

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: November 26, 2024

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: John Grandbouche, Husband of the Pilot (Samantha Grandbouche)

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Grandbouche, he stated the following

- He was the husband of the pilot.
- They met in college at Washington State University.
- She received a bachelor's degree in fine Art.
- Became interested in flying around 2017 after hearing about Glacier Aviation from a friend.
- She went to do a discovery flight in airplanes but took an interest in flying helicopters.
- She began training with Glacier Aviation to fly helicopters and eventually went to work there as a helicopter flight instructor.
- She acquired her instrument and instructor certificates there.
- She worked there for about a year and a half.
- She met Taylor Olson who worked at Glacier.
- Tyler left Glacier Aviation for Houston and began working at National Helicopter Solutions (NHS).
- When NHS needed another pilot, Tyler recommended Samantha.

- Samantha interviewed with Mr. Jarrell Allen and got the job.
- They moved to Houston and got a hotel then an apartment near the William P. Hobby Airport (HOU) Houston, Texas. This was around September 30, 2024.
- When she first got to work the helicopter that she was to use was not ready.
- She worked as a Loader for about one week.
- She went on some training flights with Holly Henderson to get familiar with the Houston area and learn the speaking points for the air tours.
- The first few weeks were rough in that, they lived in south Houston, near HOU, and she would have to travel to north Houston to fly out of David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport (DWH) Houston, Texas, which was a considerable distance away. It resulted in about an hour and a half commute.
- She was told that she would be flying out of Ellington Airport (EFD) Houston, Texas and they decided to live near Ellington.
- NHS also did discovery flights and those were conducted in the mornings, so that the evenings were committed to the air tours. She would have to get up early, commute to DWH, do a discovery flight and then wait till the evenings to do the air tours.
- Things got better. The helicopter was hangered at HOU. She would then drive to HOU, pick up the helicopter, fly it to EFD and conduct flights from there.
- There were challenges to the schedule. She was supposed to have consistent days off and every other weekend off, but that had not happened yet.
- She never spoke to him about the downtown loop.
- She did fly over Houston with Holly as a passenger.
- She did not mention the tower to him, only the flight with Holly.
- She was confident in her abilities to fly out of EFD. She was confident in herself and did everything by the book. She was secure in her capabilities.
- He mentioned that Jarrell and Holly had a disagreement about something, and a decision was made that the company was going to fire Holly. Samantha was worried about that because they were already short pilots.

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: June 24, 2025

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Tyler Olson / Pilot / National Helicopter Solutions

In a TEAMS interview with Mr. Olson, he provided the following:

- His full name was Tyler Reese Olson, age 31
- He was employed by National Helicopter Solutions (NHS) as a pilot.
- He held a commercial certificate with a helicopter rating.
- He was a Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI) and CFI instrument, helicopter (CFII).
- He had about 800 hours total time in helicopters.
- All but about 0.5 hour are in R22 and R44 helicopters.
- He accrued about 120 hours in the R44 the year prior.
- He began flight school in 2020 or 2021, at Glacier Aviation, Olympia, WA.
- It took him about 20 months to become a flight instructor.
- He did work as a flight instructor at Glacier Aviation, flying the R22 and R44.
- He worked until the end of August 2023, when he moved to Texas.
- He started working with wind turbines initially but was hired by NHS in May.

- He flew the Houston area all Summer.
- He was a witness to the accident that involved N881KE.
- He was conducting a downtown tour from David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport (DWH) Houston, Texas.
- Everything was standard for a normal tour flight.
- He departed DWH, and talked to Hobby Tower (William P. Hobby Airport (HOU), Houston, Texas) to get across the [class] Bravo [airspace].
- He flew to the NRG stadium and followed the road through the downtown area.
- As he was coming up into the downtown area, Hobby notified him that there was another helicopter at a higher altitude and asked if he had the traffic in sight.
- He acknowledged the traffic in sight.
- Hobby then contacted the other helicopter and asked if they had him in sight.
- He did not believe at that time that the other helicopter had him in sight, but they were looking.
- He was watching the other helicopter when he saw a big burst of flames.
- He contacted Hobby and reported that the other helicopter (KE) had struck a very tall tower downtown.
- As he was flying by, he saw the tower collapse and the ball of flames drop to the ground.
- Hobby responded back, but not immediately.
- He realized that it was his very good friend that had just gone down.
- He reported to Hobby that he was returning to DWH.
- He returned to DWH, shut the helicopter down and called management and reported the accident.

- He believed that management called law enforcement after the initial report.
- Management was not at DWH at that time and we were trying to figure out who to contact.
- He first met the accident pilot when the accident pilot was working at the front desk at Glacier Aviation, in Olympia, Washington.
- She became a flight instructor about the same time that he did.
- While in Texas, he wanted to get back into flying, so he applied with NHS and was hired.
- While he was working at NHS, there came a need for another pilot. He mentioned to the accident pilot that there was an opening and the accident pilot applied, interviewed and was hired.
- He really liked working at NHS. He reported that NHS prioritized safety of the pilots, and the judgement calls from the pilots, and the maintenance of the helicopters.
- He recalled that in Houston, it could get windy, and the management would say that it was fine if you didn't want to fly [because of the winds].
- He did not recall ever experiencing external pressure to fly.
- He did not have any dislike of NHS.
- When asked to describe the "Downtown Loop", he could only recall his flight paths.
 - When he first started flying for NHS they were operating out of West Houston Airport (IWS) Houston, Texas, then
 - From there he would follow interstate 10 (I-10) to Memorial City, then
 - Fly to the NRG stadium, then
 - Pass the uptown area, then
 - Fly through downtown, around the outside of a particular road that he did not recall the name of, then

- Loop around downtown along I-10.
- On the way back he would talk about all the points and the interesting things about Houston.
- He would talk about the helicopter as well.
- The route from DWH were very similar.
- He described a typical duty day as:
 - The first flight usually started around 10:00 in the morning.
 - There were not that many flights in the afternoon.
 - There were more flights in the evenings.
 - The day was usually around 8 to 10 hours in duration.
 - During the day, if there were not any flights, you could go to lunch, walk in the park. There was no requirement to stay at the airport or stay "on duty." Your down time was your time.
- The tours from Ellington Airport (EFD) Houston, Texas started around October 10, 2024.
- On his tours, there were two towers. One on the east side of town [accident tower], that was a "really, really tall one."
- He stated that this tower "quite honestly, scared the crap out of me because that thing was big."
- On the west side of downtown, there was another one that wasn't tall at all, but it was still "on his radar".
- When you're flying through downtown, there is a lot going on with buildings and the city lights, and talking to Hobby.
- There was another tower that was tall and extremely hard to see at night, that was about 12 nautical miles south of DWH.

- He always would make sure to have the tower in sight before proceeding closer and flew over roads because the towers were never going to be in the middle of the roads.
- There were shorter towers between I-10 and DWH, that were extremely bright.
- He opined that the tall tower should have had twice as many lights because it was twice as tall, and it was extremely hard to see.
- The tall tower that he mentioned earlier in the interview [the one on the east side of downtown] was the one that the pilot struck.
- The second tower that he mentioned [the one on the west side of downtown] he wanted addressed for the safety of every helicopter that flies in the area.
- He did not recall the accident tower being addressed by anyone at NHS, before the accident.
- He did not have anything more to add to the topic of the accident tower or the tours.
- He was not involved with any training flights from EFD before the start of the tours from EFD.
- He was aware of non-tour flights that were occurring down in the south Houston area prior to the start of the tour flights from EFD.
- He was not sure of the amount of flights/training, and what the responsibility of the pilots were with regard to training.
- When asked about training flights and route familiarization flights and training, he recalled that the accident pilot was a fully certificated commercial pilot.
- He recalled that the other pilot (Holly Henderson) was flying with the accident pilot.
- He did not believe that NHS had a checkout procedure for the southeast [area], for pilots. "It came down to the pilot themselves saying that they were comfortable and knowledgeable of the route that they were going to fly.
- He was not sure if NHS kept training records and thought that the question was best answered by management.

- He believed that NHS was one of the safest places that he had flown.
- He stated that with some places, money was the priority, and that they would try to push you to make a flight, and that NHS was not like that.
- He recalled that if there was anything about a flight that didn't look right or led you to cancel a flight, NHS backed up the pilot and didn't hold it against the pilot.
- He recalled that in the Summer, the weather could get challenging. There would be pop-up thunderstorms that would make you have to reschedule. He was never pressured to take the flight.
- He did not see that culture in other Texas based operations.
- He never had a safety concern that he had to bring to the management.
- NHS really cared about the maintenance of the helicopters. They took maintenance above and beyond.
- On a previous preflight he found a single drop of hydraulic fluid inside the helicopter. It was not dripping nor leaking, just a single drop. The oil level was right where it was supposed to be. Maintenance came out and fixed it right away and did not ask the pilot to fly it prior to the maintenance.
- As pilots they are responsible for notifying maintenance of an issue via phone call or text message. He would also add a photo.
- Safety concerns were passed along the same way.
- At the end of a workday, the pilot would add the hours flown into a notebook located in the helicopter.
- For the tours, they used an online app that included the passenger information and the flight that was requested.
- He didn't recall if NHS used a "live" flight tracking system.
- They used a video for preflight briefings to the passengers. The loader/concierge would then reiterate the key points like not walking into the tail rotor.

- There was a lot of emphasis on tail rotor safety, and with the best practices with how to get in and out of the helicopter.
- They included other items like not talking on the radio when the pilot was talking.
- He would tell the passengers where they were going to go on the tour, and would explain that they would pass the Galleria, and the NRG stadium.
- Altering the route would be at the pilot's discretion. Other traffic in the Bravo airspace could cause the pilot to alter the route.
- The helicopter had on-board equipment to alert the pilot of terrain and obstacles.
- The loader's responsibility was:
 - Meet and greet the passengers.
 - Brief the passengers and then walk them to the helicopter.
 - Making sure that the passengers were safe, walking around the helicopter and not walking towards the rear.
- When asked about the owners he recalled that:
 - Jarrell Allen was the main contact because he was in charge of maintenance.
 - He did not talk a lot with Rob Adkins.
 - Frank Fults was on the finance side, but he never worked with him.
- He recalled the accident pilot loved working for NHS and loved the culture and enjoyed flying the tours.
- He did not recall the accident pilot raising any safety concerns to him or anyone else that worked at NHS.
- When he hired on, he interviewed with Jarrell Allen.
- He recalled that Jarrell did some operations stuff, but not much.

- The online app details the flights for the pilots during the work week. The app ties the booking of the flight with the people who are going to be conducting the flight.
- The software was PEEK.
- The passengers would book the flights online.
- NHS did the booking primarily, but he was taking some calls as well.
- A hypothetical booking would proceed in this order:
 - A passenger would book a flight.
 - The pilot would log onto the app and see a flight scheduled.
 - He would then preflight the helicopter about 1.5 hours prior to the flight.
 - He would ensure adequate fuel is onboard.
 - The concierge would be at the airport and watching for the passengers and brief the passengers.
 - When operating from DWH, he would move the helicopter from the hangar to the helipads.
 - He would shut down and go to meet the passengers, walk them to the helicopter, and conduct the tour.
 - After the flight, if there is another flight, the concierge would walk the passengers to the helicopter.
- After the days flights he would log the times in the notebook.
- It is the pilot's responsibility to make sure that there is enough fuel for the flights and calls the FBO for fuel. The FBO would fuel the helicopter.
- He had the opinion that discovery flights had their place, and they didn't do that many. They were short flights.
- The discovery flights were usually done in the morning, so they didn't interfere with the tour flights.

- When the accident pilot came on board, she did a short stint as a loader/concierge.
- The accident pilot was learning how to talk to the passengers while, at the same time, learning the routes.
- He primarily flew helicopter N233JD out of IWS, and DWH.
- He did not recall a third helicopter taking part in the tours. He believed that the third helicopter may have been in the process of being acquired by NHS.
- N881KE was a recent addition to NHS, beginning around October.
- It flew out of DWH for a short period of time before going down to HOU/EFD.
- He flew N881EK twice. He enjoyed flying it.
- He never flew a flight out of EFD.
- Robert and Jerrell were the people getting EFD ready for tours.
- He was not sure if anyone practiced flights out of EFD.
- He was not privy of any discussions regarding flights from EFD and timing of the flights from EFD to Houston.
- Holly Henderson was working at NHS before he was hired.
- Holly provided him with training flights after he was hired.
- Once he was comfortable flying the tours, NHS had him ride along on gender reveal flights, which involved flying over parties and dropping colored powder.
- There were also some wedding-departure flights but he did not participate in those.
- There were no other training flights, other than route familiarization training flights.
- He was allowed to take the helicopter and go out and train himself in traffic pattern flights because he did not come directly from another flying job. This was to get him comfortable flying again before putting passengers in the helicopter.

- He and Holly conducted autorotations and slope landings and they talked about vortex ring state.
- Holly did not have an additional duty as a company instructor but was a certificated flight instructor.
- When he and Holly were training, she did point out towers in and around Houston that he needed to be aware of.
- He did not use his iPad because the routes were simple.
- He agreed that after multiple flights the route was easy to navigate.
- The NRG stadium and Minute Maid Park (now Daikin Park) were features on the tour.
- His route included starting south at NRG stadium, going north through Texas Medical Center, past the zoo, through the downtown area, past the Marriott with the Texas shaped lazy river. Afterwards there would be the Daikin Park which was the turning point for the tour to head back west.
- He was aware that Holly and Jarrell didn't get along so well but didn't get involved.
- He usually used about 800 ft above ground level for the tours.
- He used 800 ft because it gave him extra altitude for responding to emergencies and it kept you out of reach from powerlines and the majority of towers, while giving the passengers a close and personal look at the view.
- He did not think that 1,000 ft or 1,500 ft was too high.
- He thought that, now, 1,500 ft would be a better altitude for tours.
- He recalled that the accident pilot had a choice of the two locations and chose EFD to fly tours from.
- He recalled that the accident pilot had flown the EFD route to Houston several times before the accident, in the daytime.
- He recalled that she loved flying out of EFD.
- She did not express concern about flying near the tower near Daikin Park.

- The only time that he flew with the accident pilot was a few traffic patterns at IWS.
- He started flying with NHS in June and the accident pilot started at the end of September.
- When he first started flying with Holly, it was a few short routes. He then flew the downtown loop without passengers, then he would fly while Holly narrated, so that he could focus on the flying.
- He re-stated that it was the pilot's decision to be comfortable with the route before being released to conduct the tour.
- It took him three or four flights to feel comfortable.
- He did not include the responsibility for passengers to call out obstacles or aircraft.
- It was difficult to see obstructions and towers because of the city lights. He recalled that red lights show up better than white lights.
- Some of the towers have white lights that look just like house lights.
- Red flashing lights pop out.
- His passengers also saw the impact.
- NHS maintained a manifest of the passengers.
- He was not sure if the accident pilot used an iPad.
- He recalled that both the helicopter he flew, and the accident helicopter had ADS-B.
- He did not know if NHS and HOU had any type of written agreement.

- He never flew out of Ellington Airport (EFD) Houston, Texas.
- He only flew out of West Houston Airport (IWS), Houston, Texas, and David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport (DWH) Houston, Texas.
- Only the accident pilot flew out of EFD
- Tyler Perez was a loader and a pilot, but he did not fly the tours.
- He believed that, after the accident, NHS was ceasing all operations.

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: December 11, 2024

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Mike Thielen / President / Glacier Aviation, Inc., Tumwater,
Washington

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Thielen, he reported the following:

- He was the president of Glacier Aviation. Glacier Aviation provided airplane and helicopter flight instruction.
- Samantha Grandbouche came to Glacier Aviation initially with an interest in airplanes but chose to learn to fly helicopters after a helicopter discovery flight.
- She began working at Glacier Aviation at the front desk and trained to receive her private and commercial and instructor certificates. She did not receive her instrument rating.
- After about three years of working at the front desk, she gained about 1000 hours and transitioned to being a helicopter instructor.
- She had been employed with Glacier Aviation for about 5 years when she left to work for National Helicopter Solutions (NHS), Houston, Texas. The president of Glacier explained to her that the move was a lateral move and that she was not moving up. He explained that she was already flying R-44's at Glacier Aviation, but they had already made up their minds and were moving. He recalled her stating that her husband was unhappy with the climate in the northwest Pacific region.

- He described Samantha as a “ball of sunshine” in the office. She was a hardworking, focused employee who was committed to doing the job correctly and professionally.
- He stated that a helicopter flight instructor employee had to be safe, competent and not cocky.
- She was trained by Mike Murphy, the Chief Pilot. The President stated that if a candidate wanted to get hired [at Glacier Aviation], they would have to train with Mr. Murphy. He would watch and train a candidate for about two years before they would hire them.
- She had no ego, and she was very cautious. He never had to worry about her.
- He indicated that the accident hit Glacier Aviation very hard because she had just left.
- He guessed that she had about 50 to 100 hours of night flying, but the [training] program didn’t have a lot of night flying.
- He would check his records to determine her hiring date.
- Tyler Olsen was a former employee of Glacier Aviation. He was a flight instructor who was good at the job. He was aware that as soon as Tyler got his hours, he was going to leave Glacier Aviation.
- Tyler Perez was a flight student and employed as a fueler at Glacier Aviation. He had his private certificate and maybe his instrument rating.
- After she left, Samantha told Tyler Perez that they needed a loader in Houston, so he went to work at NHS.

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: December 11, 2024

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Mike Murphy / Chief Pilot / Glacier Aviation, Inc., Tumwater, Washington

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Murphy, he reported the following:

- He was the Chief Pilot for Glacier Aviation and has been training since about 2004.
- He was the accident pilot's primary instructor. He signed her off for her private, commercial certificates, and CFI certificate.
- She was somebody who did things the right way. She was particularly meticulous about doing things the right way. She was very conscientious about doing things the right way.
- He characterized her as an excellent pilot who was mentally prepared.
- She knew the helicopter well and took things slow (e.g. pickups, landings, etc.)
- She did things the way she was told to do things.
- As a student she performed at the top of the line. Her scores were always in the 100's or 90's. She knew her stuff.
- Glacier believed that pilots are borne in the classroom not in the flight line.
- When she worked as a flight instructor, he thought that her performance was excellent. He stated that any question the interviewer had about her, the

answer was going to be excellent. She followed all the protocols and never goofed around.

- She always knew about the weather and the NOTAMS.
- He worked with Tyler Olsen at the CFI level and no others. He signed him off for CFI. He was a hard conscientious worker. He did not stand out like Samantha did, but he was solid and reliable. He got the job done and didn't do anything wrong.
- They use Flight Schedule Pro and may have all her flight records.
- He advised her that these things that you are learning today are lifetime learning events. Afterwards he would occasionally hear her echoing his advice to her students.

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: November 5, 2024

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Robert Adkins, Part Owner, National Helicopter Solutions,

The interview began before the recording started and this information is an aid to documenting those in attendance.

On November 5, 2025, about 1000 central standard time, members of the Operations group interviewed Mr. Robert Adkins, part owner of National Helicopter Solutions (NHS), Conroe, Texas. Members in attendance were:

- Fabian Salazar, Operations Group Chairman, NTSB
- Brian Rutt, Air Safety Investigator, NTSB
- Matthew Rigsby, FAA, AVP-110
- Charles A. Olvis, FAA, AVP-110
- Thom Webster, Robinson Helicopters, Torrence, California

When interviewed by the investigative staff, Mr. Adkins provided the following information.

- The company started in 2014 doing Houston tours. The previous owners got out and "they" took it over in December of last year (2023).
- It was a company in operations before their purchase and Mr. Adkins was not an employee of National Helicopter Solutions (NHS) before purchasing it.
- The company is a Part 91.147 Air Tour operation.

- The company has three pilots and two boarding assistants.
- The company has a Director of Operations, Mr. Jarrell Allen.
- Director of Maintenance is Mr. Jarrell Allen.
- Safety Representative is Frank Faults.
- For facilities the company operates out of the FBO's [Fixed Base Operator] at Ellington Airport (EFD) Houston, Texas and David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport (DWH) Houston, Texas.
- The company has a Letter of Operations (LOA)
- The following documents were not required to operate as a Part 91.147:
 - Operations Specifications
 - General Operations Specifications
 - Training Manual
 - Flight Follower Program
 - Flight Locating. They use Flight Aware for tracking
 - Crew rest document
 - Drug and Alcohol program. Their records are kept at Jones Road (12615 Jones Road.)
 - Emergency Response Plan
 - Pilot Training Records. Whatever is required under part 91.147. Whatever is required under the FAA program. PRD.
 - The company keeps a folder on all pilots.
- When asked when the pilots receives a mission to fly a [air] tour, do they prepare a mission type folder for a flight that may include weight and balance or other required documents, Mr. Adkins stated that "everything that is required per Part 91 is what they do, which includes weight and balance, flight planning, etc."

- The pilots are not required to fill out a risk assessment.
- Pilots do not fuel the helicopter and turn in a receipt at the end of the day.
- The company uses a booking software for Air Tours.
- There is no requirement for the pilot to brief operations personnel prior to a tour flight.
- The accident pilot was employed as a pilot and had no additional duties. She did help with boarding periodically, but her job was as a pilot.
- She was with the company for about two to three months.
- She did submit a resume to the company.
- NHS does own a Part 135 operation.
- The accident pilot was not associated with a Part 135 Operation.
- She received her certificates from a flight school up in the Northwest somewhere, and Mr. Adkin's companies had nothing to do with the accident pilot's initial flight training to be a helicopter pilot.
- He recalled that when she started [with NHS] she had about 1,168 flight hours.
- She was instrument rated.
- He recalled that she never exhibited any flying deficiencies, and stated that she was a good pilot.
- He did not know the number of times that she performed Air Tours for NHS, but had the ability to track the data to find out.
- When asked about the accident flight, he stated that she was taking a group of people on an Air Tour to downtown Houston and back to Ellington (EFD).
- When asked about the downtown loop, he stated that the downtown loop was the route that the pilots took when they did the tour. He recalled that from years of flying air tours, that corner of the city is known by the controllers as the downtown loop.

- When asked about defined routes, he stated that there is a defined route, but Class Bravo airspace can change the route, so sometimes they may need to deviate.
- NHS located to EFD started around a month or so ago.
- The decision to expand to EFD was due to market demand.
- When asked about how the route to the downtown loop was plotted, he stated that it was plotted with the experience of the other pilot who had been flying downtown for many years.
- The Minute Maid Ball Park was part of the tour.
- He did not know if the accident tower was ever brought up in discussion with NHS pilots during any discussions regarding the route from EFD to the downtown loop but added that other pilots not in their company had expressed issues with it.
- The accident pilot was trained with another pilot who had been doing downtown tours for years.
- The pilots are evaluated by flight aware by checking the pilot's routes.
- When asked about any special equipment that the accident helicopter may have had to aid in the Air Tour, he stated that the accident pilot flew with an iPad.
- The helicopter had a Garmin 430 with WAAS, and a GTX 345, and standard equipment.
- The helicopter did not have any type of camera or engine data monitor installed.
- The helicopter was hangered at [Signature Aviation] the William P. Hobby Airport (HOU) Houston, Texas. They sometimes purchased fuel from HOU.
- There was no written agreement to use facilities at EFD and a written lease for storage at HOU.
- He became aware of the accident through a call from one of his partners about the accident and they then ceased all operations. He heard about it from one of their pilots.

Mr. Brain Rutt continued the interview. The following are responses from his questions:

- When asked about any written guidance for the employees, he stated that there is no written guidance, and that it was all on the job training. He added that under Part 91, it was not required but they do train the pilots.
- They do not have a formalized check out process.
- The company has a process for a pilot to notify the leadership if they have a safety concern. The company uses a SHPRD system to report pilot deficiencies or issues.
- The pilot's training took place out of DWH and EFD.

Matthew Rigsby, AVP-110, continued the interview. The following are responses to his questions:

- The pilots get the weights of the passengers through the booking software. They limit the weight of the seats to 280 pounds, not the 300 pounds from the book.
- NHS does not conduct doors-off air tours.
- The policy for new pilots is when they are comfortable with the flight is when they are released to conduct the flights themselves.
- There was not a dedicated pilot to train the new pilots but the pilot [who trained the accident pilot] was doing most of the training.
- The downtown loop was an agreed upon route that the company stated that they would do, but was not set in stone due to the Class B airspace.
- When asked about the route and if there were any altitudes or obstructions identified, he stated that it was up to the pilot to know that under Part 91, for flight planning.
- The other helicopter that was operating for NHS was based out of the north [DWH] and operating in the opposite direction.
- The pilots use standard Part 91 frequencies for communications. The only time that they get anywhere near each other is when they are in the Class B airspace and that is under ATC control.

- He did not ever fly with the accident pilot.
- He is a rated private pilot, helicopter, not fixed wing. He also has an A&P certificate.
- He did not know for sure if the Garmin 430 had terrain awareness or TAWS.
- The pilots have the discretion to file a flight plan under Part 91 rules, and they typically do.

Mr. Charles Olvis continued the interview. The following are responses to his questions:

- He had flown downtown but had not flown the loop.
- He has flown downtown during dusk conditions. He described the scenery as majestic. He recalled that it was difficult to see obstacles through the city lights. He stated that the lights, if they are not bright enough can blend into the lights with the background.
- When asked if any of the pilots of the company ever raised concerns about the accident tower having dimly lit or hard to discern lights he recalled that the accident pilot did not mention the tower but the other pilot mentioned his concern about the tower. He recalled that he stated that he did not like flying in that area because that tower was hard to see and that the lights are dim. He repeated the statement to say that he [the pilot] did not like flying in that area because of the lighting on the tower.
- When asked if there were any other challenges or if it was just the dimly lit lights, he stated that the lights were dimly lit and often broken.
- NHS does not have an official SMS. They did not have a [safety] panel, but they are a small unit that talks every day to the pilots, and they monitor the pilot's routes.
- They have had calls to talk about a lot of things, but he did not recall a specific conference to address the risk mitigation about dimly lit lights or obstructions.
- The Minute Maid Park was part of Downtown and the pilots narrate about it as part of the tour. The pilots use geographical features to define the route, but did not want to speak for the pilots.

Mr. Thom Webster, Robinson Helicopters, continued the interview. The following are responses to his questions:

- He recalled that the pilot who did the training with the accident pilot was the same pilot who took part in the development of the southern tour route, but that it was a collective decision. He added that it was the pilots who had the most weight on the route development.
- The accident pilot had a primary location of EFD for the air tours.
- The pilots [from the north route and south route] hit the same geographic points around downtown.
- He recalled that the accident pilot had conducted the downtown loop at night but did not know the number of times.
- He believed that the accident pilot was using ForeFlight but did not know for sure.
- The lease on the helicopter was something that NHS had initiated and that it was initiated before the EFD program.

The Operations Group Chairman began round two. The following are responses to his questions:

- NHS would not entertain routes that did not contain themselves to the downtown loop, because the schedule is loaded and would not allow for it.
- The downtown loop takes about 30 minutes to complete.

Brian Rutt continued the interview. The following are responses to his questions:

- NHS used flight Aware to keep dispatch data on the helicopters.
- NHS watches in real time to track helicopter routes.
- NHS is able to associate the specific routes to specific pilots.

Matthew Rigsby continued the interview. The following are responses to his questions:

- The pilots communicate with the passengers with a headsets.

- The pilots do not use a set script when talking to the passengers.
- The helicopter did not have TCAS but had ADS-B (in and out). The ADS-B data goes to their iPad.

Charles Olvis continued the interview. The following are responses to his questions:

- The flights are not scheduled, they put up time slots.

Thom Webster had no additional questions.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

MULTIPLE FATALITIES AFTER *

HELICOPTER CRASHED INTO RADIO TOWER * Accident No.: CEN25FA019

IN HOUSTON, TEXAS ON OCTOBER 20, 2024 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: HOLLY HENDERSON, Pilot

National Helicopter Solutions

via videoconference

Monday,

June 23, 2025

APPEARANCES:

FABIAN SALAZAR, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

BRIAN RUTT, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ANDY OLVIS, Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration

DREW COATES, Attorney
(On behalf of Holly Henderson)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. SALAZAR: -- Transportation Safety Board. I am the Operations Group Chairman for the Investigator-In-Charge, and we are working the CEN25FA019 accident investigation that occurred in Houston, Texas.

You're, you were an employee with National Helicopter Solution, and our interview today is just going to address questions about NHS and some questions about the accident pilot, Samantha Grandbouche.

That's who I am. I'm going to introduce everybody else in just a minute, or I'm going to give them the opportunity to introduce themselves.

The purpose of the investigation is to increase safety. It is not to assign fault or blame or liability.

Holly, you can have one representative at your side, and who is that?

MS. HENDERSON: Mr. Drew Coats.

MR. SALAZAR: Okay. And, Drew, I see you there. What firm do you represent?

MR. COATS: Coats Aviation Law.

MR. SALAZAR: All right. Thank you very much. And, Holly, what I'm going to do is, I'm going to record this interview, and I'm going to send the transcript, or send the recording out for, to be transcribed. It'll be part of the public docket. Are you okay with that?

1 MS. HENDERSON: Yes, sir.

2 MR. SALAZAR: All right. Thank you very much. And I
3 appreciate that because if not, I would have had to, you know,
4 write everything down after every answer and that would have drawn
5 this thing out quite a bit. So thank you for that.

6 Drew, for you, just know that you cannot answer the questions
7 for Holly. But if you guys have a need to discuss something
8 online, just let us know. You can tune out, you guys can discuss
9 it, and we can, you know, recontact each other and continue. So
10 if that pops up, just let me know.

11 MR. COATS: I understood. Thank you.

12 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you very much, sir.

13 All righty. And let me just, I'm just reading from a script
14 here. I want to make sure that Holly knows everything that she's
15 entitled to know.

16 The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with
17 determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and
18 promoting transportation safety. It is not a part of the
19 Department of Transportation nor the FAA. We're non-regulatory.

20 And we do have a member of the FAA, and he's going to
21 introduce himself. Why don't we start, Andy, go ahead.

22 MR. OLVIS: All right. Well, good afternoon, or good
23 morning. Holly, thank you, again, for participation in this
24 safety investigation. I really appreciate it.

25 My name is Andy Olvis. I am with AVP-110. AVP-110 is the

1 FAA's safety or accident investigation division. This is purely,
2 we only do safety investigations. We are not part of enforcement.
3 We're not part of the Flight Standard's district office. We have
4 nothing to do with any kind of enforcement actions or any kind of,
5 you know, issues that may come down later on. We're just here to
6 support and assist the NTSB.

7 A little bit of background. I was with the NTSB for 13 years
8 before I moved over to the FAA so I'm quite familiar with Fabian.
9 He and I worked together for a long time, and I understand the
10 process. I want to give you every assurance that everything that
11 we talk about is strictly for a safety investigation only and
12 nothing more.

13 My background primarily is air traffic. I did a lot of air
14 traffic, I did 21 years in the air traffic world, but I also did
15 C-12 time, which is King Air 200, in the Marine Corps. I did
16 21 years in the Marine Corps before the NTSB. And, now, I'm here
17 with the FAA.

18 So, Fabian, thank you very much. I really appreciate it.
19 And, Holly, thank you again.

20 MR. SALAZAR: All right.

21 MS. HENDERSON: Nice to meet you.

22 MR. SALAZAR: Brian.

23 MR. RUTT: Yeah, hi, everyone, Holly. I want to echo what
24 everyone's already said. Thanks for being here today. Thanks for
25 helping us out in this investigation.

1 I'm also at the NTSB, just an investigator assigned to this
2 accident as well. And I really have nothing more to say about
3 what our role is. I think Fabian explained that well. And,
4 again, thank you.

5 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you, Brian. Okay. So we got all,
6 everybody introduced. It says to talk about the party system, but
7 I'm only going to say this.

8 The NTSB has party members, and we do have party members from
9 Robinson Helicopters. Tom Webster is the gentleman's name, and he
10 will not be here. Holly, I don't know if you've ever met Tom, but
11 he's squared-away guy, and he knows everything about R44s.

12 MS. HENDERSON: Okay.

13 MR. SALAZAR: All righty. Holly, do you have any objection
14 with any of the attendees of this interview?

15 MS. HENDERSON: No. I'm here to make a world safer.

16 MR. SALAZAR: Very good. Very good. And thank you for that.
17 You have the right, if there was somebody here that you
18 didn't want to attend, you could ask that they not be here. So
19 everybody's going to stick around. Thank you.

20 As far as the accident investigation process with the NTSB,
21 we start off with factual evidence gathering, and that's, we're at
22 that stage right now with this investigation.

23 Once we gather all of the factual data, the NTSB
24 Investigator-In-Charge will review all of that data and analyze
25 it, which will lead to a final report and a probable cause, okay.

1 So just know that the importance of today's interview is to gather
2 whatever, we don't know what you know, and, hopefully, we'll
3 gather some good information that will help us with the safety
4 investigation, all right.

5 MS. HENDERSON: Sure.

6 MR. SALAZAR: I'm going to, I'm going to say, answer all the
7 questions to the best of your ability, but you're going to see
8 that we're more, we're going to get more into a conversation,
9 hopefully, than just me asking a question and you answering it
10 type of thing.

11 But when we get to those questions when they pop up, a
12 perfectly acceptable answer is, I don't know, I don't recall. If
13 that's the answer, that's fine. If you don't understand a
14 question, just, hey, would you mind repeating it or explaining it
15 to me a little bit different.

16 We're going to try not to make any surprises, you know, I'm
17 going to tell you that we're going to start off with general
18 questions. And we'll move into operations with the NHS, National
19 Helicopter Solutions, and, then, we'll get into some questions
20 about safety and maintenance, maybe air traffic control. And
21 we'll end it probably there.

22 So let me ask you this, do you have any questions before we
23 get started, Holly?

24 MS. HENDERSON: No. I'm just open book and ready to rock and
25 roll.

1 MR. SALAZAR: Okay. Good. I'll pick up the tempo a little
2 bit. I just wanted to make sure you knew everything that you're
3 entitled to know.

4 Drew, do you have any questions?

5 MR. COATS: No, sir. No, I'm good to go.

6 INTERVIEW OF HOLLY HENDERSON

7 BY MR. SALAZAR:

8 Q. Holly, would you please tell us and spell your full name?

9 A. H-o-l-l-y. And my last name is Henderson, H-e-n-d-e-r-s-o-n.

10 Q. Okay. Would you mind telling us, tell us about your aviation
11 history, what got you into flying helicopters and stuff like that?

12 A. Okay. I lived in Hawaii for 6 years, and I was having the
13 time of my life. And I saw my older cousin kind of do the same
14 thing like me, drop out of college and, you know, kind of get
15 confused about what to do in life.

16 I saw him make a great career. And he is, you know, a, has a
17 type rating for the Citation Jet for single pilot. I saw, hey, he
18 did really, really well. I was, like, cool, I think I'm going to
19 do that too.

20 But I tried airplane and it was kind of heavy. I immediately
21 got to a helicopter and was, like, wow, this is great. Mauna Loa
22 Helicopters, I don't even have to leave the state. And, yeah,
23 just a really great community, and I immediately just jumped right
24 in there.

25 And, then, I kind of ran into some money issues with flight

1 school, like everybody does, and I finished up my commercial and
2 CFI in Texas.

3 Q. Okay. How did you get to be aware of NHS?

4 A. Okay. There was a Facebook job ad, August 2023, and I was,
5 like, wow, this is great.

6 My contract with Helicopter Adventure ends at the very end of
7 September. I was planning on moving home anyway. And they really
8 wanted to hire me, but I was about 2 months from being able to
9 work so they intermittently hired a different gentleman, but I was
10 able to work about once a month, in October/November, and a little
11 bit of December. And I was very grateful to just have a job.

12 Q. Very cool. So you found them through Facebook?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Who did -- did you interview with Robert or Jerrol?

15 A. No. This was when it was previously owned by the Walz's.
16 And, then, in December, they announced that I would no longer have
17 a job, and they were selling it to Jerrol and Rob. And I was,
18 like, wow, okay, I guess I'm unemployed for a bit. And, then, I
19 think I got started with them again in January.

20 Q. Okay. All right. Did you fly out of West Texas with the
21 first owners --

22 A. West Houston air --

23 Q. -- or West Houston, yeah?

24 A. Yes, I did.

25 Q. All righty. What certificates and ratings do you have now?

1 A. I have a private, instrument, commercial and CFI, all
2 rotorcraft.

3 Q. Very cool. All right. Let's see. When you went to work, or
4 when NHS was bought out by the, Robert and Jerrol, who did you
5 answer to, was it both of them? Help us understand the roles that
6 the owners of NHS played?

7 A. Yeah. It was talking to Jerrol more on a day-to-day basis,
8 and Rob also, but less with Rob.

9 Q. Okay. And I understand this is a Part-91 Operation, but was
10 anybody assigned an operations officer duty, even by that name or
11 another term?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. All righty. When you started out, did you start out
14 as a loader, or did you start out as a pilot?

15 A. I immediately started as a pilot.

16 Q. Okay. Did you always have a loader or, for a different name,
17 the guy that helped the passengers get into the aircraft?

18 A. Yes. Every single time, we had Mr. Thaddeus most of the
19 time, and he would, you know, enthusiastically greet the
20 customers, talk with them. Then, we would walk to the helicopter
21 usually together. And, then, we would take a photo shoot. And,
22 then, Thaddeus and I would help load. And, then, off we go.

23 Q. Okay. All righty. So when you hired on for the first
24 employers, did they have somebody with air tours experience train
25 you up on the job, or how did you get trained?

1 A. The first time in October, I had nine hundred and, 930 hours,
2 and I had just been working as a tour pilot in South Carolina.
3 And I was extremely intimate with tours and, you know, he and I
4 pretty much flew together, like, four times doing the tour. And
5 he determined that I was safe, and I was like, okay.

6 Q. Okay. So let's rewind back to Hawaii, when you're flying in
7 Hawaii, were you giving tours there as well?

8 A. No. I was strictly a student.

9 Q. Okay. And, I mean, it's a simple enough question, but help
10 us understand, what's involved with giving tours?

11 A. I would say definitely the brief and briefing them about the
12 use of seatbelts, doors, quiet tone of voice, entry/exit, you
13 know, there's the standard brief.

14 And, then, you know, flying a very typical route that is very
15 pre-determined. You don't go off and go off the route. And,
16 then, you have a perfectly timed tour that should exactly wind up
17 in 30 minutes.

18 Q. Right. I mean, because we're talking a business that's
19 making money. And if you're going 35, 40 minutes on a tour,
20 you're costing the company money, right?

21 A. Exactly.

22 Q. Got it. Now, is it -- do you get pay from the company and
23 also tips from the customers or tips accepted?

24 A. Yeah. Tips, very much hit and miss, you know, depending on
25 how much money they're willing to do after a \$500 to \$600 to, you

1 know, over maybe a \$700 deal. But, you know, here and there.

2 Q. Yeah. So I'm just trying to wrap my hands around it. I flew
3 helicopters, you can see by my wall art in the back, but I never
4 did air tours.

5 Some of the my buddies flew air tours, and they told me, you
6 know, if you make it an interesting flight, you talk about the,
7 you know, point out the things outside and you make it interesting
8 and fun for the paying customers, you're more inclined to get a
9 better tip. Would you agree with that?

10 A. One hundred percent. Just run that tour talk, make it
11 exciting, historical, up to date, talk about what's going on in
12 the city.

13 Q. Yeah. Let's see where I'm at with my list of questions.

14 When you were with the current owners, Robert and Jerrol --
15 we're going to move away from the old owners, I don't think I have
16 any more questions about those so anymore questions about NHS
17 involve Robert and Jerrol and Frank. Did they have a safety video
18 that was shown to the paying customers?

19 A. Yes, hundred percent. They would watch that. Hm-hmm.

20 Q. Would you give us the highlights of the safety video as best
21 you could recall?

22 A. Hmm, don't remember.

23 Q. That's fine. And when you, so when you go to the new owners,
24 you were already signed off and already giving tours of the
25 Houston area, correct?

1 A. Correct, and I was the only pilot. They asked me to stay
2 when they transferred ownership. I was like, of course I want to
3 help you, of course I want to be a team member, yeah, I'll stay.

4 Q. Okay. When you guys started out, you were the sole pilot?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. Okay. And, then, who did they bring on next?

7 A. I was the sole pilot from January to July. We had one
8 gentleman kind of try to help out and, then, walked off on the job
9 in June. And I was back to working the only full time. And,
10 then, we got Tyler going in July.

11 Q. Okay. When you were on your own or when you were doing the
12 job by yourself, the only pilot, how long were your days?

13 A. We would only really work the afternoon to evening. And
14 that's exactly how I liked it.

15 Q. Okay. So from about 12:00 to how late at night?

16 A. Maybe 9:30.

17 Q. Okay. Were there ever, was there ever a time when you felt
18 overworked and needed a break?

19 A. No. Thaddeus knew exactly how to work the schedule, and he
20 knew exactly how to make everybody happy and not overworked, and
21 that was great.

22 Q. Okay. Very good. So tell us a little about Thaddeus, was he
23 the loader?

24 A. Yes, and he was the scheduler and booker for January to, I
25 guess, September 30th, yeah.

1 Q. And you guys use software, online software, for that, right?

2 A. Yes, it's PeachPro.

3 Q. Say that again? I was going to ask you what the name of it
4 was.

5 A. It was Peach, Peach software, Peach Number 8.

6 Q. Okay. Did you also do discovery flights?

7 A. Yeah. That was an offering, I think around April once the
8 other helicopter tour brigade showed up.

9 Q. Okay. So help us understand this. NHS, with the
10 Robinson 44s, were they going to get into flight training, or did
11 they offer any type of flight training?

12 A. Zero.

13 Q. Okay. So the discovery flights were just to entertain folks
14 who thought they might want to get into helicopter flying?

15 A. Well, they called our discovery flight, it was a rip in the
16 pattern, and it was passengers only. Nobody piloting except the
17 pilot.

18 Q. I see. All righty. So I think that's all the general
19 questions I have. The next thing I'd like to do is transition
20 into, a little more focused on the air tours themselves,
21 specifically with the Houston area. So let's start off with, let
22 me see if I can get the name right, is it David Wayne Memorial --
23 David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Did you fly out of that airport?

1 A. Yeah, we did. And it definitely made the tour longer.

2 Q. Is that so?

3 A. Hm-hmm.

4 Q. Would you say -- the tour longer, is that longer to get from
5 the airport to Houston where the actual tour focus was?

6 A. Exactly, yeah. You got to fly over suburbia. I think there
7 was a seven-mile leg to get to I-10 which is the Memorial --
8 Addicks Reservoir of our area. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. So let me see if I can do this. I'm going to share my
10 screen, and I can see why you're talking about the added time.
11 Let me know if you can see this Google Earth. Did that pop up,
12 guys?

13 A. Yes, I see it.

14 Q. Okay. Just so, for everybody's orientation, in the -- on the
15 left side you'll see where it says West Houston Airport and, then,
16 you go due north to the David Wayne Hooks Airport, you can see the
17 added length it took in the flight time.

18 And we'll get to the, this is the accident flight, the day of
19 the accident flight, and we'll get to that.

20 But I'm going to zoom in. I don't know if this is going to
21 do us any good, Holly. If it doesn't, let me know. Down here,
22 can you see the little waving hand?

23 A. I see the waving hand.

24 Q. Okay. I'm circling the NRG Stadium, the Astrodome, and the
25 NRG Stadium. Can you just, with that as a reference, would you

1 tell us what you did with the Houston tour when you left the
2 David Hooks Airport?

3 A. Okay. I would fly to Memorial City and, then, I would fly
4 behind the Williams Tower to the Med Center Astrodome. And, then,
5 I fly over the 45 on the highway, around downtown, spit up, spit
6 out over the golf course and, then, head right back over I-10.
7 And, then, once I got to Memorial City, just due north to Hooks.

8 Q. Okay. All righty. When you got back, it was around
9 30 minutes and everybody was happy?

10 A. Yes. If I was going fast enough, it'd be 35, but maybe
11 sometimes 40, just getting it.

12 Q. Got it. It certainly -- you know, I understand that there's
13 going to be, you're operating in Class Bravo airspace, correct?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Air traffic control would have their say sometimes and make
16 adjustments to your flight track which would change the times?

17 A. They knew my voice very, very well, and they knew exactly
18 what I wanted because I had been doing it for 9 months pretty much
19 every day. And only if there was a TFR, they would or would not
20 allow me.

21 Q. Got it. I understand. Now, let's talk about the name,
22 Downtown Loop. Did you use that as a way of identifying what you
23 wanted, wanting to do?

24 A. Maybe once or twice, yeah. Yeah, I would ask for Downtown
25 Loop, yeah.

1 Q. Okay. And the good folks at, you were talking to
2 Hobby Approach, is that who you talked to?

3 A. Negative. We went straight to tower.

4 Q. Okay. And tower, like you said earlier, tower was familiar
5 with what you wanted to do so they, for the most part, they gave
6 you what you asked for?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Excellent. All righty. What was the decision to go from the
9 West Houston airport up to the David Hooks that added time, why
10 did you guys do that?

11 A. I would say having two tour operators doing very similar
12 things at West Houston ended up being an issue. And it seemed
13 like the new operator got us, you know, got their way.

14 Q. Okay. All righty. Do you remember the name of the other
15 operator that was flying out of West Houston?

16 A. I think it was Leading Edge.

17 Q. Okay. So let me make sure I've got all the questions I need
18 to ask about the Hooks Airport. Were there any issues with Hooks
19 that popped up, or was it an easy airport to operate around?

20 A. Very easy. Oh my God, they welcomed us, they let us use the
21 FBO, they were excited to have us, you know, presenting the
22 airport to the general public, they let us use their golf carts.
23 It was really, really nice.

24 Q. Okay. All right. What brought about the decision to fly out
25 of Ellington Field?

1 A. It was not my choice at all. I think they wanted to have a
2 second location, and it seemed like that that was the natural
3 choice. And I just, you know, said okay.

4 Q. But they, they being, was it Jerrol and Robert, to define --

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. Yeah. Those are the guys?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. So they did include you on the discussion about using
9 Ellington Field?

10 A. No. They had been hunting for a second helicopter for a
11 while because they wanted a second location. And they just said,
12 yeah, we really, really want the second location. And that's
13 that.

14 Q. I see. Was there an intent to leave David Hooks and
15 everybody fly out of Ellington, or was it an intent to have two
16 different places to likely increase revenue?

17 A. Two different places to increase revenue.

18 Q. I understand. I get it. Was this about the same time that,
19 that Samantha came on board, or can you help us understand what
20 was going on with NHS at the time when they brought Samantha on
21 board?

22 A. Yeah. They had gotten the second helicopter, and they were
23 securing the LOA for Ellington. Tyler found Samantha because they
24 went to flight school together, and she seemed like a great
25 applicant because she had told me that she had about a thousand

1 hours and seventy in the R44. And that was most qualified
2 candidate that we'd come across.

3 So, you know, everybody else, it would be their first
4 job, period, you know, and that was just not okay. So she seemed
5 like the best fit.

6 Q. Okay. Great. Let me make sure I've got my air tour
7 questions taken care of.

8 Here's a question. Going back to David Hooks, when you flew
9 the downtown portion of the air tour, what was the altitude and
10 air speed that you used to fly past the Houston skyline?

11 A. Nine hundred feet and, I think, I need 200 knots.

12 Q. Okay. And that just gave you the ideal time and altitude to
13 give them literally a pretty picture out of the, out of the doors?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. And on that northern route, were there hazards that
16 you had to negotiate?

17 A. Yes. I would say, you know, just being on the radios when
18 you're getting near West Houston and flying a safe altitude.

19 Q. Okay. And that 900 feet was good for the northern section to
20 stay away from the towers that were out there, power lines and
21 things of that nature?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. Was that something in their, did NHS have a general
24 operations manual or anything like that, basically a set of rules
25 that you guys would have to read and know about?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. Let me just make a note.

3 A. We, typically, stayed under about 900 because when we got or
4 around downtown, you know, they would say a thousand or below,
5 obviously, a thousand or below.

6 Q. Okay. The owners, were they aware of the altitudes, or did
7 they mandate those altitudes, or was it -- was it left for the
8 pilots to decide?

9 A. Left for the pilot to decide, and I thought 900 was
10 acceptable.

11 Q. Would you say it was a good compromise for safety and the
12 mission of providing an air tour?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Tyler came first and, then, he reached out to
15 Samantha, right?

16 A. Yes. He interviewed in June, and it took him about a month
17 to move and, then, he started in July.

18 And, then, I think he found her, I don't know when he found
19 her, but, yeah, he realized that it didn't hold up his network, it
20 was a good idea.

21 Q. Okay. Excellent. So let's talk about Tyler for just a
22 moment. When he came on board, were you charged with training him
23 up and getting prepared for the Houston tours?

24 A. Yes. I did not select him, he was selected by Rob and
25 Jerrol.

1 Q. Okay. When he got hired on, what were your thoughts about
2 him as far as the hours he had and a good match for the company?

3 A. He had a great personality, and he was going to be a great
4 tour pilot. His piloting skills impressed me.

5 Q. Okay. Was he a -- easy person to train to do the job,
6 difficult, how would you describe that?

7 A. He was a great trainee.

8 Q. Okay. What were the things that you looked for because I
9 would -- let me ask this. Did you have to go out and evaluate his
10 flying skills?

11 A. Yes. We did pattern work and autos even before starting
12 training for a tour.

13 Q. All right. And, then, the tour stuff, I would imagine is
14 it's basically knowing what to say, when to say it type of stuff?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. Got it. And, then, when Samantha came on, did you do
17 the same thing, did you evaluate her flying skills and, then, help
18 train her up as far as the, what to say in the air tours?

19 A. Yes. So Tyler was a loader for a bit. And, then, he, you
20 know, I did the same thing with him and her which is he would, you
21 know, we did our airmanship thing to make sure that he's a
22 confident PIC, he knows how to fly and just be in control.

23 And, then, he would sit next to me and figure out what I was
24 saying and my jokes and everything. And, then, I would let him
25 fly, and I would sit right next to him without the duals installed

1 just, you know, seeing how he, like, maybe I would do the tour
2 talk and he would fly. And, then, once he knew the route and what
3 to say, I would just sit there and observe. And, then, like,
4 okay, yeah, you're good to go.

5 Q. Okay. You bring up an interesting point. Were there times
6 where both of you guys flew together, and you had paying customers
7 in the back so you could help basically train him up?

8 A. Hm-hmm. Yes, I did that a lot with Tyler and a lot with Sam.

9 Q. Okay. Excellent. I didn't -- that was something I never
10 gave a thought to so I appreciate that.

11 MR. SALAZAR: What I'm going to do is I'm going to stop at
12 Tyler, and I'm going to hand it over to Brian. And, then, Brian,
13 you can hand it over to Andy when you're done. And once these two
14 gentleman are done asking their questions, if we need to, we'll
15 take a little break. And if not, we'll just continue on with,
16 say, a Round 2 and wrap this up, okay.

17 MS. HENDERSON: Okay.

18 MR. SALAZAR: All right, Brian.

19 MR. RUTT: Cool.

20 BY MR. RUTT:

21 Q. So I want to talk a little bit about, well, I have three
22 things I want to cover, maintenance, ATC, which we touched a
23 little bit on and, then, safety, which we also kind of touched on.

24 Since we're already kind of talking about ATC, let's chat a
25 little bit more about that.

1 So I know you said you talked with the tower when you were
2 flying in the downtown area, is that Houston Tower, Houston Hobby?

3 A. Yes. Yes, right around Williams, which is outside of uptown
4 around the 610 Loop before I enter the Bravo core, I would call up
5 Hobby Tower, and they would say, yeah, go ahead.

6 Q. Okay. How are they to work with?

7 A. Very quick, efficient and clear and easy to understand.

8 Q. Okay. So you mentioned, you referred to it as the Downtown
9 Loop a few times, was there any ever, was there ever any confusion
10 on what the Downtown Loop was between controller and pilot, or was
11 there any, you know, questions on what your intent was when giving
12 an air tour?

13 A. I would say 90 percent of the time, it was the same
14 controllers. But, as you know, ATC sometimes has, what, you know,
15 controllers that aren't there all the time, you know, pop-up
16 controllers. And they would be like, okay, what does that mean.
17 I tell them I'm going to NRG to downtown to Memorial, and I would
18 explicitly say what my loop was.

19 Q. Okay. When you entered that airspace from the south, was it
20 the same, same kind of procedure on what the request was and,
21 obviously, you're talking to Hobby Tower again, but were there any
22 differences with the air tour coming from Ellington versus coming
23 Hooks?

24 A. I, personally, never gave a tour from Ellington.

25 Q. Okay. Gotcha. And, then, any other, any concerns with pilot

1 controller interactions while flying in the downtown area that you
2 either observed personally or had heard of from a co-worker?

3 A. Negative. No. No, I had a great experience with Hobby, and
4 I always have the Houston helicopter frequency up as well so I
5 could make additional Houston traffic calls and stay really safe.

6 Q. Okay. Great. Anything else you want to add on ATC-related
7 items before I move onto maintenance?

8 A. (No audible response.)

9 Q. Good. Okay. So talking about maintenance, this is with NHS
10 maintenance, what was your perception of their maintenance program
11 with the helicopters, quality of maintenance, etcetera?

12 A. Quality of maintenance, five stars. They were amazing,
13 really well-tuned helicopters.

14 Q. Great. Yeah, I had heard that also. And, then, so how were
15 maintenance, how was it handled on the helicopters, what location
16 was maintenance performed at, if it varied, what locations?

17 A. (indiscernible) spend 99 percent of the time up at Conroe
18 just for regular scheduled maintenance intervals. And, you know,
19 if you happened to have a question or something, he would pop down
20 to West Houston or Hooks. I don't remember squawking anything at
21 Hooks. But, yeah, just pop on down and take a look.

22 Q. Gotcha. And, then, I guess, how -- if or when you did have a
23 squawk or any other maintenance-related item, who would you talk
24 to?

25 A. Exclusively Jerrol.

1 Q. Jerrol, got it. Okay. And, then, did he handle coordinating
2 everything from there, or did it require any follow up from you?

3 A. No. He would immediately show up, no -- you know, he was
4 very on it.

5 Q. All right. Did you ever have any maintenance-related
6 concerns with any of the helicopters at NHS?

7 A. No.

8 Q. That's good. Anything, Holly, you want to add on maintenance
9 before I move on?

10 A. No. Everything was well run.

11 Q. Understood. All right. Let's talk about safety. I got a
12 few questions here about safety. Some of this may have already
13 been addressed, but we'll go through the questions I have.

14 What were your perceptions of safety culture at NHS?

15 A. I would definitely say that it was the pilot's decision if it
16 was safe or not. Nobody ever, ever pressured anybody about
17 weather or, you know, if you were tired and, you know, said, hey,
18 I really just want to work the afternoons. No big deal. It was
19 really, almost a make-your-own schedule kind of place, and I
20 really enjoyed that.

21 Q. Okay. Do you ever -- had you ever expressed any
22 safety-related concerns to, and to who would you express those to?

23 A. I didn't have any safety concerns. No.

24 Q. Okay. If you did have a concern, do you know who you would
25 bring that up with or who, what channels you would go through?

1 A. I would probably talk to Jerrol and Rob. And if it was a
2 pilot kind of question, ask one of my pilot friends.

3 Q. Gotcha. Did NHS ever hold any safety meetings or company
4 briefings, after action type things, any formal safety events?

5 A. No, but we did get together in the hangar and do lunches and,
6 you know, talk shop and be together as a team.

7 Q. Yeah. That's great. I think sometimes those are more
8 productive. They can be sometimes informal briefings.

9 And, then, safety manager or accountable representative with
10 the company, was there a person identified at the company as that
11 role?

12 A. Nobody.

13 Q. Okay. So, like you said, any safety-related thing would go
14 just to managers, Jerrol or -- who was the other one?

15 A. Rob.

16 Q. Rob, got it.

17 A. Yeah, I would say risk management was on the pilot. And my
18 training style was to make the trainee feel capable, responsible,
19 competent. I had never scare tactic anybody.

20 Q. Okay. During training flights, what were talks of safety or
21 hazards related to just the operation in the airspace, operations
22 giving air tours, carrying passengers, things like that, what
23 things in training were discussed?

24 A. Yes, definitely collision avoidance with obviously giant
25 buildings and having the down draft/up drafts associated with

1 those.

2 There was a particular pole right by the aquarium of downtown
3 that's about 700 feet, and it's like, hey, really watch out for
4 that one because if you're lower than 900, that's a -- and that
5 one's kind of hard to see. It's like, you know, a tiny little
6 light.

7 And, yeah, just obviously keeping your head out and
8 80 percent outside, knowing how to work your radios, being quick.

9 Q. Okay. Was there any written safety documentation or, I
10 guess, guidance maybe, a safety-management system even, even if
11 informal, was there any sort of written safety policies or
12 anything like that?

13 A. Negative. The only kind of, like, book I can think of would
14 be the single pilot 135 book that only I had. And that had, you
15 know, every rule period in there, but we never got certified so,
16 no, we didn't have a book or SMS system.

17 Q. Gotcha. Anything else you want to add related to safety?

18 A. Yeah. That was really the only things that I -- you know,
19 obviously, the avoidance with the tower around the aquarium,
20 staying over the highways. I told her, you know, the route from
21 Ellington, the most direct route is over 45.

22 Q. Hm-hmm.

23 A. It's just, that's the most direct route.

24 Q. Okay. And 45, that's the --

25 MR. SALAZAR: Interstate 45.

1 MR. RUTT: -- is that the east/west?

2 MR. SALAZAR: It's north and south.

3 MR. RUTT: Okay. North/south.

4 MR. SALAZAR: I'll tell you what, we're going to come back to
5 that, to the route from Ellington to downtown, Holly.

6 MS. HENDERSON: Hm-hmm.

7 MR. SALAZAR: So let's hold off or let's table that
8 discussion for right now.

9 MS. HENDERSON: Yeah.

10 MR. RUTT: I actually, that's all I have for my questions. I
11 think we can hand it over to Andy now if you want to take it over.

12 MR. OLVIS: All right. Well, thanks, Brian. I appreciate
13 it. Holly, thank you again. I just have a couple of real brief
14 questions. Brian and Fabian seemed to have gotten a lot of mine
15 already.

16 BY MR. OLVIS:

17 Q. But where did the turn, the Downtown Loop, come from, do you
18 recall?

19 A. No. It was probably more clear than H-Town Express, if you
20 were to say that one, you're like, nobody knows what that is.

21 Q. Right. So it's more of a colloquial term that, it was there
22 when you got there?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. Did any other operators use that term, or was that
25 strictly NHS?

1 A. We were the only downtown tour people every single day. So
2 it was just us that used it.

3 Q. Okay. Great. Did you all have, ever have any face-to-face
4 discussions with Houston Hobby air traffic personnel regarding
5 your operations and how you operated and what was expected, things
6 like that?

7 A. No. I tried to get them a gift card a lot, but, you know,
8 they don't accept gifts or face-to-face interactions. Yeah. I
9 never ever got to shake hands with them or meet them.

10 Q. That's why a pizza is always a great thing, you know, just
11 sending it, they can't turn it away.

12 A. Hm-hmm.

13 Q. Okay. And just to, so I just want to be clear then. At no
14 time when you were at NHS did the company, or were you aware of
15 any company discussions that you weren't necessarily a part of
16 with air traffic to kind of outline that route?

17 I guess I'm just trying to, I want to delineate and make sure
18 that the route was strictly something that NHS came up with and
19 that ATC, specifically Houston Hobby, was comfortable with.

20 A. Yes. They knew the route from West Houston and from Hooks
21 intimately well, and I -- they were not briefed on Ellington's
22 route.

23 Q. They were not?

24 A. Not. I assume that, you know, she just started doing them,
25 and they were like, okay, this is what you want, okay.

1 MR. OLVIS: Okay. And, then, lastly, and Fabian, we may want
2 to table this last question I have. I was just going to ask about
3 lighting specifically.

4 MR. SALAZAR: Yeah, hold off on it.

5 MR. OLVIS: Yeah. We'll just hold off on that. Thank you.
6 That's probably going to get caught up on the Ellington questions
7 then.

8 MR. SALAZAR: Yeah.

9 MR. OLVIS: Okay. So, Fabian, I think that's going to cover
10 everything I have about the AT -- oh, actually, I had one more
11 quick question.

12 Holly, have you ever had in your experience when you were
13 providing air tours, did ATC ever provide you with any kind of
14 safety alert or safety advisory regarding any kind of obstructions
15 or any kind of towers, things like that?

16 MS. HENDERSON: Negative.

17 MR. OLVIS: Okay. Fabian, that's all I got.

18 MR. SALAZAR: All right. Thank you. We've been at this for
19 45 minutes. Does anybody need to take a break?

20 MS. HENDERSON: No.

21 MR. SALAZAR: All right. So how about we go through Round 2
22 and once we're done with Round 2, I'm sure we'll be done with all
23 the interview questions. Holly, are you okay with that?

24 MS. HENDERSON: Yes.

25 MR. SALAZAR: So we're going to get into discussions about

1 Samantha and the route that she flew, and we know this. She had a
2 horrible accident, hit a tower, everybody was fatality injured.

3 And, Holly, I know you at least had a working friendship with
4 her so on behalf of the FAA and the NTSB, we'd like to extend our
5 condolences. We should have done that at the very beginning.

6 MS. HENDERSON: Thank you. Yeah, it's been an extreme
7 hardship. I'm very lucky to have a job.

8 MR. SALAZAR: Well, I can't imagine the nightmare that you've
9 dealt with so forgive us for that. And these questions aren't
10 going to get too graphical or anything, but if there's a time that
11 you need a 5-minute break, just let us know, okay.

12 MS. HENDERSON: Okay.

13 BY MR. SALAZAR:

14 Q. So it might be easier if you just -- we're going to go
15 through, try another narrative and that is, tell us from the
16 beginning of the discussions about flying out of Ellington and
17 Samantha being the pilot out of there. Tell, help us understand
18 NHS's decision to put her down in Ellington Field and what
19 preparations were made prior to releasing her for the tours.

20 A. Okay. I had an apartment lease off Briar Forest and that was
21 about 15 minutes from West Houston, and I was -- you don't know,
22 it's \$3,000 to break an apartment lease. And I was like, darn,
23 anybody want to break my apartment lease for me. And they're
24 like, no. So I'm like, I get it.

25 And Tyler enjoyed the north. He had an RV, and it was good

1 for him to be up next to Hooks. And that just kind of worked out
2 that him and I were to stay up north. And the only person left
3 was Samantha, and she was to run her own post from the south.

4 Q. Okay. And she was okay with that when she hired on, she was
5 good with that?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Tell us a little bit about the development of the route from
10 Ellington Field to Houston?

11 A. We all talked about it, and I talked to my other Houston
12 pilot friends. And they, yeah, everybody just determined that
13 direct following 45 was the quickest way for Runway 13 there at
14 Hobby.

15 But if it was 0422, ATC does not want you anywhere near the
16 runway or even the final approach fix. And you're going to have
17 to do as they say if it's a 0422 there.

18 MR. SALAZAR: Okay. So let's do this for myself and
19 everybody else. I'm going to share my screen one more time. And,
20 Brian, let me know when you guys can see that.

21 MR. RUTT: Got it.

22 MR. SALAZAR: Okay.

23 BY MR. SALAZAR:

24 Q. So zooming in a little bit, we got Ellington Field and off to
25 the left is I-45, my hand is going up it. And there is Hobby. So

1 what Hobby was saying when this runway was in, was active, they
2 didn't want you anywhere around it?

3 A. Yes. Yes, and I hadn't experienced that because I was given
4 25 hours (indiscernible) cross country to get my hours up, and I
5 experienced that myself which was they don't want you anywhere
6 near the final approach fix of 0422.

7 Q. Got it. And there were multiple examples of this route. So
8 let me just, let me just show you an example of the route.

9 Departing Ellington Field, proceeding north, there's a gentle
10 turn to the left. And most of, almost all of the flights flew
11 over -- is it that bridge? Yeah, it's that bridge that goes over
12 the Houston ship channel. I don't know if that was part of the
13 tour.

14 Then, it would go to the, basically, the Minute Maid Park and
15 -- follow the freeway past the Toyota Center. You got the Houston
16 Astro's home field, Toyota Center is the Rockets, I understand.
17 Continuing on towards Hermann Park and the Houston Zoo. And,
18 then, onto the NRG -- NRG Stadium and the Astrodome. And, then,
19 basically, a wide arc around Houston Hobby back to Ellington.
20 Holly, did you have any part in helping develop that route?

21 A. No, I did not. And the only discussion we had was that, I
22 think the uptown was going to have to get cut out of the H-Town
23 Express from Ellington because of that extra time.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. But that was literally it. When I went to Thailand on my

1 family vacation, I noticed some of her routes, they were changing.
2 And I was like, hmm, she's not following the highway. You know, I
3 would just look --

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. -- at FlightAware just to look, and I was like, that's
6 interesting. But I didn't text her about it, I didn't, you know,
7 didn't text Tyler about it. Tyler and Sam were, like, yeah, we
8 got this, no biggie. And I was like, okay, well, you all seem
9 like you got it.

10 Q. Yeah. Did Tyler help her out a little bit on figuring out
11 the nuances?

12 A. Yes. Hm-hmm. And I think Tyler did give additional training
13 once I left and, yeah, helped her out.

14 Q. Okay. All right. So let's zoom in a little bit. For
15 reference, there's the Minute Maid Park and the accident site is
16 right in this field right here. You can actually see the tower.
17 Holly, were you, did you have any discussions with anybody, Tyler,
18 Samantha, the owners, about the, any of the hazards on this
19 southern route?

20 A. Before they even got the LOA and the helicopter, Jerrol and I
21 and Tyler, we all discussed the route. And we all looked at I-45
22 and said, yeah, that's the most direct route.

23 I never, ever, ever briefed anybody on coming from the east
24 because it's dark. That's not the most iconic view, you know, the
25 most iconic view is coming from the west of downtown.

1 Q. Is that so?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Do you recall anybody having any type of conversation about
4 that very specific tower?

5 A. No. No, I always followed I-45 when I did my downtown tours.
6 And I knew the towers were there, but I felt a safe comfortable
7 distance from them.

8 Q. Okay. I may have asked this question, I don't remember, did
9 Tyler actually perform some of the tours from the south?

10 A. I do not know.

11 Q. Okay. All right. But it's not safe to assume that everyone
12 of the ADS-B tracks that show the southern route were flown by
13 Samantha, would you agree with that? There's a possibility that
14 Tyler could have flown some of those?

15 A. Possibility, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. All righty.

17 A. Especially if they were experimenting while I was gone of
18 what works, and they were, like, timing it.

19 Q. Uh-huh. So let me get this straight. You were gone to
20 Thailand for a period of time while they were developing the
21 southern route?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Okay. All righty. And it sounded to me like it was -- well,
24 that's too many assumptions, and I don't want to, I don't want to
25 go down that track. So let's just deal with facts.

1 You had a lease that you didn't want to break and spend three
2 thousand bucks. Tyler, being an outdoorsman, was more inclined to
3 stay in the northern route because of the, just the opportunities
4 he had up there?

5 A. Yeah. He liked his, the trees and his RV.

6 Q. Lake Livingston and fun things like that?

7 A. Hm-hmm.

8 Q. Yeah, I get it. I get it. All right. Samantha had no
9 issues with, with operating in the south?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. All righty. Let me get back to my paper. I'm going to stop
12 sharing the screen. Okay. I think, well, I'm done with -- oh,
13 November 881 Kilo Echo, the accident helicopter, when you -- you
14 flew in that aircraft, right?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. When you flew in it, I understand it had a Garmin 760
17 GPS, did you ever operate that, that instrument?

18 A. I actually had it 90 percent of the time turned off. I
19 didn't like the brightness, and I'm just used to using by
20 eyeballs. And, yeah, just had it off.

21 Q. Got it. Did it have an alerting system to it that constantly
22 went off?

23 A. No. I think it had, like, traffic because it had ADS-B in,
24 but, no, it didn't beep.

25 Q. What was the helicopter that was operating up north?

1 A. That was the Juliette Delta, something like that.

2 Q. Do you know what, do you recall the full registration number?

3 A. Let me get my log book.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. That was 233 Juliette Delta.

6 Q. Got it. Were they pretty close to, I mean, they're R44s,
7 right, but for instrumentation wise, were they pretty well
8 matched?

9 A. I think 233 Juliette Delta had a -- you know, had two radios
10 and a Garmin, I think, 430. And, then, the accident helicopter
11 was a bit more sophisticated with the newness of the radios and
12 the touchscreen Garmin.

13 Q. Okay. Any complaints about either one?

14 A. No. No, they were both, spin like a top, perfect.

15 Q. And I have to, I have to let you know that both you and Tyler
16 were very complimentary towards the maintenance, and we, that was
17 recognized by us. That's important.

18 The last thing I want to ask you, I spoke to Samantha's
19 husband, and he had mentioned that Sam told him that you had a,
20 you, Holly, had a, some sort of disagreement with NHS and were
21 going to, he said that you were going to be fired. Is there any
22 truth to that and, if there is, can you enlighten us on what the
23 issue was?

24 A. No. Not at all. I don't think my job was in danger at all.
25 We had a little tiff about the radio in the new helicopter, the

1 Kilo Echo, and how to listen to two frequencies at once because it
2 was set up that you can only listen to one radio at a time. And,
3 you know, as a busy airspace, you need to listen to two at the
4 same time. And I just went to the Garmin guru and asked how to do
5 that. And I got it figured out. And that was that.

6 Q. Okay. How about this, you mentioned, you gave five stars to
7 the maintenance?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. How many stars would you give to NHS?

10 A. As an operator, they were fair with me, and they let me do
11 what I thought was safe. And I was also give it a five star.

12 The pay, the pay is the only thing I'd like to, you know,
13 maybe drop back a bit. I was able to live comfortably, but, you
14 know, you know. It's always nice to get paid more.

15 MR. SALAZAR: Exactly. And that takes me to the end of my
16 questions. So I'm going to pass it on to Brian.

17 MR. RUTT: I only have one follow up with management at NHS.

18 BY MR. RUTT:

19 Q. Did you ever feel any, basically, did you feel comfortable
20 going to anyone in management with any concerns you have,
21 especially talking about this, this radio issue where it could be
22 deemed as flight safety issue. You described it as a tiff.

23 I guess I'm wondering if you can describe what the
24 disagreement was a little bit more in detail. And, then, if it
25 was -- like, if you were apprehensive going towards management

1 with any of these issues that may have come up?

2 A. Hmm. No, I wasn't apprehensive. The day we picked it up, we
3 were dropping off 233 Juliette Delta, and the reason why I didn't
4 go to maintenance to get it solved is because they were, they were
5 already working on 233 Juliette Delta to get the hundred hour
6 going. And I had already said goodbye.

7 And I know that they were working really hard, and I just
8 didn't want to bother them because I know that they were already
9 working. And it's like, why call and disrupt their workflow.

10 Q. Was the disagreement with you going straight to Garmin to
11 sort out this issue, or, I guess, I'm still a little, I don't
12 quite understand what, the disagreement between you and Jerrol.

13 A. Yeah, you know, there was a nice Garmin dealer at Hooks, and
14 I just asked for their expertise, and that is it.

15 Q. Okay. And that --

16 A. You know, just a really nice general aviation airport where
17 everybody's super neighborly and wants to help each other. I was
18 just, I just asked them for help because I knew that they were
19 very busy doing the hundred hour.

20 Q. How was that received by management, specifically it sounds
21 like -- was Jerrol the one that you had the disagreement with?

22 A. Yeah. I think it's just because, you know, if anybody
23 touches the helicopter obviously, you know, for the insurance or
24 something has to be, you know, some sort of stipulation.

25 They got it figured out without repairing anything. It was

1 just advice.

2 MR. RUTT: Okay. That sounds good. I don't think I have any
3 other follow-up questions except I do want to say thank you,
4 Holly. I can't imagine the past, well, few months that you've had
5 to navigate through and all the different changes and things that
6 may have come after this accident happened, not to mention the
7 grieving process, whatever that looks like.

8 So I do want to thank you for your time today and your
9 willingness to share with us what you know.

10 MS. HENDERSON: Yeah. And I think there's one other tidbit
11 I'd like to add is that Tyler flew in ForeFlight the first couple
12 of weeks he started. And I said, yeah, sure, go ahead, you know,
13 get used to the airspace.

14 And, then, he didn't fly with his iPad anymore because he
15 realized, okay, this is just extra clunky so I don't need it
16 anymore. And I said, good, fine, you know, that's great.

17 And, you know, I think he said the same thing to Sam which
18 is, yeah, you can fly with your iPad for a little bit, you know,
19 get used to where the airspace begins and ends and, then, you're
20 eventually not going to need it because you're doing the same
21 thing every single day. So that was kind of the attitude we had
22 towards her using the iPad.

23 MR. RUTT: Okay. That's all I have. Andy.

24 MR. SALAZAR: All right.

25 MR. OLVIS: Okay. Great. Thank you so much, Brian. Holly,

1 just a couple of real brief questions.

2 BY MR. OLVIS:

3 Q. I know you said you never flew any tours out of Ellington,
4 but did you ever fly that route at all just, like, on a training
5 or any kind of test flight or anything like that out of Ellington?

6 A. So we did have 1.8 flight of us just flying around the area,
7 not doing the route, but just being, like, yeah, we can cut off
8 the Great Wolf Lodge, no need for that; or, yeah, this is how
9 we're going to do the Texas Monument one, okay.

10 And, then, we did not do the downtown route but, you know, we
11 just briefed it. But, you know, we just kind of flew around and
12 looked at stuff to point out.

13 Q. Okay. Did any of those flights happen at night?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. Did you have -- I mean, obviously, you flew for NHS
16 for quite a while, you had occasion to fly a lot of tours at
17 night, is that correct?

18 A. Yeah. We flew a lot of night tours.

19 Q. Can you describe specifically as you're going towards the
20 city, you had mentioned that the iconic view was from the west,
21 but can you describe to me what the lighting is like at night and
22 how difficult it is to discern certain, you know, maybe antennas
23 or other hazards as you're flying with all the light pollution?

24 A. I never had an issue, you know, just no bright screens in the
25 cockpit, period. I didn't, I didn't need my screens on.

1 Q. Okay. So you just kept all your lights turned down low and,
2 then, you were -- that helped your night vision and things like
3 that, correct?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Would you also attribute some of that to just being, you
6 know, familiar, one, with the route, and, two, with where the
7 obstructions were on the flight or adjacent to the route, is that
8 correct?

9 A. Very much so. Hm-hmm.

10 MR. OLVIS: And that's all I've got, Fabian.

11 MR. SALAZAR: All right. Well, I've got on alibi --

12 MR. OLVIS: It was easy.

13 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you very much, Andy. I got one alibi
14 question. Were paying passengers allowed to fly in the front
15 seat?

16 MS. HENDERSON: If they wanted to but most of the time, it
17 was two passengers in the back.

18 MR. SALAZAR: Okay. All right. That's it. So I'm going to
19 stop the recording.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

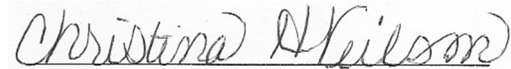
IN THE MATTER OF: MULTIPLE FATALITIES AFTER HELICOPTER
 CRASHED INTO RADIO TOWER IN HOUSTON,
 TEXAS ON OCTOBER 20, 2024
 Interview of Holly Henderson

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN25FA019

PLACE: via videoconference

DATE: June 23, 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.



Christina H. Neilson
Transcriber

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: December 11, 2024

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Noe Gonzelez / Employee / Signature Aviation, William P. Hobby
Airport (HOU) Airport, Houston, Texas

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Gonzalez, he reported the following:

- N881KE was hangered in a community hangar at their fixed base operations (FBO) at HOU.
- The helicopter did not receive maintenance from Signature Aviation at HOU.
- The helicopter was there for a short time that ended when the helicopter was involved in the accident.
- The operator did not usually purchase fuel at HOU but would depart HOU for Ellington Airport (EFD) Houston, Texas, conduct tours from there and then return to HOU at the end of the day.
- The helicopter was usually fueled at EFD.
- He worked with Robert Adkins for the contract to use the hangar at HOU.

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Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: June 24, 2025

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Matthew Daugherty

In a TEAMS interview with Mr. Daugherty, he provided the following:

- He was employed by Signature Aviation, Ellington Field, Houston, Texas.
- A broker came in and was looking for space for a helicopter tour company.
- He stated that they were full and did not have hangar space.
- The helicopter started showing up one day to conduct tours, about two months later.
- He did not know if the NHS helicopter and the broker were from the same company.
- They did not have a deal, like a monthly deal for funds. The pilot, and concierge would just show up like any other aircraft.
- They had a handling fee for transient aircraft and charged them for the individual fuel purchases. They would buy fuel at every landing.
- At the first flight, they would buy enough fuel to waive the handling fee.
- They (pilot and concierge) would not use any other services other than the ramp space and purchasing fuel.

- he had no complaints about the operation.
- There was a younger guy who would meet the passengers and take them out to the female who would be at the helicopter.
- The line guys out on the ramp would have them park in a specific spot because they were coming and going.
- The passengers would walk into the FBO and the FBO employees would point them at the guy (concierge).
- Signature had a video hook up in the upstairs conference room, but they never used that room for showing the safety video.
- They did not have any office space at the FBO.
- He did not speak to any of the three part-owners of NHS. The guy that he spoke with was a third-party real estate broker. He stated that it might not even have been for the same helicopter company but speculated that it was awfully convenient that NHS showed up two months later and started operating from the FBO.
- The broker was asking for space for a Robinson helicopter.
- He asked the broker questions like:
 - Do you have wheels?
 - Are you moving it, or are we moving it?
 - Questions regarding operational logistics.
- He asked about lobby space or “through space” for helicopter tours.
- They had a lot of space on the flight line and the helicopter operations was no big deal.
- He and Noe, from Signature at HOU, are colleagues and speak all the time.
- Prior to the accident, he did not have any conversations with Noe about the helicopter. He didn’t know it was based there.

- He only had small talk conversations with the pilot and the concierge, like hello as he passed by, and good morning. There was a short period of time that they operated from EFD, and he had not had the opportunity to spend time with them.
- He did not receive any noise complaints from the helicopters.
- He recalled that they would show up, go out on a few flights, then leave. He recalled that they also had a short \$25.00 flight, where they would go up, circle the airport and land.
- He learned about the accident via text messages. With the internet, twitter, ADS-B and things like that, it wasn't long before he realized that it was the same helicopter that had been flying out of the FBO.
- He followed their company protocol for an accident and conducted a fuel check. He recalled that they had pumped about 1,000 gallons for about 50 to 75 aircraft and there were no issues.
- He alerted the flights schools and was told that they were fine.
- He reported that they did a check of their fuel delivery system and found no anomalies. They went from the tank, the filters and the truck.
- In conclusion, he stated that he didn't see anything with the operations that drew his attention one way or the other.
- He was not aware of any Signature employees going on a tour with NHS.

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Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: December 9, 2024

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Terry Porter, Owner, Porter Equipment Holdings LLC and N881KE

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Porter, he reported the following:

- He purchased the accident helicopter about two years ago, from Express Helicopters, Conroe, Texas, with the intent of flying it for personal use.
- He indicated that the person who owns Express Helicopters was the same person who owns National Helicopters Solutions (NHS) Robert Adkins.
- Express Helicopters is a Robinson certified service center.
- Express Helicopters performed the maintenance on the helicopter, and they had it in the shop for about two and a half weeks. He "busted a valve" on the number three-cylinder head and replaced it while it was at their home hangar. He was told by the mechanic at Express Helicopters to put about five to ten hours on the helicopter and then bring it to Express Helicopters.
- While at Express Helicopters, he had other maintenance done to it, like installing an accessories bar and replacing the windscreens.
- He and his wife would travel to the shop occasionally to see the progress on the helicopter.
- While his helicopter was in the Express Helicopters shop, Mr. Adkins approached him about leasing the helicopter.

- Mr. Porter initially agreed to the idea of leasing the helicopter but wanted it back by the end of October.
- Mr. Adkins said that he would get him a lease agreement.
- A gentleman named Frank or Frankie Fults emailed him a contract. The value of the helicopter was below what he had paid for the helicopter, so he refused to sign the contract. The value was noted as \$325,000.00 or \$350,000.00, which was considerably lower than the price he had paid Express Helicopters for the helicopter.
- He was receiving bills for the work, so he wanted to go look at the progress that was made to the helicopter.
- He travelled to the shop and discovered that his helicopter was not there. There was a gray one that was being used for the air tour business and a white one that was being worked on.
- He asked Mr. Jerrell Allen where his helicopter was and was told that the helicopter was at Hooks Airport [David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport (DWH) Houston, Texas.]
- He was told that the helicopter was already out "touring," and Mr. Porter reminded them that they didn't have a signed contract. He was told that "they were taking care of it." Mr. Porter stated that he was taking their word at "face value," as he was new to this activity.
- He stated that the next thing he knew, the helicopter was gone.
- He received a text asking for all the records for the helicopter, not just the maintenance records. He took all the records to Mr. Adkins and that was the last time that he spoke with anyone from NHS.
- It was explained to Mr. Porter by Mr. Adkins that he wanted to change the name on the invoices to the air tour company. They were filing for bankruptcy, and it would separate it from Express Helicopters.
- Mr. Porter told Mr. Adkins that he did not want the name changed as he believed that it was illegal.
- Mr. Porter stated that he had an invoice that he wanted to pay that was about \$7,000.00, but NHS did not want the money.

- He stated that he met Tyler Olson, the pilot who witnessed the accident.
- He thought that Mr. Jerrell was the mechanic at Express Helicopters and did not know if Mr. Jarrell was a part-owner of NHS.
- He did not do his flight training with NHS or Express Helicopters.
- The helicopter was equipped with a Garmin 760, a Garmin 430, a Garmin GDL 52, and ForeFlight.
- He opined that the Garmin 760 was likely turned off during the time of the accident because it normally gives several warnings through the four headsets.

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: November 26, 2024

Subject: CEN25FA019 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Tyler Perez /Employee / National Helicopter Solutions

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Perez, he reported the following:

- He was a boarder, with “growth opportunity” to become a pilot. He used an iPad to provide safety briefing video to the passengers. He would brief them and answer any questions. He would also take photographs of the passengers.
- The pilot would get the helicopter ready to go.
- He would also escort the passengers to the helicopter, secure the seat belts, close the doors and give the pilot the thumbs up. He would then do a walk around to make sure things were safe. Give the thumbs up and then they would be on their way.
- He would track them on ForeFlight, (ADS-B). When they came back, he would see that they were on final [approach], he would walk out and make sure the area was clear. After the landing, the pilot would go to idle and he would open the doors,
- He said that one thing they would tell the passengers was to not worry about doing anything except making sure that the seat belts were buckled. They would do the rest.
- He would open the doors and stand on the tail rotor side to ensure the passengers did not walk to the tail rotor. He would get one passenger out and walk that person to the front of the helicopter and then go get the next person out of the helicopter.

- Once everyone was out and at the front of the helicopter, they might take another photograph, then he would walk them away from the helicopter while the pilot would shut down the helicopter.
- He would meet the pilot at HOU, and they would fly the helicopter to EFD. Every evening, they would take the helicopter back to HOU.
- His growth opportunity included operating the helicopter from HOU to EFD every day. This was the only time that he was allowed to operate the helicopter, and he needed to be with one of NHS's certified pilots.
- The growth opportunity did include the hope of becoming one of the tour pilots. He explained that the understanding was that there was growth potential for the company and that the boarder would already know the operation and the helicopter, and it would be a smoother transition for the next newer pilot to be a former boarder.
- He hired on around one week before the accident. His official start day was on October 8th or 9th and the first day of the job was on the 11th or 12th.
- His training was only for loading and that was done by the accident pilot. She also told him about the routes because they had a lot of down time.
- He recalled that she got down to Houston about one or two weeks before him, and she was doing a lot of training with Tyler Olsen and Holly [Henderson]. He never met Holly. He admitted that he was not "in the loop" with her training.
- He said that they would come down and practice setting up routes from EFD.
- He agreed that the accident pilot worked with Tyler Olsen and Holly Henderson on route development.
- He did not ever go on the downtown loop route, but he was only there for a short time.
- After the flight departed on the air tour, he would wait in the crew lounge or out front of Signature Fixed Base Operation (FBO).
- He recalled that the helicopter was in great shape and that Jerrel (Express Helicopters, Conroe, Texas) was top tier.

- He recalled that the R-44 Raven II had a different start procedure than what he was used to.
- He recalled that there was a Garmin 760 attached to the accessory bar, but the ForeFlight on their iPad was the main source of navigation equipment. They did not use the Garmin 760.
- He did have a photograph of the inside of the accident helicopter and would provide them for the investigation.
- He believed that NHS was shutting down the Air Tour business.
- He interviewed with Jerrell (Allen) and he didn't speak much with Robert (Adkins). He thought that Jerrell and his wife were nice and genuine people.
- He thought that it (the job) was a super great gig, that was promising.
- When asked about the accident pilot's comments on the downtown loop, he stated that she didn't have comments on the route specifically but was more concerned with the time management and HOU airspace and getting comfortable with it all.
- He said that they were guaranteed two days off per week and that it was Tuesday and Wednesday.
- For the time that he was there, it was always just he and the accident pilot supporting the air tours.
- He worked the week prior to the accident. He was the loader on the day of the accident.
- On that day there were about three and the accident flight might have been a fourth flight. He would check the schedule to make sure. He could not access the schedule.
- When he took photographs of the passengers, he more often used their phone. For the accident flight, he used one of their phones.
- He worked at Glacier Aviation while going through flight training.
- He got his private, instrument and commercial certificates and ratings.

- He thought that the accident pilot was a great instructor that was super knowledgeable and an amazing pilot.