

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SIKORSKY S76B HELICOPTER N72EX

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CRASH NEAR CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA,

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ON JANUARY 26, 2020

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Interview of: GARRET DALTON

Director of Operations

Island Express Helicopters

Island Express Helicopters
Long Beach, CaliforniaThursday,
January 30, 2020

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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(On behalf of Mr. Dalton)

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:01 a.m.)

DR. SILVA: On the record at 9:01 a.m.

DR. SEVILLIAN: Good morning, Garret.

MR. DALTON: Good morning.

DR. SEVILLIAN: My name is Dajuan Sevillian. I am a human performance investigator with the NTSB. Thank you for taking the time out to speak with us today.

What you're seeing today is a result of our party system. Around the table we have NTSB investigators and also FAA representatives, not from the enforcement side but from the safety side. What we do at the NTSB primarily is all about safety. We're -- we make recommendations to improve safe travel. So that's what our goal is today, is to work that phase of the investigation. You're here today because you are the expert and we want to learn from you about this operation.

You are -- I just want to let you know that the -- what we'll talk about today will be part of a docket later on as the investigation continues. And you're also -- part of our investigative process, you're allowed a representative with you. So for the record, can you please state who you would like to represent you today?

MR. DALTON: Don Swaim.

DR. SEVILLIAN: Thank you. So how the interview will be run today is we will have two rounds of questioning, and before we go

1 through that process, I want to go around the table so folks can
2 introduce themselves so you can see who you're talking with.
3 Okay? So I'll start with me. Again, I'm Dujuan Sevillian, human
4 performance investigator.

5 MR. SALAZAR: I'm Fabian Salazar with the NTSB. I'm looking
6 into operations.

7 MR. RIGSBY: Matt Rigsby with the FAA's Office of Accident
8 Investigations.

9 DR. SILVA: I'm Sathya Silva, human performance at the NTSB.

10 DR. SEVILLIAN: At any time during the interview, if you want
11 to take a break, please let us know and we'll stop the recording,
12 take a break, and so on.

13 MR. DALTON: Okay.

14 DR. SEVILLIAN: Is there anything else before we start?

15 MR. DALTON: No.

16 DR. SEVILLIAN: Sathya, is there anything I missed?

17 DR. SILVA: You're good.

18 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. Let's go ahead and get started.

19 INTERVIEW OF GARRET DALTON

20 BY DR. SEVILLIAN:

21 Q. So for the record, Garret, could you please state and spell
22 your first and last name?

23 A. First name is Garret, G-a-r-r-e-t; last name is Dalton,
24 D-a-l-t-o-n.

25 Q. Okay. And what's your role here?

1 A. My title is director of operations at Island Express
2 Helicopters.

3 Q. And as far as an organizational chart, where do you -- where
4 are you located on an organizational chart? Who do you report to?

5 A. I answer to the president.

6 Q. President. Okay. Can you give me a brief aviation
7 biographical sketch of your background?

8 A. I took my first flight as a student in 2002. I went to
9 flight school here in Los Angeles. I got my private license,
10 commercial license, CFI, and was hired by the flight school. And
11 I worked there for a few years building up my flight time. I also
12 worked simultaneously with another flight school here in Los
13 Angeles called LA Helicopters.

14 I left there and I went to work for PHI in the Gulf of
15 Mexico, flying to offshore oil rigs. I only did that for about 6
16 months, and then I went to work for Papillon Airways in Boulder
17 City, Nevada, flying tourists to the Grand Canyon. I did that for
18 about 6 months, and then I took a job with Helinet Aviation in Van
19 Nuys, California, flying ENG, electronic news gathering. And then
20 I moved up into their charter department doing private charters.

21 And I left there and I worked for Arctic Air Services in
22 Santa Maria, California, flying Sikorsky S-76 two-pilot IFR
23 program for ExxonMobil. And I'm not sure how long, maybe a year
24 and a half, 2 years, I started as a copilot. I got my ATP and
25 moved up as a -- into a -- as a captain. And unfortunately there

1 was a number of incidents -- there was the drop of oil prices;
2 there was an oil line leak, and that contract was going away. And
3 before it went away, somebody from my previous employer, Helinet
4 Aviation, reached out to me to come back and be a charter pilot.
5 And I went back as a charter pilot, and I think the day I started
6 there, the chief pilot stepped down, so I threw my name in the hat
7 and I end up becoming their chief pilot for about 3 years.

8 And then I came to work here in August 2018 as director of
9 operations, so just over a year and a half. I've got about over
10 5,000 hours in helicopters.

11 Q. How many hours, do you know, in the S-76?

12 A. I would have to check my logbook.

13 Q. Okay. That's fine.

14 A. If I -- yeah, I'd have to check my logbook.

15 Q. That's fine. So do you have anyone that works for you as far
16 as that is a subordinate, since you're director of operations?

17 A. Yes. The chief pilot reports to me, the director of
18 maintenance reports to me, and the general manager reports to me.

19 Q. Okay. All right. What operation does the company operate
20 under?

21 A. We're a 135 on-demand air carrier.

22 Q. Does the company have a safety management system?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Who was involved in the development of the safety management
25 system?

1 A. It was introduced before I started here.

2 Q. I'm sorry. Say it again.

3 A. It was introduced before I started at this company.

4 Q. Okay. Are you aware of how -- now that you're with the
5 company, who -- how are employees trained on the use of the SMS?

6 A. They receive initial training when they start at the company.

7 Q. What does that initial training entail?

8 A. It's computer training.

9 Q. Okay. And so this is computer-based training. It is a pass-
10 fail type --

11 A. No.

12 Q. -- of training? They just get training? Okay.

13 How do you -- do you receive or how is the -- is there a risk
14 assessment with the safety management system program?

15 A. Yes. So all employees that are in a safety-related role do a
16 risk assessment.

17 Q. And who are the employees in a safety role?

18 A. Pilots, mechanics, ground crew.

19 Q. So for pilots, when do they fill out -- do you have a name
20 for the risk assessment?

21 A. Flight risk assessment for the pilots.

22 Q. For the pilots. And how do you get involved with that risk
23 assessment for pilots?

24 A. I'm responsible to ensure that they do it. If in the process
25 of the risk assessment there's an elevated score or there's a

1 question that comes up in the risk assessment, they need to call
2 me.

3 Q. So --

4 A. Or I will get an email. So if there's an elevated score,
5 I'll get an email. If there's a question in there, it directs
6 them to call me.

7 Q. So if there is no elevated risk score, do you still keep
8 metrics of how often pilots fill out the risk assessment?

9 A. I will spot check that they're being done. Occasionally I
10 will -- occasionally I'll spot check, and if I find that a pilot
11 is flying and has not filled out a risk assessment, I'll call or
12 text them, and as soon as they land, they will complete a risk
13 assessment. That has happened. Not regularly, but it has
14 happened.

15 Q. Where a pilot hasn't filled out a risk assessment?

16 A. Yes. So I ask them to do it.

17 Q. The accident flight, did you get any type of information as
18 far as risk assessments from the --

19 A. No.

20 Q. No? How do you -- do you work with your principal operations
21 inspector with SMS by any chance?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Anyone from the FAA that you work with on the -- asking
24 questions or anything about the SMS?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. So the SMS is just basically managed within this
2 company or is it an outside source?

3 A. We use the support of a outside company but it's managed
4 directly by us.

5 Q. And what does that outside company do for you?

6 A. They provide us with the tools.

7 Q. The tools. Okay. All right. Have you ever had a flight
8 cancelled due to an elevated risk?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Is there any oversight from organizations such as ARGUS or
11 WYVERN that conducts audits on your --

12 A. So we're not WYVERN approved. We're not ARGUS approved. We
13 do receive audits from some of our customers.

14 Q. And who are those customers?

15 A. We just received one recently from Chevron. We had an audit
16 from ExxonMobil but they decided not to use us. Not that they
17 didn't like how we operated, they decided not to use us because of
18 the age of our aircraft and the type of aircraft. We received an
19 audit from California Edison. That's all I can think of. There
20 may be others, but that's all I can think of right now.

21 Q. And what was the result of those audits?

22 A. I don't know the specifics, but I can say that all of them
23 came back with very positive responses with very, very minor
24 deficiencies that I believe we fixed. And deficiencies were not
25 required for them; it's just observations.

1 Q. How do you -- I'm looking at the criteria from the flight
2 risk analysis tool, and it has an area named "weather, mission,
3 operation, duty day qualifications, and personal." Are you aware
4 of the criteria on how those were --

5 A. Yeah. So I worked hand in hand with our safety manager to do
6 the latest update to what you're looking at.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. There is no 100 percent right way to do this. In other
9 words, there's no -- nothing out there to tell us you must ask
10 this question or this score you must get. So we continually
11 monitor it and update it according to our operations.

12 Q. I have just a question here on the weather section. There's
13 a -- it's number 8 here on the -- here, I can show it to you. It
14 is SVR [sic] en route caution; write your Plan B if the -- in the
15 header comments. What does that mean?

16 A. Special VFR.

17 Q. En route, what is that -- what is a Special VFR en route
18 caution?

19 A. So if the weather is under VFR minimums.

20 Q. So pilots can operate the aircraft at this operation --

21 A. We can operate less than VFR. It's in our GOM.

22 Q. Less than VFR. Can you operate in IFR conditions?

23 A. No. But you may find yourself in there in an emergency and
24 you've got to deal with that situation. But no is the answer.
25 We're not an IFR program.

1 Q. Okay. I didn't ask this question earlier, but how many
2 employees work for the company?

3 A. Approximately 25.

4 Q. And how many are pilots?

5 A. I believe we had six.

6 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. So that's all the questions I have for
7 now. I'll transfer to Fabian.

8 MR. DALTON: Thank you.

9 BY MR. SALAZAR:

10 Q. Garret, I'm going to start off with some questions that are
11 going to be real close to his first introduction questions, and
12 then I'll tell you the next area that we're going to go to so you
13 can just be mentally ready for those.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. Out of the GOM, there are some things at the beginning of the
16 book. My question with regards to those is, has the director of
17 operations delegated someone to maintain the operator's manual and
18 all of its revisions, or is that you?

19 A. That's me.

20 Q. Okay. Which areas of the -- are you responsible for all of
21 the areas of the GOM or are some portions of it delegated to
22 somebody else?

23 A. No, it's me.

24 Q. Do you keep a list of assigned manuals and their revisions?

25 A. I supplied you with all our manuals.

1 Q. So yes? Do all the documents that you supplied me with meet
2 the revision control standards and have the appropriate markings
3 in the upper right-hand portion of each page?

4 A. As far as I'm aware, yes.

5 Q. When changes are made, do they have a large black sidebar to
6 highlight the change?

7 A. They should.

8 Q. When revisions are required is the whole section replaced
9 with a new revision number on each page?

10 A. In regards to our GOM, just the revision pages and the
11 revision control log.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And depending on the revision, possibly an OpSpec.

14 Q. Your company forms, are they all kept in section Sierra?

15 A. They should be.

16 Q. Okay. Are you allowed to use correction fluid or anything to
17 make minor changes?

18 A. I'm not sure.

19 Q. On to the duties and responsibilities of the DO, there's
20 about 13 or 14 items with those. Are you familiar with them?

21 A. Yes, but I can't list them.

22 Q. I'm not going to ask you to.

23 A. Thank you.

24 Q. In a general term, when you do your performance counseling,
25 whatever your company calls it, with your boss, has he rated you

1 anything less than satisfactory in any of those areas?

2 A. I haven't had a performance review.

3 Q. Okay. With regards to the chief pilot, did you assess the
4 chief pilot in the performance of his duties while he's worked for
5 you?

6 A. I have not conducted a performance review of any employee.

7 Q. The GOM lists responsibilities for the chief pilot. Was he,
8 in your opinion, performing those duties in an acceptable manner?

9 A. More than acceptable.

10 Q. I'm going to move on to aeronautical weather. There's a
11 statement in the GOM under Aeronautical Weather, that gives you a
12 limitation on the flying conditions. Would you mind telling me
13 what that is?

14 A. Off the top of my head, I believe our minimums are 300 feet
15 and 1 mile day.

16 Q. It talks about those limits being in a local flying area, and
17 I was under the assumption uncontrolled airspace. I believe it
18 spells that out as well. Sorry. But for local flying area, do
19 you guys have a defined local flying area?

20 A. No. No. And we're not required because we're not an EMS
21 operator.

22 Q. Okay. And we mentioned those limits. That was my next
23 question.

24 There's a statement in there that says: In the interest of
25 safety, ground and flight staff closely monitor during periods

1 that may lead to weather minimums being less than those outlined.
2 Do you guys have a method to stay in communication with a pilot
3 while he's out flying from Point A to Point B?

4 A. So we do have a company frequency, but unfortunately it's a
5 line of sight. A lot of our flights are generated at our heliport
6 at Queen Mary. They go back and forth to our heliport at Pebbly
7 Beach on Catalina Island. And we do have radio coverage for the
8 entire flight. We also have that same frequency just kind of our
9 local area here in Long Beach.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. It's a line of sight, so if you go far away, it's --

12 Q. Now the accident aircraft took off out of John Wayne. From
13 John Wayne how far can he go before he loses line of sight?

14 A. Off the record, a total guess, Downtown LA.

15 Q. Okay. Can he maintain communication with him to Camarillo?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Does GOM address Special VFR?

18 A. I'm not sure. I'd have to check.

19 Q. Okay. How common is it in a given month around this area in
20 the environments throughout the year to request and fly Special
21 VFR?

22 A. It's totally dependent on the weather condition and time of
23 year.

24 Q. Is it common or uncommon to fly Special VFR or request and
25 receive Special VFR clearance?

1 A. I'm not sure if I can put it simply as common or uncommon,
2 but yes we do request Special VFR.

3 Q. Okay. And as you mentioned earlier, it is authorized to do
4 that with your OpSpec?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. All right. We're going to transition to -- I think I just
7 have one question on publication. Who's responsible for
8 maintaining the publications in the aircraft?

9 A. The chief pilot.

10 Q. When we looked at and recovered all the records, we found one
11 chart -- I don't remember which one it was, whether it was a
12 helicopter chart, a VFR sectional or the Terminal Area Chart, but
13 one of them is out of date. So I would recommend after today
14 doing a spot check on your aircraft to see if you have any other
15 pubs that are out of date.

16 A. I'll check all aircraft.

17 Q. Thank you, sir. We're going to talk a little bit about fuel
18 minimums. I don't have anything on paper but I remember being
19 told that about 1200 pounds were on the aircraft when it departed.
20 In that aircraft, with a average fuel burn, is that enough to get
21 to Camarillo with a VFR fuel reserve or is it enough to get to
22 Camarillo and back?

23 A. It exceeds it. It exceeds it. It's enough to get to
24 Camarillo and back.

25 Q. Okay. Is it typical for them to go -- for a flight to go

1 from John Wayne to Camarillo, did it refuel there and come back?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. And when they come back, is it sufficient fuel to land
4 with sufficient VFR reserve?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. In the DOM [sic] under decision fuel, it states 30
7 minutes remaining, and then it gives you a guidance to request to
8 return back to the airfield or to go to an airfield. I was
9 confused, so I'm looking for a clarification. For decision fuel,
10 when it says 30 minutes remaining, is that 30 remaining until fuel
11 burnout or is it 30 minutes remaining until reserve?

12 A. I'd have to review the document. I'm sorry.

13 Q. And forgive me if I'm firing these questions at you. I'll --

14 A. It's okay. I'm good. I'm good.

15 Q. -- if you want me to pause; if you need a break, let me know.

16 A. You mentioned that you're old school and you like paper, I'm
17 kind of the same, so --

18 Q. Yes, I like paper. And here I am working with this computer
19 on this and I had to fight myself from writing all these questions
20 down. Okay. On to emergency training. Does the GOM or any other
21 training document that Island Express has address IFR operations?

22 A. I would have to check, but I believe possibly our training
23 manual, pilot training manual.

24 Q. Does the company have any program that addresses inadvertent
25 IMC? Flight training or any type of like safety training?

1 A. I believe it's in our pilot training manual.

2 Q. Okay. Are pilots required to demonstrate proficiency in
3 basic instruments anytime during the year as part of any of their
4 check rides or training flights?

5 A. Yes. Yes.

6 Q. Do the company pilots have the opportunity to practice
7 instrument flight with company aircraft or a simulator?

8 A. They're encouraged to do so.

9 Q. Does the annual proficiency check ride of the pilots include
10 any type of IMC flying or flying recovery with an instrument
11 recovery?

12 A. It's not required, but I believe 99 percent of the check
13 rides will have a check ride document that's document that that
14 was performed.

15 Q. Do any of your pilots, are they given an opportunity to fly
16 simulator during the year?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Our next section is going to deal with the VIP transport.
19 Does the company have any type of training for pilots who are new
20 to VIP transport?

21 A. We do provide training but I don't believe it's documented.

22 Q. Okay. Other than like conversation, are pilots told to try
23 not to interact with any of the VIPs?

24 A. Yes, but it's not documented. But we do have charter
25 standards.

1 Q. Charter standards?

2 A. If you want.

3 Q. Okay. Is there a program or even if it's unwritten, is there
4 a program to train AS350 pilots so when they fly the S-76?

5 A. I'm sorry. Repeat the question.

6 Q. I'll put it to you in other words.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. A new hire comes in, does he go straight to the AS350?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Once a pilot is flying the AS350, is he encouraged to move up
11 to the S-76 or is it -- how does one get to fly the S-76?

12 A. We're a very small company. We only have, well, recently six
13 pilots. Three pilots are Sikorsky qualified. Two of them had
14 experience in the aircraft prior to being hired at this company
15 and one received training, upgrade training.

16 Q. Okay. Do you ever have an -- or do the three AS350 pilots
17 have an interest in it? Have you ever been approached by one of
18 them that says he wants to move up to the aircraft?

19 A. So three of the pilots that are not S-76 qualified, two of
20 them have not displayed an interest to upgrade; however, that
21 doesn't mean that they don't have the desire. And one of them who
22 was hired recently, it was suggested at his interview that we
23 would like him to move up into the S-76.

24 Q. What is the president of the company's philosophy on
25 transporting VIPs? And that's kind of a -- let me -- what is the

1 president -- what's his thoughts on that? I know it's a --

2 A. You'll have to ask him.

3 Q. Yeah. Would he -- okay. Do you get a mission to fly VIPs?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. When you do the mission to fly VIPs is there any type of
6 pressure put on you to get the VIP to the destination?

7 A. Absolutely not.

8 Q. After loading the passengers in the back of the aircraft, is
9 it realistically possible for the passengers in the back to
10 communicate with the pilot up front?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. It's a quiet enough aircraft where they can --

13 A. They have a -- so we have a, you know, intercom system. They
14 have headsets. They don't always wear them, but the option is
15 there.

16 Q. Okay. So the headsets are provided as their opportunity to,
17 if they're --

18 A. It's up them whether they use them or not. It's a soundproof
19 cabin. It's still pretty loud back there, but some passengers
20 choose to take advantage of the ear protection and the
21 communications and some don't.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. When they're briefed and loaded into the aircraft, it's
24 explained to them.

25 Q. This section deals with the accident pilot.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. I know we've had these questions before, but again, for the
3 -- this is for the record. What is the accident pilot's -- and if
4 it's okay with you, I'm just going to say Ara.

5 A. That's fine.

6 Q. What's his history with the company?

7 A. He's been there almost 10 years. He's got over 8,000 hours.
8 He started as a line pilot and he is now the chief pilot. He's
9 been the most exemplary employee that I've ever seen in any
10 company I've ever worked for.

11 Q. Have you received a check ride from him?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. During those check rides what is his demeanor like?

14 A. Totally professional.

15 Q. Would you consider him a competent instructor pilot?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. If you fail a maneuver, how would he react?

18 A. Professionally. Provide coaching, reevaluate.

19 MR. SALAZAR: That's all my questions. Thank you, Garret.

20 MR. DALTON: Thank you.

21 DR. SEVILLIAN: Thanks, Fabian.

22 Matt?

23 MR. RIGSBY: Yes. Still good, Garret?

24 MR. DALTON: I'm good.

25 MR. RIGSBY: Okay.

1 BY MR. RIGSBY:

2 Q. Just for the record, who's your POI and what FSDO is it?

3 A. Kevin Doty at the Long Beach FSDO.

4 Q. Okay. How often has Kevin been -- visited your facility?

5 A. So you have to ask him that, but he has requirements to do
6 base inspections. He's done them with me -- actually, he's done
7 them with me and Ara. I can't tell you how frequently it is, but
8 I --

9 Q. Within the last year, he's been here?

10 A. Yes. We just moved to this facility, and sometimes I'll go
11 meet him at the FSDO. I just had a meeting with him recently,
12 invited him here, and he's -- he was supposed to come by pretty
13 soon. I don't -- you'll have to ask him that.

14 Q. Has the POI provided the Island Express check rides for any
15 of the pilots?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Did he provide Ara a check ride?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. How about yourself?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Have you ever had to deal with his manager at all at the
22 FSDO?

23 A. No.

24 Q. When you say six pilots, are you counting yourself?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. As far as contract training, I know we talked a little
2 bit about you all do that. Could you just go a little bit more --
3 I know it's EuroSafety, but who oversees the contract? Do you do
4 all that?

5 A. So it's not a requirement, but as a company we choose to go
6 above and beyond and provide some expert outside training. We
7 contract with EuroSafety, and the director of operations
8 coordinates that training.

9 Q. Do you sit in on the class?

10 A. Absolutely.

11 Q. And this is for both the AS350 and the S-76?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. On the day of the accident, did Ara talk -- call you at all?

14 A. No.

15 Q. The arrangement that -- I understand the OC Helicopters is a
16 broker.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So they contract with you --

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. -- to provide the flight services?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Okay. So are they the ones writing the check to you guys or
23 is -- I guess, how does that arrangement work?

24 A. I cannot say that.

25 Q. Okay. Have any of your pilots ever --

1 A. I'm sorry. Just to rewind. The money side of things is not
2 my role --

3 Q. Is not your role.

4 A. -- as director of operations.

5 Q. Okay. Have any of your pilots ever reported any issues with
6 OC Helicopters? Pressure to fly or -- that you're aware of?

7 A. No pressure to fly.

8 Q. Okay. Is OC Helicopters associated with Island Express in
9 any way?

10 A. No.

11 Q. On the VIP transports, have any of the pilots talked about --
12 come to you afterwards and talked to you about, you know, maybe
13 one client putting more pressure at all?

14 A. I'm not aware of any of the clients putting pressure on us to
15 fly. I have interjected and cancelled flights because of weather.

16 Q. Okay. Thanks. I know we talked earlier about Spidertracks,
17 that the aircraft -- are all aircraft equipped with --

18 A. All of our aircraft are equipped with Spidertracks.

19 Q. Does someone follow those each flight?

20 A. Yes. We have a flight follower.

21 Q. Flight follower. And are they watching the flight live
22 anytime an aircraft --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. Are they located here?

25 A. At our Queensway branch at the heliport at -- right in Queen

1 Mary.

2 Q. Okay. You know, you talked about some of the customer audits
3 and things. Do you have any DoD contracts?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Does the FAA require you to have an SMS program?

6 A. No. It's encouraged.

7 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. All right. I'm done.

8 DR. SEVILLIAN: All right. Thanks, Matt. Appreciate it.
9 Garret, are you still fine?

10 MR. DALTON: Sorry. I was just focusing --

11 DR. SEVILLIAN: Oh, okay. No, I understand.

12 DR. SILVA: Do you need a break?

13 MR. DALTON: No, I'm fine.

14 DR. SEVILLIAN: Sathya?

15 DR. SILVA: I will hold my questions till the second round.

16 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. We're going to start the second round
17 here. Is everyone okay?

18 MR. SWAIM: Are you okay?

19 MR. DALTON: Yeah.

20 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. All right, so I'll start the second
21 round. We'll go through one more time.

22 BY DR. SEVILLIAN:

23 Q. You mentioned that the company has a flight follower watching
24 the flights live. For the accident flight, is there any data that
25 you're aware of about that flight from the flight follower that

1 you are -- that was communicated to you?

2 A. No. I -- no. Maybe you need to be more specific in your
3 question.

4 Q. So is any information regarding the flight follower -- did
5 the flight follower speak to you about that flight, the accident
6 flight?

7 A. Obviously I talked to him after the accident, yes.

8 Q. Okay. And what conversation did you have?

9 A. We talked about the flight from start to finish and the
10 accident, that the ERP action checklist and his use of it.
11 Once I became aware that the aircraft was missing, I was in
12 communication with him.

13 Q. Okay. And as far as -- so we have the safety management
14 system. Is there any other method on how pilots communicate
15 safety-related concerns or issues?

16 A. Yes. So as part of our SMS system they have a tool -- I'm
17 sorry, I'm drawing a blank here. They have a tool -- hazard
18 reporting tool.

19 Q. And what does that hazard reporting tool consist of?

20 A. So they can either be anonymous or they can say who they are,
21 and then if they see something that is a safety concern, they can
22 use this tool and it will immediately be disseminated to the
23 president, the safety manager, and director of operations, and I
24 believe the chief pilot, but I'm not sure.

25 Q. Do you have safety meetings?

1 A. Yes. The safety manager conducts a pilot safety meeting. We
2 try to do it once a month. The director of maintenance conducts a
3 maintenance safety meeting; again, he tries to do it once a month.
4 And the safety manager conducts a safety meeting with the ramp
5 agents; again, he tries to do it once a month.

6 Q. Okay. And as far as dissemination of information, are there
7 any safety bulletins that you put out?

8 A. So after the safety meetings, the minutes are taken and then
9 the minutes are disseminated to whoever is appropriate.

10 Q. And --

11 A. And then usually the safety manager will pick a topic or
12 something that's come up, he'll pick a safety-related item or he
13 will ask a member of that group to come up with a safety topic,
14 and that'll be introduced as part of that meeting.

15 Q. So can you remember just kind of the highlights of the last
16 meeting that you had?

17 A. No, I don't. I'd have to look at the minutes. I'm sorry.

18 Q. Okay. And pilots are able to, you said, submit anonymous or
19 they can --

20 A. Well, apart from the meeting, there is a tool in our SMS
21 which they can submit a hazard report. So if they see something
22 that they deem is safe -- or is a concern to them, they can bring
23 it up and then we can address it. So we can provide -- what's the
24 word I'm looking for? A way of avoiding that risk.

25 Q. Mediation?

1 A. Yeah, not -- there's another word.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's what I would have used.

3 MR. DALTON: There's another word. Anyway, we would
4 obviously try to follow up and avoid the risk.

5 MR. SALAZAR: Mitigate the risk.

6 MR. DALTON: Mitigate the risk. That's the word. I'm sorry.
7 Thank you.

8 MR. SALAZAR: According to your safety officer.

9 MR. DALTON: Okay.

10 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. Those are the questions I have for
11 right now.

12 Fabian.

13 MR. SALAZAR: Yes, sir.

14 BY MR. SALAZAR:

15 Q. A couple of questions on the risk assessment. If a risk is
16 elevated, you mentioned that the pilot is going to talk to you.
17 And this conversation that you're going to have, is it designed to
18 mitigate that elevated risk?

19 A. So the idea of the risk assessment is obviously for the pilot
20 to assess the flight and make sure that he can -- it can be
21 conducted safely. It also kind of helps as a checklist for him to
22 go -- checks everything.

23 Q. Let me ask you this question --

24 A. So the -- if there's an elevated score or if there's a
25 question, then they're directed to call me.

1 Q. Okay. Does he require your approval at that point for the
2 flight?

3 A. If he hits a certain score or if he hits a certain question,
4 yes.

5 Q. Okay. And you stated that you haven't cancelled missions
6 before.

7 A. So typically a pilot will never go above 60, which grounds
8 him, because the flight will never be generated. It will stop
9 before it would ever get to that stage.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I don't know of a pilot that's hit a score of 60 where it's a
12 no-go because myself or the chief pilot would turn around and say
13 we're not accepting the flight because of amount of risks.

14 Q. As far as quantifying those numbers, is there a low, moderate
15 and high value, or is it just --

16 A. Yes, it is -- well, so if the flight is accepted, then
17 there's a -- I think it's above 45, they need to call the chief
18 pilot, director of operations, safety officer, and then at 60 it's
19 a no-go.

20 Q. Okay. And this is all part of the SMS program, the risk
21 assessment?

22 A. Part of our risk assessment, yes.

23 Q. Very good. Talking about the flight following individual --
24 you mentioned your flight following individual. Is there one
25 located at John Wayne?

1 A. No.

2 Q. The individual that's in -- by the Queen Mary?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Can that person communicate with the pilots at John Wayne?

5 A. When he's on the ground or while he's flying?

6 Q. While he's flying.

7 A. As long as he has a line of sight. So on takeoff and
8 landing, no; en route, yes.

9 Q. Okay. Are you -- now the flight follower for that day, was
10 that Angel?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. When you were talking to Angel after the fact, did -- after
13 the accident, did --

14 A. Well, I talked to him when it was missing. When I first
15 talked to him, it was overdue.

16 Q. Okay. Did Angel -- or did you have a conversation with Angel
17 during that period of time that we're talking about addressing his
18 -- Angel talking to the pilot about weather?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Was the weather at John Wayne Airport above 1,000 and 3 when
21 he departed?

22 A. So I requested that information from Bill English as part of
23 the ATC weather operation of this NTSB investigation, and it's in
24 that folder. I haven't looked at it so I can't answer that
25 question.

1 Q. All right.

2 A. As far as I'm aware, it was VFR at John Wayne Airport.

3 MR. SALAZAR: Okay. That's all the questions I have. Thank
4 you.

5 DR. SEVILLIAN: Thank you, Fabian.

6 Matt.

7 BY MR. RIGSBY:

8 Q. Let's see here. Garret, who are your designated 119
9 officials for the company for operational control?

10 A. So as director of operations, I have operational control. I
11 can delegate that to the chief pilot and the director of
12 maintenance. During the flight, the pilot has operational
13 control. He can stop the flight at any time.

14 Q. But as far as listed in the OpSpec, it's yourself --

15 A. It's myself. And I said --

16 Q. -- chief pilot and the DOM?

17 A. It's me and then it says -- I believe it's worded that I can
18 delegate it to --

19 Q. Right.

20 A. -- certain individuals, but it doesn't name them.

21 Q. Okay. Does the -- is the flight follower, do they have
22 operational control?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. What type of training does the flight follower get?

25 A. Are general manager, Peter Ruiz, provides flight following

1 training and it's documented.

2 Q. Okay. Are they pilots?

3 A. Well, no -- I oversee it, but -- they provide the training; I
4 oversee it.

5 Q. Okay. Then, I guess, the flight follower, are they pilots?
6 Their background, are they --

7 A. No.

8 Q. Does their training include, like, weather observations?

9 A. Yes. They also receive training on our SMS and our ERP, and
10 on our emergency action checklist.

11 Q. When the pilots fill out this risk assessment, do they file
12 it somewhere before they leave or do they carry it on the
13 aircraft?

14 A. It stays on the computer system. It's filed on the computer
15 system. And that's where I can -- I talked earlier about I can
16 check that they've filled one out.

17 Q. Sure. Do they -- like for this flight, for example, Ara
18 would fill one out before the flight, and then is it before every
19 flight or --

20 A. So it's before -- he fills it out -- as part of his preflight
21 he'll check the weather, check the documents, preflight the
22 aircraft, fill out the risk assessment. If there's any
23 significant change in the day, he's required to do it and start a
24 new risk assessment. So unless there's anything significant
25 change --

1 Q. Okay. Is that -- on this flight, before this -- with this
2 accident flight, was that -- is that what you all have conducted
3 before?

4 A. Many times.

5 Q. Many times. Would Ara have stayed in Carmello [sic] or
6 (indiscernible) --

7 A. Yeah. So he would stay in Camarillo for the return leg.

8 Q. On the day before, do you know how long -- like what's a
9 typical duty day for a mission like that?

10 A. Typically he would return at 4 p.m. So depart around 9 a.m.,
11 return at 4. I didn't look at the flight logs for the day before,
12 but I can check real easy.

13 Q. Okay. Do you all fly at night?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. No restriction? Okay.

16 A. Obviously we need to have our three takeoffs and landings.

17 Q. Um-hum. Would -- have you ever had a pilot call you, you
18 know, he's scheduled for a flight, he calls you and just says, you
19 know, I'm not feeling good -- I mean, how would you handle a
20 situation like that?

21 A. I can't recall a conversation like that, but I would discuss
22 their concerns and either cancel the flight or -- I can't recall
23 having that conversation, but absolutely, I'm always available to
24 -- sometimes I would discuss the flight with the pilot or
25 communicate -- I would contact them --

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. -- to talk about any concerns or issues or potential. Or if
3 it's something unusual, I would definitely step in. Like if it
4 was a location that they haven't landed there before, for example,
5 I would walk them through it.

6 Q. So they --

7 A. That's more likely that it would come from me as opposed to
8 coming from them.

9 Q. Sure, sure. Have you ever had an aircraft, like say if it
10 was on this flight, he gets socked in there, ever had issues from
11 the company from above that says, you know, well, why do you have
12 to take --

13 A. We have had instances where the aircraft couldn't make it
14 back to home base or whatever, and the company has totally
15 supported the decision making.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And I can provide examples.

18 Q. Okay. Has Sikorsky ever come here to conduct, do any
19 training?

20 A. No. Try to sell us helicopters.

21 MR. RIGSBY: I think I'm done.

22 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. I appreciate it.

23 Sathya.

24 BY DR. SILVA:

25 Q. So I'm just trying to understand your process in terms of how

1 a flight -- how you get flights. So does OC Helicopters contact
2 you if they have a request? How does that work?

3 A. So whoever the customer or client is, we'll either email or,
4 you know, through the website or they would call. If they've done
5 prior flights, they would call.

6 Q. Call you?

7 A. No. Typically they would call our reservations department.
8 They would call our vice president of business development or our
9 vice president, typically.

10 Q. And so then, can you walk me through the process? Let's say
11 if somebody calls or --

12 A. If somebody calls and they have a flight request for next
13 Friday, we would get the flight details. We would assess if we
14 can fulfill their needs, and then we would quote them. If they
15 decide that they accept the quote, then, you know, we would bill
16 them and we would put it into our online booking system. If it's
17 an unusual flight or something strange, I would be contacted.

18 Q. When you say you would assess the flight, what are you
19 looking at?

20 A. So if there's something that -- if it was an unusual landing
21 zone or unusual request to pick up a large group and there might
22 be a performance issue, then I would be contacted. And then I
23 would make the decision whether we can actually provide the
24 services or not provide the services.

25 Q. So once you have a flight booked, how do you go about

1 assigning pilots to those?

2 A. The chief pilot generally will assign the pilots. Sometimes
3 I would help or if he's off, I would assist him.

4 Q. So what's your understanding of how that's done?

5 A. We would choose the appropriate pilot that could best -- best
6 suited to the flight according to their qualifications and
7 personality.

8 Q. What kind of information is the company given on the mission?

9 A. That's an open question depending on the flight.

10 Q. So is the pilot given information on when they need -- when
11 the passengers need to be at a certain spot or are they just given
12 a departure time?

13 A. No, they're given the details.

14 Q. So in the case of the accident, do you have any insight into
15 how Ara got that flight assigned?

16 A. So the broker booked it. He was in communication directly --
17 so it was booked by the broker. It was inputted into our computer
18 booking system. Ara assigned himself the flight as chief pilot.
19 He communicated directly with the broker to get the names and
20 weights. I was in communication with the chief pilot and the
21 pilot of the flight the night before. And the morning of, I
22 checked the weather and deemed that the flight was doable. I
23 didn't communicate that with the chief pilot because he's more
24 capable of making his own decisions.

25 Q. Do you recall what the -- when you checked the weather, what

1 it was looking like?

2 A. I can't, but I can tell you that I assessed the weather and I
3 deemed that the flight could be conducted safely, at worst, it
4 might have a slight delay, 30 minutes, an hour, maybe.

5 Q. What are your minimums for launch? Weather minimums. Sorry.

6 A. Class Golf, it states in our GOM 300 feet and 1 mile.

7 Q. How often would you say you depart in less than VFR
8 conditions?

9 A. I can't give you a number, but probably depending on how
10 often we fly Special VFR. We do -- I can't give a percentage or
11 amount of time, but we do.

12 Q. How often do you fly personally?

13 A. You've got access to my duty logs. Maybe twice a week.

14 Q. Twice a week. Okay. So pretty consistently?

15 A. Yes. Yes, pretty consistently.

16 Q. So in the last, I don't know, 6 months, how often would you
17 say you've had to request Special VFR?

18 A. In the past 6 months, maybe three or four times.

19 Q. Okay. So that's how often it would be, okay.

20 So what was -- so you, actually this is -- we started this
21 question already. So in terms of what you know of the accident
22 flight, you checked the weather. Did you follow it at all
23 until --

24 A. No, I did not. I was off that day. But as director of
25 operations, I'm always working.

1 Q. So how did you find out it was missing?

2 A. My vice president called me.

3 Q. Do you know how they found out?

4 A. I can't answer that. You'll have to ask him that.

5 Q. So you mentioned you talked to the flight follower. What was
6 that conversation? What do you recall from that conversation?

7 A. The first person I heard from was the vice president, that
8 there was a missing aircraft. And then -- I would have to check
9 my phone records, but I believe I first tried to call the FBO that
10 he was supposed to land at. Then I tried to call the tower at
11 Camarillo Airport. Then I think I talked to my vice president
12 again to have him try to contact some passengers on board. Then I
13 talked to the flight follower.

14 At some stage I believe that we got notification that there
15 was an accident. I was in an area of very poor phone signal. The
16 only way I had communication with my phone is because I was using
17 a WiFi at a café. And then I made the decision that I was going
18 to go to the scene of the accident. I communicated with the
19 flight follower that -- while I was on en route, that I probably
20 wouldn't have phone coverage for the next 30 minutes.

21 As soon as I got back in cell phone coverage, I called and
22 got updates. I asked him if he had followed the emergency action
23 checklist. He said he had. I asked him had he called 911? He
24 said no. I instructed him to call 911 and give them the details.
25 I contacted the NTSB and the FAA. I continued to the site.

1 Q. Do you recall what kind of details he gave you about the
2 flight when you spoke with him?

3 A. He told me the location, his last known location.

4 Q. Was there anything else besides his location?

5 A. The time it departed, the last known location and the time.

6 Q. Do flight followers have any role in risk assessments?

7 A. They do their own -- well, so it's a dual role, flight
8 follower/ramp agent, and they do a daily risk assessment for
9 themselves.

10 Q. A daily risk assessment.

11 A. Because they have a safety -- they work in a safety role.
12 Sorry about that. They have a safety-related role.

13 Q. Okay. Do they have any interface with the flight risk
14 assessment?

15 A. They do their own flight risk because they've got no access
16 to the pilot's flight risk assessment.

17 Q. Is that also through the same system?

18 A. Yes. So theirs is called a ground risk assessment.

19 Q. Okay. For a specific flight?

20 A. No, no, no, no.

21 MR. SWAIM: I don't think you're communicating that --

22 MR. DALTON: So, yeah, there's probably a miscommunication
23 here.

24 BY DR. SILVA:

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. The pilot does his flight risk assessment on the flight. The
2 flight follower/ramp agent will do a personal ground risk
3 assessment on their day; in other words, the environment that they
4 are working in: Are they fit to work? Have they had the
5 training? It's their environment specifically. Nothing to do
6 with the flight.

7 Q. Okay. So they don't have any interface with a specific
8 flight and assessing risk versus the pilot?

9 A. Absolutely not. No, they've got no operational control over
10 a flight.

11 Q. Okay. So what are their -- again, in your understanding,
12 what are their roles and responsibilities as a flight follower?

13 A. I mean, their main role is to assist the pilot, create
14 manifests. They follow the flight to make sure it's -- so we have
15 oversight to make sure that it's completed safely. In this case,
16 unfortunately, the aircraft went missing. So then their role is
17 to help get assistance. It might be a precautionary landing or it
18 might be an emergency landing that just resulted in a non-event,
19 but they're there to provide support to the flight.

20 Q. Does every flight have a flight follower?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. How many flight followers do you have?

23 A. Four or five. No, actually, more than that because we've got
24 some on the Island. So we've got seven or eight, probably, total.

25 Q. Are they -- in terms of how they're doing job, do they have

1 specific tools they're using that the company provides that --

2 A. Flight following tools?

3 Q. Right.

4 A. They've got the radio. They've got the phone system.

5 They've got the Spidertracks. They've got the All Pro system --

6 no, I said that. Our ERP.

7 Q. So going back to safety, on that note. Can you describe the
8 safety program from your perspective?

9 A. Our safety management system is a tool that can help us as a
10 company identify risks and how to mitigate those risks.

11 Q. So can you give me an example of a safety report that has
12 gotten to you and how that has gone through that system?

13 A. There has been -- I would have to access it to give you
14 details on it. But yes, there's been hazard reports made, there's
15 been -- we've followed up and --

16 Q. How many reports do you typically get, let's say, in a month?

17 A. Typically three or four a year.

18 Q. Three or four a year?

19 A. Yeah, hazard reports, I'm talking about. Right?

20 Q. Okay. Yep. What are the alternative reports?

21 A. That somebody would communicate with me directly or the
22 safety officer.

23 Q. Well, that's fine, too. So in terms of safety issues that
24 you've identified, how many would you say?

25 A. Well, like I say, three or four hazards a year, and then

1 we're proactive. Myself and the chief pilot and the safety
2 manager are proactive in -- like we conduct safety meetings. Some
3 actions or changes are followed up on as a result of findings in
4 these safety meetings.

5 Q. Can you give us an example of a flight hazard or something
6 related to a flight and how that was handled?

7 MR. SWAIM: Do you mean a hazard report?

8 DR. SILVA: Or safety issue.

9 MR. DALTON: We have one ongoing right now, where a pilot
10 filled out a hazard report in relation to air conditioning on the
11 aircraft. The aircraft is now grounded to get the air
12 conditioning fixed. And that's open until the AC is fixed, it's
13 open.

14 BY DR. SILVA:

15 Q. Are there any reporting -- is there any reporting that's
16 mandatory that you would expect a pilot to follow and report to
17 the safety program?

18 A. No, but they are required to be part of the safety management
19 system and attend the meetings.

20 Q. So all of the pilots attend all the meetings?

21 A. Yes. So the way we kind of do it, you know, if some of them
22 are off when the safety meeting happens, so the people who are on
23 site will gather and then people that can't make it, via a
24 conference call. If they're off and out of town or unavailable,
25 they're at an activity, we send them the minutes. We actively

1 encourage participation.

2 Q. In your experience, it's been about a year and a half, have
3 you ever encountered, yourself, or had a pilot encounter IMC?

4 A. No. But I terminated a flight mid-flight. I landed,
5 terminated flight. The weather -- I saw the weather was worse
6 than forecast. It was deteriorating. I landed mid-flight. We
7 got Ubers for our clients. I got a hotel and stayed where I
8 landed the aircraft. It was like at midnight.

9 Q. Was that the only -- you've only done that once, that you've
10 canceled a flight for weather?

11 A. It wasn't canceled; it was terminated.

12 Q. Or terminated. Yeah?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. How often would you say that happens operationally?

15 A. Only ever happened to me once.

16 Q. Do you know of any other cases?

17 A. No, but we have delayed flights until weather improved. And
18 we've cancelled flights. So we've cancelled the flights we can't
19 do due to flight safety, due to the weather, and we've provided
20 options, ground transportation, a jet that can fly in IFR
21 conditions.

22 DR. SILVA: What's that? Do you want a break?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, no. I just said we may want to
24 get the air conditioner on.

25 MR. DALTON: No, let's do it. Can we take a minute?

1 DR. SILVA: Yeah, let's take a break.

2 MR. DALTON: And use the bathroom and get the air going.

3 DR. SILVA: Sounds good. Okay. We are off the record at
4 10:10.

5 (Off the record at 10:10 a.m.)

6 (On the record at 10:18 a.m.)

7 DR. SILVA: Back on the record at 10:18.

8 BY DR. SILVA:

9 Q. Okay. So I wanted to go back to the flight risk assessment,
10 follow up on some questions. You mentioned that on the flight
11 risk assessment that you would get contacted if there's an
12 elevated score. How often does that happen?

13 A. A couple of times a year, maybe.

14 Q. Couple times a year. And how would that conversation go?

15 A. I would get an email.

16 Q. Okay. And do you talk to the pilot at that point?

17 A. Yeah. So we would interject and either terminate or discuss
18 it or change the pilot. It might be an environmental factor or
19 medical factor with the pilot or something like that; you know, I
20 feel sick. Okay, we'll swap out pilots. If it's an issue with
21 the aircraft, bring the aircraft back, take a different aircraft.

22 Q. Okay. I see. And you mentioned that you do spot checks on
23 the risk assessments.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. How often would you find that people aren't completing them?

1 A. Not that often.

2 Q. Say, in the last year, how many times have you --

3 A. Three or four times.

4 Q. Did they -- did you get a feel for why they wouldn't fill one
5 out?

6 A. They just forget. They totally apologized and filled it out
7 as soon as they landed or got on the ground or got access to it
8 from our computer.

9 Q. And you mentioned that you do -- you did the development of
10 the SMS.

11 A. I assisted with our safety manager, yes. It's a living
12 document.

13 Q. And that's, actually that's -- my question is how -- what
14 does that process look like in terms of updating it and assigning
15 weight and --

16 A. So there's no right or wrong way. We can just adjust it to
17 help improve safety within our company.

18 Q. So how do you go about doing that? Can you give me an
19 example of something you might have changed?

20 A. Yes.

21 DR. SILVA: Dujuan, can you --

22 MR. DALTON: So the last update, question number 6 on the
23 weather, it previously had simply said ceiling less than 500 feet.
24 The amendment was if the ceiling is less than 500 feet, that they
25 must call director of operations, chief pilot, to help assess

1 weather and make a safe decision. We elevated the score, and then
2 at the bottom, we introduced two new questions.

3 One of the questions is: I called the director of operations
4 to discuss the weather go/no-go decision. The next question is:
5 I called the chief pilot to discuss the weather, go/no-go
6 decision, and then it has a minus number because that risk has
7 been reduced because they discussed it with the director of
8 operations. That's just one example.

9 BY DR. SILVA:

10 Q. So what prompted that change?

11 A. Just being proactive. There wasn't an incident.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. Just being proactive.

14 Q. So in terms of, yeah, proactive, is there a way that you
15 assess this continuously or how does that work?

16 A. Yeah, it's a living, breathing document. It's all organic
17 within the company. When things come up in our safety meetings,
18 that might have triggered this or something like that. Or it
19 might have been just us, like I said, being proactive. I can't
20 tell you why we made that change. But, you know, our safety
21 culture is one that I believe is strong and we encourage --
22 participation is encouraged.

23 Q. Since we've got the paper out here, I think there was a box
24 here for Special VFR.

25 A. Yeah, Dujuan brought it up there.

1 Q. Yeah. Which number, do you remember, with Special -- write
2 your Plan B in header comments.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. What would you expect to see in that, in the header comments
5 if you're doing Special VFR?

6 A. That they have an alternative.

7 Q. Okay. Can you give me an example of what that might be?

8 A. I can give an example, a personal example.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. So the pilot didn't tick that box on this particular flight
11 because he ticked a box that illustrates that it was VFR that
12 morning.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. If he ticked a box that it was less than 1,000 feet, well
15 then it's going to be Special VFR. So then he would tick this
16 box. If I was in that situation, my -- and the weather at Burbank
17 Airport was less than VFR, my Plan B would be possibly to go via
18 Santa Monica.

19 Q. Okay. Change in route?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. And I know we talked about this earlier, but do you have an
22 idea of when this risk assessment for the accident was completed?

23 A. Yeah. I've got the -- I contacted PRISM, and they've given
24 me a timestamp. We discussed it a couple of days ago that there
25 is no timestamp on it, so I contacted PRISM. They told me how to

1 change the system, that it will provide a timestamp moving
2 forward.

3 In fact, since I talked to you, Fabian, they contacted me to
4 say that the directions they gave me were incorrect so I need to
5 go back and --

6 MR. SALAZAR: Okay.

7 MR. DALTON: -- and change the way we did it. But it's -- it
8 will be done. However, they were able to provide me with a
9 timestamp from the back end.

10 BY DR. SILVA:

11 Q. Do you remember what that is offhand?

12 A. Oh, I can tell you, I -- my phone's turned off. I'll have to
13 pull it up through email. I believe it was 6:55.

14 Q. Okay. Is there any guidance on when to submit the risk
15 assessment prior to a flight?

16 A. Prior to the flight.

17 Q. Anytime prior to the flight?

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. Okay. You mentioned that the SMS was an outside company.
20 What company are you working with?

21 A. PRISM.

22 Q. Also PRISM, okay. And you mentioned that the customers, that
23 certain customers conduct audits. What are they specifically
24 looking at?

25 A. Pilot training, aircraft operations, maintenance.

1 Q. So when there have been initiatives that you've taken to
2 address observations, can you give us some examples of fixes that
3 you've enacted?

4 A. I need to think about it for a second.

5 Q. Sure. Take your time.

6 A. I can't think of one offhand. That's not to say that there
7 hasn't been changes that came as the result of an audit.

8 Q. Okay. So when you -- going back to the flight risk
9 assessments. When you've seen Special VFR in those forms checked
10 off --

11 A. I don't recall ever seeing like Special checked.

12 Q. You don't? Okay. Do you remember when Ara became chief
13 pilot?

14 A. I wasn't employed here, so our HR will have to give you that
15 information.

16 Q. So he was chief pilot when you were here?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. What would you, would -- sorry. What would you describe as
19 his greatest strength?

20 A. He was the most passionate, dedicated, hard working, safe,
21 excellent chief pilot/pilot that I've ever worked with.

22 Q. What --

23 A. His integrity was second to none.

24 Q. Do you recall the last time that you spoke with him?

25 A. The night previous.

1 Q. What did that conversation look like?

2 A. It was a text message. It was text messages. We were
3 arranging a charter, a different charter for Sunday. We were
4 establishing that the we had an aircraft, that the aircraft was
5 airworthy, in other words, all the maintenance was good. It had
6 just come out of maintenance, and obviously the director of
7 maintenance was part of that conversation. And also, we discussed
8 who we would -- which pilot we would assign to the flight.

9 Q. Would you expect, as DO, to find out about a case where
10 someone might have encountered IMC, inadvertent IMC?

11 A. Yes. Certainly, I would. I would hope that I would find out
12 about it, that somebody would tell me.

13 Q. Would you expect the pilot to come to your or --

14 A. I would expect it. I can't guarantee it, but I definitely
15 expect it.

16 Q. Do you know if that's communicated to them any how?

17 A. I've always communicated with them that my door is open and
18 my phone is always on.

19 Q. Switching gears to the FAA real quick here. How often do you
20 speak with your POI?

21 A. Probably once a month.

22 Q. Once a month?

23 A. Some months we -- on a daily basis, some months -- then
24 there's going to be a gap and -- he's really busy though. I mean,
25 he's overworked. I'm not sure how he's paid, but he's definitely

1 overworked, right. Underpaid? Okay. Overworked and underpaid.

2 But we have a good working relationship.

3 Q. Okay. What are those -- are these usually phone

4 conversations? Does he come over here?

5 A. Phone, text message. I go see him. It's only 5 minutes

6 away. And then the only time he would come here was for base

7 inspections.

8 Q. How often would he actually come to --

9 A. Once or twice a year.

10 Q. How is your relationship with him?

11 A. Really good. He's been really supportive, and professionally

12 I think he appreciates what I do at the company and the direction

13 the company's going. But you'll have to have that conversation

14 with him.

15 Q. Do you interact with anyone else on the team?

16 A. Yes. I do have a little bit of interaction with our PMI, Tom

17 Walters.

18 Q. What does that look like? What would you interact with him

19 for?

20 A. Our last interaction was I -- our director of maintenance

21 asked him to come over and visit our new facility, which we're in

22 right now. And he came over and we gave him the grand tour and,

23 unannounced, he gave us, I guess, his maintenance inspection.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And he walked away with no findings. That was our last

1 interaction with him.

2 Q. When did you say that was?

3 A. Middle of -- middle to late December.

4 Q. December. Okay.

5 A. Adam will help you with that.

6 Q. Okay. Can you describe the training program that you've got
7 here?

8 A. The pilot training program?

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. I'd (indiscernible) the manual.

11 Q. That's okay. From your -- in your own words, what does that
12 look like?

13 A. So we use a computer-based online ground training program
14 called CTS, Computer Training Systems. And that helps us make
15 sure that we -- that the pilot does all the required regulatory
16 training. And it helps keeps us organized to make sure that we
17 don't miss anything.

18 They are assigned -- the pilot is assigned a couple of
19 modules every month. So it's not just all terms right before
20 their check ride, for example. So it's an ongoing thing
21 throughout the year. And then there's obviously the check ride,
22 which is annual.

23 There's initial training for new hires. There's transition
24 -- differences training for the different aircraft, differences
25 within the aircraft family.

1 Q. So once a pilot gets hired on, how long do they spend in
2 initial?

3 A. Yeah. Probably about -- before they fly the line, depending
4 on the pilot's experience, 3 weeks to a month.

5 Q. Three weeks to a month. Okay. And that includes --

6 A. So they have, you know, they have -- they start off with
7 they've got to do -- enter the drug program; they got to pass
8 initial drug test. They got to be provided with drug and alcohol
9 training. They get indoc training, company training, aircraft-
10 specific training, computer -- computerized training, ground and
11 flight training in whatever aircraft they're flying, training on
12 our SMS, how we conduct our business, what's expected of them.
13 The GOM, we'll give them -- we'll provide training on our
14 documents, our GOM, our safety management system. It's all
15 listed.

16 Q. Okay. Are those all computerized?

17 A. No. No, it's --

18 Q. It's in person?

19 A. A lot of it's computerized; some of it's ground training one-
20 on-one classroom style. And then there's aircraft ground training
21 and aircraft flight training.

22 Q. And do you contract out for those?

23 A. No, it's in house.

24 Q. Everything is in house. And you mentioned there's no
25 simulator --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- training. All of the training's in the aircraft.

3 A. No. But we do, do annual outside training. So we seek
4 (indiscernible) from outside the company. They provide training
5 on the two airframes that we offer.

6 Q. Is that like a recurrent --

7 A. It's an annual thing, yes.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So to add, as part of that it's ground training and flight
10 training.

11 Q. Is there any portion of your training that involves
12 inadvertent IMC?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Can you describe what that looks like?

15 A. Whatever's listed in the manual. But there is ground
16 training and there is flight training that would include fuel
17 limiting device and the procedures of unusual attitude recovery,
18 and how to fly if you find yourself inadvertent IMC. And then we
19 also do some instrument training. If you find yourself in that
20 position, you communicate -- you fly, communicate, confess, and
21 then you -- usually just some instrument training, that's just,
22 you know, basic flight training as to fly the aircraft, keep it
23 straight and level, turns, banks, that sort of stuff. And then
24 there's usually a couple of approaches. And check ride usually is
25 the same thing. So that they can display competence and --

1 Q. Um-hum. So if a pilot gets into inadvertent IMC, what kind
2 of flight maneuvers are you expecting to respond?

3 A. They have to deal with that emergency however they see fit as
4 PIC. But we provide the training in how to recover from unusual
5 attitude, how to do turns; in other words, potentially they might
6 want to turn out of it and get back to VFR. And then how to use
7 the equipment in the aircraft to try -- use ATC to help them maybe
8 to do an ILS approach or something like that.

9 Q. So it's not -- when you go through the training, it's not a
10 180-degree turn --

11 A. It's that they -- that's their decision.

12 Q. There's no guidance necessarily on that?

13 A. There is -- I'd have to review the training manual.

14 Q. Okay. You mentioned that there is undocumented VIP training.
15 What does that look like?

16 A. We just have the like charter standards, that they are
17 groomed, that they -- you know, that they shaved; if they have a
18 beard, that they're groomed, their hair is groomed. They wear
19 company supplied polo shirt; they wear black pants, black shoes.
20 The aircraft is clean, there's waters supplied, that they don't
21 obviously -- we have a social media policy as well, that they
22 don't take pictures, you know, they don't talk about did these
23 people use our services, because they probably want to avoid the
24 public. And so, there's expectations that they don't take
25 pictures, that they don't broadcast their movements, stuff like

1 that. So it's kind of our charter standards.

2 Q. Is there any kind of CRM or single pilot resource management
3 in your training?

4 A. Yes. It's in our computerized training system. We have
5 initial and then recurrent. So when they first start with the
6 company, they will do initial CRM, and then every year they do
7 recurrent CRM.

8 Q. Do you feel like you're sufficiently staffed when it comes to
9 pilots?

10 A. No.

11 Q. So you have -- well, let's say, pre-accident you had six.
12 How many would you say you would need in order to fulfill your
13 mission?

14 A. Well, it just -- the company has grown to where we're getting
15 a lot more Sikorsky requests. We only have three Sikorsky pilots,
16 so we have an ad out right now looking for a Sikorsky pilot. We
17 also have another pilot that just so happened to hand in his
18 notice before this incident. I think his last day is the 31st.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So I would need two, one to replace him and an additional.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. We already have an ad out.

23 Q. Okay. So --

24 A. And this is our slow time of year, so we're trying to be
25 proactive, once April comes, our busy summer season.

1 Q. So ideally you're looking for eight; is that -- eight?

2 A. No, no, seven. One to replace the guy that's leaving and
3 then an additional.

4 Q. Okay. What are you looking for in terms of hiring, what kind
5 of pilots?

6 A. Somebody that's got local area knowledge. This is one of the
7 busiest airspace in the country, and if you -- all of your flight
8 career is in Indiana where you don't have to deal with congested
9 airspace, it's going to be a challenge to fly here. We like to
10 see somebody that's got -- and experience in the aircraft that we
11 fly.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So local knowledge is key, aircraft-specific experience is
14 also required.

15 Q. Okay. Do you have --

16 A. You know, not to say that we've never done it, but, you know,
17 we don't provide -- take somebody in that's never flown the
18 aircraft. It's just a lot of work.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Also, you know, their experience, their personal demeanor,
21 personality and decision making. You know, just being the best
22 pilot in the world isn't enough. You have to have the right
23 personality that you get on with your co-workers and you can
24 actually conduct yourself with our VIPs. You know, personality is
25 a huge thing in any job, I guess.

1 Q. How -- what does attrition look like?

2 A. I don't understand the question.

3 Q. So are you continuously losing pilots and having --

4 A. No.

5 Q. -- to replace them or --

6 A. No, we don't have a turnover.

7 Q. Okay. How long would you say a pilot, once they work here,
8 is it something that --

9 A. I'd have to direct you to HR, but the chief pilot has been
10 here almost 10 years. David's been here, I want to say, 5 years.
11 This is a guess. I'm just guessing.

12 Q. So you're looking at multiple years?

13 A. Yeah. It's -- the turnover's not an issue.

14 Q. Now switching gears to the OC Helicopters.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. So it sounds like you have opportunity or people come to you
17 directly to book flights and there are other opportunities that a
18 broker would come to you?

19 A. So -- yeah. So people come to our website or know us and
20 come to us directly, and a lot of times when it includes a broker,
21 they will call multiple operators to try and get the cheapest
22 price.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. So we can have the same flight request from five different
25 people.

1 Q. Oh, okay.

2 A. Yes. And sometimes we find ourselves saying we've already
3 quoted. We have brokers call us and we'll say we've already
4 quoted the client directly. They don't like that obviously.

5 Q. Have you had any challenges working with them?

6 A. No.

7 Q. And it sounds like the pilots interface with them also on the
8 ramp. Any feedback from pilots on interaction?

9 A. I'm sorry. Repeat the question.

10 Q. So I think we mentioned earlier that the pilots interact with
11 the OC Helicopters when they're out on the ramp.

12 A. So typically when it's an OC flight, we will set up a group
13 text message to help assist in communications. That group text
14 will usually include whoever booked the flight, so the
15 reservations, our VP of marketing or business development or our
16 vice president. So whoever booked the flight, because they know
17 the request, it'll include OC Helicopters and the pilot.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So that, you know, it's clear, concise communication. If
20 there's changes to the flight details, you know, one text message,
21 everybody knows.

22 Q. Have you heard of any challenges the pilots have had
23 specifically with the broker?

24 A. I had one issue a few months ago.

25 Q. What was the nature of that?

1 A. It was -- the group text message was set up and I added our
2 flight follower to the group text, and OC Helicopters were pissed
3 off because they didn't want anybody else knowing the movements.
4 But we explained to them that our flight follower's going to know
5 the movements regardless.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. So we rectified the situation by removing that person from
8 the group, and then I had to do two texts. Now I had to text the
9 group my movements and then I had to text our flight follower my
10 movements.

11 Q. And regarding canceling flights, how often do you have to
12 cancel for weather?

13 A. Not that often but it does happen. And sometimes the flight
14 could be delayed until the weather improved, or we -- or I will --
15 myself and the chief pilot will interject and cancel the flight,
16 and then our business -- or whoever booked the flight will then
17 provide options, ground transportation or provide a jet that can
18 fly IFR or something like that. But we have done it, yes.

19 Q. Yeah. So when you have to provide alternative means, does
20 that -- is that coming from your bottom line or how does that
21 work? Is the broker handling all of that?

22 A. So if we cancel for weather we refund.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. If we provide an option, we'll charge them.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So, yeah, if the flight is cancelled for weather, we
2 reimburse them. If -- so we would reimburse them, but then if
3 they wanted a jet option or ground transportation, then we would
4 charge them accordingly.

5 Q. And you would just coordinate that -- you have people that
6 you work with, with the contract?

7 A. Yeah. So whoever booked the flight or reservation -- yeah,
8 so we have contacts with the limo company and we have a couple of
9 jet brokers that we work with.

10 Q. I see. Okay. Is all of your time in rotorcraft?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And you mentioned you have to look at your logbook for S-76
13 time, but do you have an idea?

14 A. Probably around 300 hours.

15 Q. 300?

16 A. That's a total guess, but --

17 Q. How long have you been flying the S-76?

18 A. Close to 10 years maybe. That's a guess, but -- yeah.
19 Between 8 to 10.

20 Q. And from what you know of this flight, this specific flight
21 and customer, can you give me an idea of whether this was a common
22 route, common --

23 A. Yes. It was done the day before. I had done it a couple of
24 weeks ago.

25 Q. So is this something that you've been doing for years or --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- how does that work?

3 A. That's a fair comment.

4 Q. Okay. Okay, the last question I have is to think back, and
5 it's a big picture, but in your own words how would you describe
6 your roles and responsibilities here at the company?

7 A. My job is to protect the certificate, our 135 certificate.
8 So I have to protect that by keeping us compliant with all the
9 rules and regulations. My second job -- I mean, my duties and
10 responsibilities are listed in our GOM, but you're asking me.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. You know, it's to keep us safe. To keep us safe and
13 professional, protect the image of the company.

14 DR. SILVA: Okay. Those are all my questions for now.

15 Dajuan.

16 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. Thanks, Sathya. So we'll do another
17 round, I guess, and we'll --

18 MR. DALTON: Three rounds? Come on, I didn't sign up for
19 three rounds. Two rounds is what I signed up for here. So we've
20 got the next one at 11, by the way.

21 MR. SALAZAR: I know. I just have a couple of questions.

22 DR. SEVILLIAN: Yeah, I have a couple here and then we'll go
23 to you, Fabian.

24 MR. SALAZAR: Go ahead, yeah. Yeah.

25 BY DR. SEVILLIAN:

1 Q. So has there ever been an employee here that did not agree
2 with the management style or management communication or anything
3 like that?

4 A. Not that I know of. People might have personal opinions that
5 they haven't shared with me, but I don't know. I can't obviously
6 speak for them, but I don't know. No, I can't -- there's nothing
7 that -- no. No.

8 Q. Does the company have a fatigue policy for pilots?

9 A. Yes. It's in our GOM.

10 Q. Okay.

11 MR. SWAIM: What did you say? I'm sorry. Could you say that
12 again?

13 DR. SEVILLIAN: It's in his GOM.

14 MR. SWAIM: Oh. Thank you. I just didn't hear it.

15 BY DR. SEVILLIAN:

16 Q. I noticed in the -- I want to say this right -- in the flight
17 risk analysis tool, that there is a section named Personal.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And at the bottom, it says a statement that the pilot can
20 fill out "I am fatigued and I am not safe to fly" and they have to
21 rate that. What are they looking for as far as --

22 A. So that was another change that we introduced to our risk
23 assessment tool pretty recently. And the reason that came about
24 was we had a pilot that started his duty day -- he filled out his
25 risk assessment, he started his duty day, and then he called us to

1 say that he's sick, that he doesn't think that he can continue on
2 with his flight duties. So we told him to come back. We swapped
3 out pilots. We told him to go home. And we asked him did he feel
4 sick when he came to work this morning, and he said yes. So we
5 felt that this tool had let us down, so we introduced that
6 question so that it would help improve communications with myself,
7 the chief pilot, and safety manager.

8 Q. And if a pilot was fatigued on a flight, who do they contact?

9 A. They would either contact the chief pilot, myself, safety
10 manager or the ground crew manager.

11 Q. Okay. How often do pilots make calls about them being
12 fatigued?

13 A. It happens during the summer occasionally when they're flying
14 back and forth to Catalina Island. And so what we've done is
15 we've introduced the flights so it'll give them an hour to an hour
16 and a half in the middle of the day. Because it's, you know, it's
17 a hot summer's day and sitting in the seat long periods of time.
18 And then we've also limited the amount of flights that they can do
19 in a day, roundtrips to the Island.

20 When it comes to our charter department, it's generally not
21 an issue because you might do a 30-minute flight and be sitting
22 for 4 hours and then do another 20-minute flight or whatever. So
23 from a charter point of view, fatigue isn't an issue. It could be
24 a long day, and we do have duty limitations, obviously. But the
25 fatigue is only an issue flying back and forth to the Island.

1 Q. And also under Personal is urgency, pressure, customer
2 management, peer pilot.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. So focusing on peer pilot, what does that mean?

5 A. Can I see it?

6 Q. Yeah. It's here.

7 A. So that would be chief pilot or director of operations, you
8 know, somebody above them.

9 Q. So is there anything in there about any external pressures
10 that they may encounter on a flight with a VIP?

11 A. Possibly.

12 Q. That question or that statement there, can you relate it
13 to VIPs?

14 A. So I think -- this is filled out at the beginning of the day.
15 However, in the course of the day they might run into a customer
16 that might be pushing or something, but then they have to deal
17 with that at that point. I mean, this is already done and dusted.

18 Q. Right. Have they ever had -- and to your knowledge, has
19 there ever been a situation like that with a VIP pressure?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. And then one final question is, I see at the bottom of
22 this document --

23 A. Sorry, just to go back and clarify.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. There could be an occasion where it might be a scheduled 2

1 p.m. return and then it might be --

2 (Interruption at the door.)

3 MR. DALTON: You know, the departure time might be moved
4 forward a bit. That's an example of maybe what we're talking
5 about.

6 BY DR. SEVILLIAN:

7 Q. And at the bottom of this document it says if the score is
8 greater than 45, director of ops, safety manager, and then no-go.
9 What does it -- when you say must assess, what are you assessing
10 for a score greater than 45? Are you -- what are you assessing?

11 A. So I'm going to look at what -- the ones that they take that
12 elevated the score and how we can mitigate the risk.

13 Q. Has there ever been a situation where you've spoken with a
14 pilot and say I don't understand why this is a risk or I agree, or
15 is there any disagreement?

16 A. No. When we introduced -- so recently when we updated this
17 document, and we did have a pilot meeting where we went through it
18 question by question to make sure that they understood what's
19 being asked and expected of them. And that's how we went through
20 it so that everybody's clear on what's being asked.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And that's been documented.

23 DR. SEVILLIAN: All right. Thank you.

24 Fabian.

25 BY MR. SALAZAR:

1 Q. What are the approved methods of receiving weather for your
2 pilots?

3 A. It's listed in our GOM.

4 Q. In the GOM? In looking at the GOM and the weather minimums,
5 it states that you can have 1,000 and 500 feet but no lower than
6 300 feet. Have you ever had a conversation with your pilots where
7 while en route, not during takeoff and landing, they found
8 themselves at 300 feet?

9 A. Yeah. They turned around.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. You know, in the environment that we operate in between here
12 and Catalina, there's no weather reporting mid-channel. So, you
13 know, you could be fine here by the Queen Mary and it could be
14 clear at the Island, or it might be, you know, better than 300,
15 and it might deteriorate mid-channel. We've had plenty of times
16 where people have turned around and come back.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I've done it myself.

19 Q. In the past -- since you've been here, we'll put it that way,
20 how many of your VIP pilots have left under -- have left? And
21 what were the circumstances?

22 A. One. He -- his commute was too much so he went to work with
23 another operator.

24 Q. Okay. Is there any animosity?

25 A. No. He loved the company. He loved the flights that we do.

1 He just -- the commute was killing him. He lived down in -- he
2 lived a couple of hours away.

3 Q. Is this Deetz?

4 A. No. It -- sorry, I'm drawing a blank here. It's -- his name
5 will come to me in a second. But no, I wasn't here when Kurt
6 Deetz left. In fact, I worked for the company that he -- I hired
7 him at a different -- so he left here to work for me while I was
8 chief pilot at Helinet Aviation.

9 MR. SALAZAR: All right. I think that's it. Thank you.

10 DR. SEVILLIAN: Thank you, Fabian.

11 Matt.

12 BY MR. RIGSBY:

13 Q. A couple (indiscernible). Do you know how Spidertracks or
14 how often Spidertracks --

15 A. I think it pings every 2 minutes.

16 Q. Two minutes. Okay.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. How are the pilots paid? Salary, is it?

19 A. So we -- no, hourly.

20 Q. Hourly.

21 A. And we guarantee them 40 hours a week. So, you know, in the
22 slow season, if we don't have any work for them, we still
23 guarantee them the 40 hours so they can pay their bills.
24 Summertime there's overtime and life is good, right?

25 Q. And so they are given overtime if -- go beyond 40 hours?

1 A. Yes. If they go over 8 hours in a day, it's time and half.

2 I (indiscernible). Sorry.

3 Q. Are you -- is Island Express, is it purely on demand or do
4 you have scheduled flights?

5 A. No, it's on demand.

6 Q. On demand. Okay. Have you yourself flown 72EX?

7 A. Yes. I loved that aircraft.

8 Q. Okay. Where -- if you would need to get the charts as you're
9 sitting in the airplane, where would you have to go for those?

10 A. Okay. So --

11 Q. Or where are they stored?

12 A. They're in the pocket, the right front pocket. The right
13 front pocket of the door.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. The pilot door. However, I mentioned earlier that we live
16 and operate in a very busy congested airspace.

17 Q. Sure.

18 A. Pulling out a chart is not an option. You need to know where
19 the airspace begins and ends. You need to know the frequencies
20 all by heart.

21 Q. Sure. Electronic flight bags --

22 A. Each pilot --

23 Q. Do most pilots have their own iPads?

24 A. Yeah, most of the pilots have their own iPads and a
25 Foreflight subscription. It's not company issued, so --

1 Q. Okay. Have you ever had any issues with 72EX as far as
2 maintenance?

3 A. No. I mean, just typical maintenance. It's -- I loved the
4 aircraft. It flew awesome. It was very presentable. It was just
5 a beautiful bird to fly.

6 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. I'm done.

7 DR. SEVILLIAN: Thanks, Matt.

8 Sathya?

9 DR. SILVA: I just had one follow-up.

10 BY DR. SILVA:

11 Q. So in your role here as a pilot, can you walk us through when
12 you're evaluating weather, can you walk us through that process?
13 What are you looking at? What are you looking for?

14 A. So if I come to work as a pilot and I'm assigned a flight, I
15 will look at weather and I would assess that it's within the
16 company limitations and my personal limitations, and that -- the
17 trend is the biggest thing, that the trend is better not worse.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. We look at forecasts and we want the trend to be getting
20 better. Unfortunately, it's a forecast, it's not actual
21 conditions. So --

22 Q. So specific -- do you recall what products that you would use
23 to look at the weather? METARs, TAFs, radar?

24 A. Yeah, all the, the government -- the only ones are
25 government-approved ones.

1 Q. Okay. Is there anything in particular you'd be looking for
2 in terms of ceiling visibility product wise?

3 A. I'm sorry. I don't understand the question.

4 Q. Any product in particularly when you're assessing ceiling
5 visibility, what are you looking at? What product --

6 A. Which product do I use?

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. I use Foreflight.

9 Q. Okay. And they have a graphical depiction or do you
10 primarily use the TAF -- or, sorry -- METARs, TAF?

11 A. No, I use the METARs and TAF. The graphic is just a quick
12 reference. But no, I need the raw data.

13 Q. So along the route, you look for the airports along the
14 route?

15 A. The ones I'm going to go to, but I also look at adjacent ones
16 as well. I requested the weather information from the NTSB for
17 other airports because that's what I would have looked at: Santa
18 Monica, CQT, Oxnard and Point Mugu. As a pilot, I would have
19 looked at those, and that's what I requested.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I haven't had a chance to review it for the day of the
22 accident.

23 DR. SILVA: All right. That's the only question I had.

24 DR. SEVILLIAN: All right. So that concludes the interview.

25 I do want to ask is there anything that we should have asked you

1 that we didn't ask you?

2 MR. DALTON: No.

3 DR. SEVILLIAN: All right. Is there anyone that you suggest
4 we speak with as far as our interview process?

5 MR. DALTON: No. We've got the schedule and I'm good with
6 that.

7 DR. SEVILLIAN: Are there any other pilots that have flown a
8 76 here at the company that may be good to interview in the
9 future?

10 MR. DALTON: Just the three of us that -- just myself --
11 well, there was just three pilots: Ara, myself and David Harley.

12 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. That's all I have, and that concludes
13 the interview.

14 Off the record.

15 DR. SILVA: We're off the record at 11:02 a.m.

16 (Whereupon, at 11:02 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

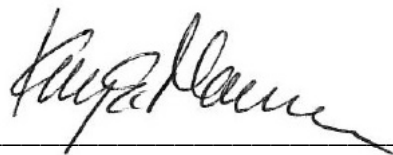
IN THE MATTER OF: SIKORSKY S76B HELICOPTER N72EX
 CRASH NEAR CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA,
 ON JANUARY 26, 2020
 Interview of Garret Dalton

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA20MA059

PLACE: Long Beach, California

DATE: January 30, 2020

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.



Kay Maurer
Transcriber