



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

June 19, 2018

Attachment 22 – Duty Pilot and Previous Captain Interview Summaries

OPERATIONAL FACTORS/HUMAN PERFORMANCE

DCA17IA148

Interviewee: Captain Leslie James Dolphin

Date: August 31, 2017

Location: via Teleconference

Time: 1304 EDT

Via Telephone: Shawn Etcher, Sathya Silva – NTSB; Christy Helgeson – FAA; Gordon Heieis - ACPA

Captain Dolphin waived representation.

During the interview Captain Dolphin stated the following:

He was a graduate of the Moncton Flight School and went to school for Environmental Science and Economics. He was a bush pilot in the Canadian north. He flew for 3 different companies and was involved in hiring, assistant chief pilot, and involved in training. He was a line check pilot with both A and B authority in Canada and joined Air Canada in 1990. He has had numerous opportunities to fly throughout Canada and throughout the world.

He was a captain in the A320 based in Toronto.

He had over 24,000 hours of total flight experience, 7,000 hours of total experience in the A320 as a first officer and a captain, and about 4,000 hours of experience in the A320 as a captain.

He had also flown the Airbus 330 for Air Canada although he started on the A320 as a first officer when he was first hired at Air Canada.

He had flown with the incident first officer 2 days and the day prior to the incident flight. During the trip, they flew to SFO together. He flew on the 5th of July with the incident first officer from Toronto to SFO as Air Canada flight 759 and returned on 6th of July as flight 750 from SFO to Toronto. The incident then occurred on the 7th of July. He had flown with the incident first officer on 2 different trips, one being earlier in the year but could not recall the exact dates.

The usual check in procedure was to meet in the trans-border office, which is where he met the incident first officer on July 5. It was a standard jovial meeting. The incident first officer was a wonderful individual, very professional, disciplined, and down to earth. They reviewed the flight plan, weather, fuel, etc. then they went to the airplane. They got along very well, and the incident first officer was “easy to get along with” and made everyone feel welcome. They complied with their SOP and structure in getting the airplane prepared for departure and everything worked well, and they talked while enroute. It was a relaxed environment.

While in SFO they went their separate ways at the hotel. The next morning, on the 6th of July, they met for breakfast at a restaurant across from the crew hotel. Nothing out of the ordinary was said or done. They chatted about the weather and the ideas of flying back together and discussed sports. They returned to the hotel, got ready for work to return to Toronto. They met for the pickup downstairs in the hotel. Arrived at the airport, went through security, reviewed the flight plan, went

over it together. The flight was very “straight forward” and “very professional.” He felt the incident first officer was very pleasurable to work with, he was very knowledgeable about the flight components and could fly the airplane well. After landing in Toronto everything went well other than the line for customs was really long. After they cleared customs they went their separate ways.

He could not recall who was the pilot flying or pilot monitoring on their flight into SFO.

They were given the DYMND 3 STAR followed by the FMS Bridge Visual 28R.

The SOP has them following exactly the thesis in hand. The DYMND Approach has a variety of altitudes and speeds that they would have to comply with. Many times, controllers would alter speed, heading and altitude but he could not recall if that was the case when he and the incident first officer flew in there. They make sure they have a safe situation at every waypoint restriction given.

They would always “hard tune” the frequency for the ILS for backup to the visual. He has always done that. Air Canada’s procedures mention that a crew can hard tune the frequency to assist. He felt it was common sense or logical to tune the frequency, but he said he “would not say it was mandatory but a good practice to follow.”

Since SFO is a high density, mountainous, airport, they would have a minimum of flaps 1 configured around ARCHI intersection. Controllers do keep an airplane “high and hot” for a prolonged period of time. Generally, the approach will be hand flown with the assistance of the pilot monitoring to comply with speed critique that ATC was requiring by using flaps and landing gear. He felt it was common to use landing gear to slow and descend the airplane on this approach more so than on an ILS approach.

He would use the autopilot as much as possible but would hand fly generally inside ARCHI or TRDOW because ATC would need the pilots to do things that the autopilot was incapable of doing. Autothrust always stayed on when he was flying the airplane except maybe when it was a clear day in Toronto. It was in very few cases that he would disconnect both the autopilot and autothrust.

SFO was a very “tricky airport” to take off and land in, especially when landing. He further stated it was unique and very common for ATC to keep you high and fast. The modes he would have used for the approach would be autopilot off and flight director off then just flying the aircraft under those conditions.

When asked about the ILS vs. the visual, he said, “nowhere near it” The FMS approach is more of challenge due to the overwhelming traffic at the airport. It was common for them to keep you high and “hot” but he was used to it. He considered the profile a little bit more workload but not a huge demand.

When he flew to SFO with the incident first officer it was beautiful VFR and ATC kept them high and fast. Which was his consistent experience with flying into SFO. Since it was a high density, close runways, lots of traffic, everyone, he felt, understands the restraints. An ILS approach was a

very relaxed profile, but the visual approach was more of a challenge for crews to approach and land under the circumstances of the overwhelming amount of traffic into and out of SFO.

He goes to SFO on a regular basis. It's a little more demanding but not a "huge amount more."

The restrictions were lifted when ATC asked if the crew has the airport or the San Mateo bridge in sight, usually between 8 and 10 miles out.

He felt the incident first officer was open to input. He thought the incident first officer would speak up if something was being done incorrectly. He also briefs first officers that if they feel uncomfortable with anything to let him know.

They generally talked a little about work stuff but not a great deal.

The incident first officer's greatest strength was his "fine personality" and "forthright ability to communicate openly" with a captain as well as not feeling intimidated. He was a strong thinker and competent at flying. He felt very comfortable with flying with the incident first officer.

There was nothing he could think of that the incident first officer could improve on. He was "true to the word pilot and aviator." He considered the first officer competent and experienced.

He "really enjoys" working for Air Canada. Regarding morale at Air Canada, they have a new agreement in principal with the company which a lot of people are upset by. He was going to be retiring in less than 5 years, so it wouldn't really affect him, but he hoped they make the right decision. He enjoyed what he does but some people are not happy. There were a lot of pilots upset why they are negotiating again as they had recently signed a 10-year agreement. Some of the pilots he thought probably were not happy with the current agreement discussion. One of the concern areas that was brought up by many first officers, was that they were concerned about the continuations of a low-cost carrier in the company that was continuing to grow. This was a very difficult situation for a lot of people. The low-cost carrier was Rouge.

Coming into SFO they will not get the entire STAR procedure. He will let the airplane fly the "critique" he wants it to-do. He will use the open descent mode to get the airplane down. Very rarely they can do a managed descent mode into SFO. An ILS was always managed, all the time, but on the visual they do the open descent until he disconnected the autopilot and flew manually.

The workload going into SFO was a wonderful challenge. As pilot monitoring, there was a little higher workload than going into Toronto for example. Basically, he kept an eye on the hands and feet of the pilot flying as a pilot monitoring and he was used to doing that. Every first officer he has flown with going into SFO, including the incident first officer, had done a very good job of managing the aircraft. The workload he would classify as 30-40% higher than an ILS approach situation. Visual approaches were busier but doable and manageable. He would be looking inside and outside the cockpit the exact same amount if he was PF. He would estimate 50-60% of the time ATC would point out aircraft off the left side while on the approach to runway 28R. For him there was no difference in the time he spent looking inside and outside of the cockpit if he were pilot monitoring or pilot flying. He would think that this would be similar for the first officers.

SFO was a “senior pilot” route and he felt pilots that fly that route have been there a fair amount.

He had some training in FMS approaches and visual approach similar to the Bridge Visual and once in a while in training they would touch on it. Since it was a special procedure airport, they are required by policy to do extra training and study. He considered the training to be “all good.”

He knew what a map shift was but has never seen one in the Airbus.

The flight from Toronto to San Francisco was a later evening departure. Most of the pilots who take the late flights, like him, enjoy the afternoon and evening flights, and he was not tired. He felt the incident first officer was not tired either and showed no indication of fatigue or anything like that on their flight together. The incident first officer did not mention being tired. He felt there were no issues of being tired. He knows other pilots, in the crew room, complain about late flights. They have asked him “how can you fly late at night” and he typically responds with asking them if they’ve flown overseas and talks about how fatiguing those flights are.

There was increased workload for pilots and ATC for the amount of traffic in and out of SFO. A lot of times as they approach (not all the times) they were in situations where they are high and fast, and the aircraft could not slow as fast as the pilot or ATC may want it to. So, they disconnect the autopilot and use the full speed brake. With the autopilot off they can use full speed brake deployment and not just half speed brake deployment which the autopilot is limited to using. He thought the handling was due to the dynamic ATC needs into SFO.

He felt that speed management was not specific to a certain aircraft, but he further stated that the Airbus 321 was harder to slow down. About 90% of the time going into SFO he flew the A-320. He felt that it’s about working the aircraft comfortably into SFO.

The LaGuardia visual approach to runway 31 was a “challenge” for most, otherwise everywhere else that he had flown was fine. If he could he would change those two approaches (Expressway visual into LaGuardia and the FMS Bridge Visual into SFO) to an ILS as it would be “110 % safer for everyone” He flew the A330 overseas, but always did ILS approaches in that operation.

The night of the 5th when he arrived he could not recall if runway 28L was open or closed.

He did recall discussing the relevant and “new and fresher” NOTAMs before starting their descent. He always mentioned to go over the NOTAMs to have them fresh in his mind and he would go over them quite in depth, especially at Los Angeles, SFO, and New York. He stated he definitely would have discussed the 28L closed NOTAM that day.

He found out the name of the incident first officer about 2 to 3 weeks after the incident. A first officer he was flying with had told him.

When asked if he knew the incident captain, he stated that he has since found out who it was, and he did not know him very well. He had chatted a few times with him in the crew room.

The pilots were able bid against flying with a specific crewmember; however, it was only available to first officers and they can ask not to fly with a specific captain. He did not believe captains could bid to avoid flying with a specific first officer. He was not sure if that bid option had ever been exercised. It's extremely rarely talked about if at all.

He was glad to share a few thoughts about SFO as he knew the procedures well.

Interview concluded at 1408 EDT

Interview: Captain Patrick Robert Kalist

Date: September 6, 2017

Location: via telephone

Time: 1301 EDT

Via Teleconference: Shawn Etcher, Sathya Silva – NTSB; Christy Helgeson – Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); Beverley Harvey, Missy Rudin-Brown - Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSBC); Gordon Heieis – Air Canada Pilots Association

Captain Kalist was represented by Jean-Francois Bisson-Ross – Air Canada Counsel Litigation.

During the interview, Captain Kalist stated the following information:

He was the Airbus chief pilot at Air Canada Rouge.

He started flying the late 1980's in a flying club in Saskatoon while working on his mechanical engineering degree. He flew weekends and during the summer. After he graduated from the university, it was tough to find a flying job and he was loading airplanes for a while. He was then an FO flying the Twin Otter, FO on a Beech 99, then a captain on the Beech 99. He then ended up being the Chief Pilot for the Beech 99. He left for a Falcon 20 job as a first officer at a jet charter for 6-months, then went to another corporate job flying a Falcon 10 and Hawker 800 for about 3 years. In 2000, he joined Air Canada as a relief pilot on the B767 for 3 ½ years, then was a CRJ FO for about 2 ½ years with the last 1.5 years as a simulator instructor. He was then captain on the Embraer which he flew for 10 years during which he moved into a temporary management then permanent management as manager of flying operations. The last 5 years he was the Chief Pilot of the Embraer. They started with 60 and when he left they were down to 25. The last 18 months he has been at Air Canada Rouge as the Airbus Chief Pilot and joined in May 2016.

He conservatively estimated that he had 7,000 hours of total flying experience. He had not flown the A320 prior to his current position; it is "relatively new" to him. He had about 200 hours of total flight experience in the A320 while at Rouge, flown from the left seat.

He was the duty pilot the night of the incident. The first notification he received was Saturday afternoon, as there was nothing filed with dispatch and no calls to him prior to 1530 EDT on Saturday (7/8). He was based in Toronto.

All flight operations managers take a shift as duty pilot. He had been on duty about 3-4 times a year. When on shift, the pilots call an 800 number which is routed to the on-call duty pilot's cell. The captain called and wanted to let them know they had an "incident" coming into SFO the night prior. He specifically mentioned conducting a "low energy go-around" because they were lined up on a taxiway. Prior to touchdown, something didn't feel right, and they went around. The incident captain mentioned that he had already advised dispatch and had spoken to ATC in SFO, however, he was not sure when those occurred. The captain also stated that he was putting in an ASR.

The incident captain asked if he had any advice or comments. He asked the incident captain if they used any NAVAIDs, to which the captain stated, "no they had the airport in sight" far out. The duty pilot told him that it's a best practice to use NAVAIDs to back up a visual approach. He told the incident captain how that practice had helped him not land on the wrong runway in the past. He also stated that there may be further follow-up. He also informed him that he would passing it along to the Chief Pilot of the fleet and told the incident captain that he was available if needed.

After he concluded the call, he knew there would be follow-up for this but at the time he "assumed" they were misaligned with a runway. He was at home at the time of the call and talking on his cell phone. He sat down at his computer and wrote an email to the Chief Pilot and Assistant Chief Pilot of the A320 and to the fleet specialist at mainline Air Canada. He ended the email with "I will leave the follow-up with you" and provided the crew names for reference. He also told them to "Let [him] know if [he] could assist further."

Sometimes there might be more follow up required but the chief pilot on the A320 called him when he saw the email and had a short discussion about the conversation with the crew. He did suggest to chief pilot that they would likely need to talk with the assistant chief pilot to have further conversation. The assistant chief pilot was on vacation at the time and had someone acting for her.

After the conversation on Saturday, there was discussion on Monday. The acting assistant chief pilot asked whether he considered doing anything differently compared to his response on Saturday. He stated that if no one had responded to his email, he would have looked at doing something on his own but due to the protocols he was the first contact and passed it off to the chief pilot. With 3,600 pilots, being a duty pilot can be a busy role. He typically would punt the report to whomever was responsible, so he could go back to answering the phone. Weekends are the busiest time for duty pilots as that is when other management are not working.

A duty pilot will get about 10 to 15 calls in the morning on a weekend day. He has been a duty pilot since 2009 and has done it 3 to 4 times a year, 24 hours per day, for 1 week at a time. Sometimes he will get no calls and others he will get 15 quickly. It's a 24 hour a day position. The day of the incident, he was getting a call or two an hour. Sometimes the calls are quick (i.e. providing a second opinion on a MEL) and others are more complex (i.e. if a flight is delayed and crews need help with scheduling and dispatch) as he never knows how many other people he will have to get engaged to get a resolution. That weekend he would classify the workload of duty pilot as "average".

A duty pilot period is Tuesday at noon to the following Tuesday at noon.

Aside from those mentioned above, the duty pilot is the first point of contact for the crew and he considered the job to be one as a “pilot babysitter.” The issues can range from MEL, passenger, security, technical issues. He could also get calls about someone who has a home study day. Those he would defer to normal business hours. He will also help pilots drop trips for personal reasons. He will also provide MEL extensions. During the summer when they are busier, and crews are “getting stretched” he had to referee between pilots and schedulers.

As duty pilot, he has duty delegated to him, but the system is designed to be able to engage the resources that are needed. Had he not been able to get the chief pilot or assistant chief pilot, then he would have to make the decision if need be about holding a crew out of service or whatever would be needed. He must engage the proper resources. The process was designed such that the duty pilot was to engage other resources.

In the case of the incident, he engaged the senior director of line ops who was acting as the Air Canada system Chief Pilot while the assistant Chief Pilot was on holiday. He felt the exact two people that needed to be involved were involved with the incident.

The director of line operations makes the decision to hold a crew out of service because the role requires a notification of ACPA if a crew is pulled out of service. It is based on a technical decision from the chief pilot and it is a joint decision. Had the right people not responded he would have started making phone calls to help make a decision.

There are some mandatory items that require a crew to be removed from service, such an engine shut down or declaring a mayday, otherwise it’s a judgement call if to pull the crew of service. It’s a judgement decision depending on how the crew sounds or if they sounded affected. If in doubt, he always asks them to call their association so there is no pressure.

The safety department would not typically be involved to removing a crew. Sometimes they are involved if there is a reportable event, however for removing a crew from service for an inflight issue they would not typically be involved in that decision.

A go-around is reportable event, but it does not necessarily include the safety department. This event may have been a little lower in altitude, than they thought. Go-arounds happen on a “fairly frequent” basis. Normally the Safety group nor duty pilot get involved on a go-around.

He had information that the crew went around because they were aligned with a taxiway. The decision to hold the crew out of service depends on the depth of information he has. If he were to have needed to make a decision on this event, he did not have enough information on severity of the incident to make a sound decision on how to respond and wasn’t sure whether safety would get involved.

He loves working for Air Canada Rouge. He felt morale at Rouge is “quite good” and they are “quite happy.” They have a seniority-based bidding system and they use a different scheduling tool, so pilots get more “bang for their buck” when bidding. It’s nice flying and efficient and productive. Morale at Air Canada mainline was less than Air Canada Rouge as the nature of flying

was “tough.” The narrow body aircraft fly multileg days and the pairings aren’t ideal. Morale and happiness was “less so” compared to Rouge. Also, the summer is a busier time.

When asked what decision he would have made about the crew if he weren’t able to reach the chief pilot, he stated that he would have considered taking the crew out of service. He would have wanted to have another conversation with a crew and talk to another pilot manager before making a decision, especially since the captain said they had done a “low energy go around.” Knowing what he knows after the fact it would have been easy to say to remove the crew but at the time he did not have all that information and the incident captain seemed “quite comfortable” and he didn’t perceive any nervousness or stress from someone that had been through a significant incident.

The definition of a low energy go around is one conducted below 50 feet with thrust at idle and engines spooling down. It would mean that the aircraft was almost in the flare and virtually committed to land. When they train it, the aircraft may touchdown in the process. His impression that they were “quite low” and “not at 800 feet or 500 feet.”

He had flown into SFO and it was more than 5 years ago. He may have been there 3 times during his career.

When asked to clarify if the incident captain told him he was lined up with the taxiway or the runway, he stated that in his email he wrote that it was a low energy go around with being lined up on the taxiway.

He had interacted with the first officer on a personal matter about 9 years ago when he was manager of line operations. The first officer had needed some time off due to family issues. He only remembered the captain from 10 years ago. The captain was in one of his recurrent training classes and had written in Greek. That is what stood out about the incident captain. This was more than 10 years ago.

Staffing has been a challenge as it is tough to get the balance right. The summer season is very busy and it’s a challenge. Summer, Christmas and March breaks are the busiest. He recalled that there was discussion of having managers flying as first officers as they did not have enough pilots trained prior to starting the summer season. They do not have a surplus of pilots, but they have not chronically canceled flights due to staffing. He does not get a lot of feedback from Rouge pilots as they do not have a reserve system. So, if a pilot calls in sick they call in a pilot on a day off and pay them time and a half or more. At Rouge there are not as many staffing problems and they are managed.

He had flown the FMS approach in the simulator since the incident with the assistant chief pilot. The way they flew it was fully managed approach which was virtually like an ILS with lateral and vertical guidance. Flying that approach in that manner seemed very benign. They came in offset about 3-4 miles back. It was “quite civilized.”

In open descent, it would have increased the workload for both pilot flying, and pilot monitoring as open descent does not have vertical protections for crossing restrictions. If the ILS was not tuned, they would have no vertical guidance either. The pilot flying would set the altitudes unless

autopilot was off then the pilot monitoring would select altitudes. It can be done, but it would be a lot busier for both pilots.

The guidance suggested to tune in the ILS. During the simulator run, he thought that since he was following the guidance in the FMS the ILS does not give much useful information aside from runway offset which he would use to make sure he wasn't crossing into the other runway approach path. If company guidance told them to tune it he would have tuned in the ILS frequency, but if it did not require him to tune in the ILS he would not have tuned in the frequency. He did not believe it was required to tune in the ILS frequency.

The flight ops manuals provided guidance on when to remove crew from service and some are declaring mayday, engine failure, or engine fire. There is no specific guidance on lining up for the wrong landing surface. The guidance is very broad. Sometimes pilots think that they will be taken out of service if they are in an incident and he provided an example of a flight control malfunction. In this case the flaps did not fully extend, and the crew declared "pan pan." The crew of that flight asked if they would be held OTS for the issue, and he responded not unless they did not feel like they were fit to fly. He would ask the crew if they felt they needed to be removed from service and would remove them if they needed to be. If a crew assess they are unfit to fly, he will not tell them otherwise and the crew always has the ability to remove themselves from flying if they feel they are unfit. His job as Chief Pilot was to support their assessment.

Fatigue did not come up with the call to the incident captain. He had mentioned that the incident crew had a challenging or difficult flight, due to deviating for weather.

He uses email extensively and then follows up with a phone call. Depending on when an event happens (middle of the night) he may just send an email. Had he not received a response by email he would have picked up the phone and get in touch with someone. Initially with this event the facts did not appear to be "extremely" serious.

He referenced the manual for when pilots would be removed from service. It stated that major incidents including a high speed rejected takeoff, declaring mayday, or engine failure would constitute removal from service. The rouge manual does not require removal from service if a "Pan Pan" declaration was made.

He speculated that the captain was "trying to downplay the severity" of what occurred and that was why he didn't report it immediately.

When asked if he was able to stay engaged with a case if he wanted to, he stated the following. If something did not feel right he could remain engaged and not just pass it off to someone else, especially if the crew felt comfortable with talking to only one person. The duty pilot could remain engaged, but on the day of on the incident event and he passed it to the parties involved. If it was on his fleet he would want to be the one engaged as the chief pilot. That was why he included the fleet specialist on the email as he knew that individual would be doing a bulk of the work and it was their responsibility to respond. He offered to assist them if they needed.

He suspected that the incident captain did not know it was a major event at the time. Pilots typically would call dispatch to report they had an incident. Sometimes it was not well understood that was the obligation. Dispatch takes the details and then puts out the info to everyone, which allows the pilot to be “covered” for reporting. He did not think that dispatch was informed in a timely manner for the incident event.

A pilot was required to report a reportable event as soon as practical. They should not take away from their flight duties to report but should notify in a reasonable time. If something happens on takeoff, then he would expect them to notify via datalink or radio. If something happened on landing, such as a lightning strike, he would expect them to report at the gate once the aircraft is secured. Some of the reportable events are not “cut and dry” but it’s better to over report than under report.

There is no standard question sheet that a duty pilot asks if a crew reports an event. He was aware that some other airlines had a 10-question list of items to ask pilots who called in.

The incident captain did not state at what altitude they did a go-around when he talked to the duty pilot.

The interview concluded at 1421 EDT.