and they can step you through the
10 process, also.

11 Q. Okay. So, when the application has been processed through
12 AWC, and it's been given all the green checkmarks, what does that
13 mean to you as an inspector?

14 A. It means I can issue the special flight permit or the --
15 yeah --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- in this case, a special flight permit.

18 Q. Okay. So, if it's giving you all green checkmarks, then, as
19 an inspector, you feel comfortable issuing the special flight
20 permit, because basically, the application is saying, hey, you're
21 good to go?

22 A. Basically, yes.

23 Q. Okay. So, the records provided for the application show that
24 the maintenance records and the air worthiness directive
25 compliance sheet was provided for a record review. How did you

1 complete the requirement for a record review and inspection as
2 required by the .2J?

3 A. I had the owner send me a copy of the logbook entry for the
4 previous inspection, and the special flight permit inspection. A
5 part 65 inspector looked at it, and said it was safe for the
6 one-time flight, and signed it off.

7 Q. Okay. Did you yourself ever physically go through the
8 records or physically inspect the aircraft?

9 A. I did not physically inspect the aircraft, no. I did --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- look at the copies of the logs, but I never had the actual
12 logs in hand.

13 Q. Okay. Do you know if there is a requirement for you as an
14 inspector to physically go out and inspect the logs and the
15 aircraft, or is that up to the discretion of the inspector?

16 A. Well, it depends.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. If there's damage to the aircraft, if there's some known
19 safety issue with the aircraft, I'm going to physically look at it
20 myself. Otherwise, I can request that a certified technician do
21 that portion.

22 Q. Okay. So, in terms of a known safety issue, what's some
23 examples of something that would cause you to pause a little bit
24 and maybe want to go out and look at it?

25 A. Well, it depends on the certificate type. If it's --

1 considering this type of certificate, say the aircraft was
2 damaged, and there was a repair done to it, and they were going to
3 ferry it for, you know, further repairs, of course, I would look
4 at the plane at that point myself and investigate the repairs.

5 Q. Okay. So, typically, an aircraft owner requesting a special
6 flight permit for a ferry flight, and the aircraft's been out of
7 annual, in this case, since 2015, that doesn't -- trying to word
8 it right. That doesn't reach the level of, hey, this might be a
9 safety of flight issue? It's just, okay, it's just out of annual?

10 A. There's always a question, the air worthiness of the plane.
11 If was air worthy, of course, it wouldn't need a special flight
12 permit. If there's something specific like -- I spoke with the
13 previous owner, I spoke with the current owner, and conversed --
14 or, actually got a log entry from a certified technician.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Not anywhere in there was any indication that there was
17 something wrong with the airplane, that it wasn't safe for the
18 flight. So, you know, I was okay with it.

19 Q. Okay. One of the paperwork items that was provided to you
20 for the record review was an AD compliance report dated 6/28/2023.
21 In that compliance report, it had a Mr. -- let me doublecheck that
22 real quick. All right. Give me one second. AD compliance
23 report. Okay. It had a Mr. Tyler Smith (ph.) that had his name
24 on the AD listing with the cert number of apprentice. Did that
25 ever strike you as odd, or is that expected? What was your

1 thoughts when you reviewed it?

2 A. The AD report. I'm not sure I seen a specific AD report.
3 The log entry said that the ADs had been checked. I didn't see an
4 actual itemized report except from the previous inspection.

5 Q. Okay. And when it comes to completion of ADs, who is
6 authorized to sign off on ADs, especially like reoccurring ADs?

7 A. There's whoever performed the required inspection or service
8 for the AD.

9 Q. Okay, okay. So, does that individual have to be an AMP
10 mechanic, or can it be a pilot? Who can it be?

11 A. It says in the body of the AD. The, yeah, the person
12 returning it to service, you know, it might be an AD where the
13 pilot is allowed to do the inspection.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. It just depends on what it says in the AD.

16 Q. Okay. Okay. So, in terms of this application for the
17 special flight permit for November-2-0-0-Romeo-Alpha, you never
18 saw an air worthiness directive compliance report showing that the
19 ADs were complied with?

20 A. Other than the --

21 (Crosstalk)

22 A. Other than the log entry, no.

23 Q. Okay. Let's see. All right. How much do you as an
24 inspector rely on the information provided to you by the
25 applicant?

1 A. Well, I verify what the applicant provides me through
2 SPAS, --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- aircraft ownership registration.

5 Q. Okay. And then, for the items that they're requesting this
6 ferry permit for, so in terms of this ferry permit, he was
7 requesting a -- let me get to it. They were requesting a one-time
8 flight from Midwest International to Clyde Cessna Field due to the
9 annual inspection expired. So, when you (audio difficulties)
10 information given to you in the application in the AWC portal, is
11 there any way to really verify that information, or you'd kind of
12 taken the applicant at his word?

13 A. Well, I asked for a copy of the logbook. In this case, when
14 I checked the aircraft records in SPAS, it had the previous owner,
15 and it was --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- registered to the previous owner. And that's why I
18 contacted the previous owner, just as a courtesy call more than
19 anything, to verify that, yes, he did sell the plane, and he
20 confirmed that.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And so, the -- I'm sorry.

23 Q. No, go ahead. Sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

24 A. The current owner had a bill of sale and registration
25 application that was properly filled out, so --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- that was satisfactory.

3 Q. What was the reasoning behind the two separate ferry permits?
4 Because there was one that was dated on the -- let's see. There
5 was one that was dated on June 29; and then, there was a second
6 one dated July 11.

7 A. The first one, I believe, had a 10-day window that allowed
8 him to move the aircraft in.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. There were some weather issues, and so they were not able to
11 fly it in that first window, and she contacted me again and wanted
12 to know if I could do an extension, and I was able to go back into
13 the AWC and extend it using the original information.

14 Q. Okay. All right. When did you complete your OJT training
15 for issuing air worthiness certificates?

16 A. I believe it was 2001, but I'd have to get that date to be
17 exact.

18 Q. So, 2001 is prior/before entering the FAA?

19 A. No, I got hired in the FAA in 2000.

20 Q. In 2000?

21 A. Or, 2020. Excuse me.

22 Q. In 2020. Okay.

23 A. Okay. Yeah, 2021.

24 Q. Okay. So, you completed it in 2021? Okay.

25 A. I believe so.

1 Q. Do you feel like your string training, your OJT training, for
2 this task was adequate in issuing special flight permits?

3 A. Yes, I do.

4 Q. Okay. Does everyone complete this task the same way, or is
5 it by preference of the inspector?

6 MR. SMITH: Bill, hang tight. Yeah, Andrew, that's kind of a
7 broad question, asking him to speculate on a lot of inspectors in
8 the Agency. Could you maybe --

9 MR. FINNE: Okay.

10 MR. SMITH: -- rephrase that question a little more tailored
11 directly to him?

12 MR. FINNE: Yeah, yeah. No worries.

13 MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you.

14 MR. FINNE: Yeah.

15 BY MR. FINNE:

16 Q. In terms of your office and you yourself, do you -- trying to
17 rephrase it. You all kind of know what I'm trying to ask, is, do
18 you complete -- is it kind of up to the preference of the air
19 worthiness inspectors in your office on, do you solely use the
20 8130.2J? Do you use just the guidance, or do you feel comfortable
21 going out inspecting it? Is it okay to have just the maintenance?
22 Is it standardized between all the inspectors in the office, or is
23 it kind of just up to the individual inspector?

24 MR. FINNE: Is that good?

25 MR. SMITH: Yeah, basically asking if there's a standard

1 operating procedure --

2 MR. FINNE: Yes.

3 MR. SMITH: -- for the process?

4 MR. FINNE: Sorry.

5 MR. SMITH: Okay. Yeah. And I don't mean to interrupt the
6 flow. I just wanted to make sure that, you know, he wasn't
7 speaking --

8 MR. FINNE: No.

9 MR. SMITH: -- for everybody. Thanks.

10 MR. BROWN: Yeah, I believe there is.

11 BY MR. FINNE:

12 Q. Okay. Is that standard operating procedure the 2J itself, or
13 is there a specific standard operating procedure in the office
14 manual, if you have one?

15 A. Yeah, we use everything at our disposal, including
16 communicating --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- with other inspectors or FLMs --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- if we have any question or if there's something new that
21 we haven't seen before, because there are --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- so many different types of air worthiness --

24 Q. Right.

25 A. -- certificates. So, yeah, everything is done through the

1 AWC. Now, sometimes, the operator or the owner will apply through
2 the AWC and enter all the information in there, and all we've got
3 to do is go in, and verify, and, like, in this case, she was
4 having some issues with that, so I went ahead and assisted her,
5 which is allowed for guidance.

6 Q. Yeah. No, no, no. Of course. Okay. So, in the standard
7 operating procedure, there's a job task analysis that is provided
8 for each kind of task that you would be able to perform, and it's
9 usually tied to a PTRS code, or an activity code, as they now call
10 it. Are you aware of any job task analysis guidance for
11 completing a special flight permit?

12 A. No. When I went through it, I was in a different office. I
13 was --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- originally hired in Lincoln CE09. And it was a local
16 task, so there wasn't a JTA code associated with it.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. It was a local custom task that we were trained locally on
19 how to do.

20 Q. Okay. So, if it's a local task --

21 MR. FINNE: And, Matt, he might now know any of this, and
22 this is perfectly fine.

23 BY MR. FINNE:

24 Q. If it's a local task, the OJT -- so, it's not in the OJT
25 national program? It's just a local OJT item for the Lincoln

1 FSDO?

2 A. I believe that's correct.

3 Q. Okay. So, there isn't a PTRS code or JTA attached to that
4 task. Okay. I'm just talking out loud. Okay. In --

5 A. There is a PTRS code.

6 Q. There is? Okay. Do you know what it is?

7 A. Not right off. For --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- issuing a special flight permit, or a ferry permit, or an
10 air worthiness certificate, yes, there is a PTRS code for that
11 that we would use for documentation in SAS. But as far as the
12 training specifically having one, I don't know if there is or not,
13 honestly.

14 Q. Okay. And that's perfectly fine. Okay. Yeah, I found it
15 right here. So, the SAS activity report says that it was a
16 5404 activity admin ferry permit under the technical discipline of
17 avionics. Is there a reason why you chose a 5404 code versus
18 another PTRS code?

19 A. Because it's specific to issuing a special flight permit.

20 Q. Okay. Does the .2J direct you to use that PTRS code, or is
21 it just kind of, this is the best code that fit the circumstances,
22 the task, so you could get it entered into SAS?

23 A. You know, I just don't know, honestly.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. If I recall correctly, it's in the 8900, but I don't think

1 it's in the 2J, but I'm not 100 percent sure.

2 Q. Okay. Do you feel that your --

3 MR. FINNE: And this might be broad, Matt, but I'm going to
4 try to get (indiscernible).

5 BY MR. FINNE:

6 Q. Do you feel that your office has the resources and manpower
7 to complete this task with everything else you have going on as a
8 FSDO?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. Do you feel that additional guidance could be provided
13 to better help you in completing this task?

14 A. It's pretty clear, the guidance that we have.

15 Q. Okay. Do you feel that any additional training could be
16 provided to help you better in completing this task?

17 A. Any additional training? I don't know what it would be.

18 Q. Okay. And I guess, finally, is there anything I haven't
19 asked you that you feel is important to let us know about?

20 A. Not that I can think of.

21 MR. FINNE: Okay. John, do you got anything?

22 MR. BRANNON: I don't have anything additional.

23 MR. FINNE: Okay. All right. Let me -- Matt, do you have
24 anything additional?

25 MR. SMITH: No, I don't, thank you.

1 MR. FINNE: Okay. All right.

2 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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

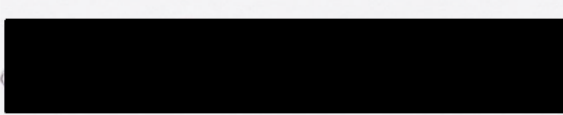
IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL PLANE CRASH NEAR
KEARNEY, MISSOURI ON
JULY 20, 2023
Interview of William Joseph Brown

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN23FA314

PLACE: Kansas City, Missouri

DATE: September 20, 2023

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



Lisa D. Sevarino
Transcriber