

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: PATRICIA "PATTI" TAYLOR, Operations
OC Helicopters

Virtual

Thursday,
February 19, 2020

APPEARANCES:

DUJUAN SEVILLIAN, PhD, Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

FABIAN SALAZAR, Operational Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

GARRET DALTON, Director of Operations
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I N T E R V I E W

DR. SEVILLIAN: Again, Patti, my name is Dajuan Sevillian. I'm a Human Performance Investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board. Appreciate you talking with us virtual.

The NTSB overall goal is to investigate accidents and prevent those accidents by putting together recommendations. You are a part of this call because you're an expert, and we want to hear from you on the process.

What you're seeing on the phone is -- what you're hearing on the phone is we have Garret, myself, and Fabian, and they're going to introduce themselves in a moment. But as part of our party system we have these individuals on our list to call when we need to get information, work with them to gather the facts, and that's why they're here with us today.

You are allowed one representative. So who would you like to represent you today?

MS. TAYLOR: I'll be speaking for myself.

DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. That's fine too. One of the things to let you know is that all of this is being recorded. There will be a transcript that will be developed as part of the public docket for the NTSB. So nothing is confidential, but just want to communicate that with you.

So with that being said, we're going to do two rounds of questioning. Any time you have a need for clarity on a question

1 or if there -- if you don't know something, that's fine; just say,
2 I don't know. That's fine with us as well.

3 So with that I'd like to go around the virtual room and have
4 everyone introduce themselves. Fabian?

5 MR. SALAZAR: Good morning, Patti. My name is Fabian
6 Salazar. I'm the Operations Group Chairman for the investigation.

7 MS. TAYLOR: Good morning.

8 DR. SEVILLIAN: Garret?

9 MR. DALTON: Good morning, Patti. Garret Dalton, your
10 Director of Operations for Island Express Helicopters. And I've
11 got some expertise on the actual aircraft itself and our
12 operations.

13 DR. SEVILLIAN: Yeah, thanks.

14 MS. TAYLOR: Good morning, Garret.

15 DR. SEVILLIAN: Thanks, Garret.

16 Anything before we get started, Patti?

17 MS. TAYLOR: No.

18 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay.

19 MS. TAYLOR: Not at this moment. Thank you.

20 INTERVIEW OF PATRICIA TAYLOR

21 BY DR. SEVILLIAN:

22 Q. So for the record, could you please state your first and last
23 name with spelling?

24 A. My first name is Patricia, P-a-t-r-i-c-i-a. Last name
25 Taylor, T-a-y-l-o-r. And I go by Patti. And I'm operations at OC

1 Helicopters.

2 Q. Okay. So you mentioned that you are operations at OC
3 Helicopters. Could you give us just a brief background of what
4 your roles and responsibilities as that position?

5 A. My roles and responsibilities are, I guess, everything, but I
6 don't fly. So I'm not involved in that aspect, but I do run the
7 operations as far as the office, customer relations, accounting,
8 billing, et cetera.

9 Q. Okay. Can you give us a brief aviation background sketch?

10 A. I'm sorry. Can you clarify that?

11 Q. Yeah. Do you have any flight experience or any experiences
12 with aviation?

13 A. I do not. My experience in aviation is just in this business
14 for the last almost 13 years. No flight experience. Just learned
15 the business as I went along.

16 Q. Okay. And how long have you been with the organization?

17 A. Since inception.

18 Q. What year was that?

19 A. Approximately -- OC Helicopters was approximately 2007.

20 Q. Okay. And you mentioned earlier that you're involved with
21 customer relations and accounts. Can you briefly describe
22 customer relations, that process?

23 A. Okay. So we're a smaller company, so customer relations
24 would involve the calls that come in, bookings, answering customer
25 questions, just anything to facilitate answering the client or

1 guest's questions with regard to bookings, questions for events,
2 you know, however to handle those items.

3 Q. And so, for instance, if you had a VIP that would like to
4 book with OC Helicopters, could you explain that process?

5 A. Sure. The VIP and/or their team would be in contact with us,
6 and then we would work out the details of whatever they were
7 trying to accommodate to see what we could do to facilitate. If
8 we were unable to help them because they needed a bigger aircraft
9 or something, then we worked in association with Island to
10 facilitate the request if possible.

11 Q. All right. And is Island Express the only operator that you
12 work with?

13 A. No.

14 Q. What are the other operators?

15 A. The operators we have worked with? I've worked with Helinet.
16 I've worked with Orbic. I've worked with Star. Worked with --
17 I'm sorry. This cold is going to be a problem. We deal with some
18 people in New York. It just depends on where the transaction --
19 or what was needed for the guest.

20 Q. And do you follow the same process regardless of the -- who
21 you work with, what operator you work with?

22 A. Can you clarify what you're asking, please?

23 Q. Yes. You were saying that there's a -- you have a process
24 that you work through for OC Helicopters when working with
25 accommodation of the VIPs.

1 A. Well, I mean, yes. I mean, different VIPs have different
2 requests. But it's the same procedures dependent upon if I'm
3 helping facilitate their security or their, you know, driver
4 service or something like that. But it is, in essence, the same
5 procedures followed. Yes.

6 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. That's the questions I have for now.
7 Fabian?

8 MR. SALAZAR: Okay. Thank you, Dujuan.

9 BY MR. SALAZAR:

10 Q. Patti, a couple of things before we get started. Number one,
11 the NTSB wants to send its condolences to you and your company.
12 We understand this accident has hit everybody very hard.

13 A. It has. Thank you very much.

14 Q. You're welcome. And, number two, if you need to take a break
15 at any time, just let us know. Okay?

16 A. Sure. I'm trying not to cough in your ear but --

17 Q. Okay. Well, just let us know

18 A. I apologize.

19 Q. -- if you need a break. All right? Dujuan --

20 A. Yes. Okay.

21 Q. -- asked a lot of the questions that I had concerning the
22 company. But is OC Helicopters a Part 135 on-demand air taxi?

23 A. Yes, we are.

24 Q. Okay. About how many employees do you have?

25 A. Two.

1 Q. Okay. Is that you and Rick?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. Okay. And other than charter flights, do you do any other
4 types of flights?

5 A. We do Part 91 photo-type flights, golf ball drops. We do
6 tours under the -- and I apologize. My brain is fuzzy. I forget.
7 L-O-A, something, something. But the technical part of that is we
8 do tours, charters, golf ball drops, photo flights.

9 Q. Okay. Tell us a little bit about your working relationship
10 with Island Express. Who do you usually talk with when you're
11 coordinating these VIP flights?

12 A. For the VIP flights?

13 Q. Yes, ma'am.

14 A. Typically my contact would be with Whitney Bagge.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. On occasion, you know, I would have to get ahold of someone
17 else, but for the VIP and VVIP stuff, we dealt directly to
18 facilitate those transactions.

19 Q. Okay. Now, specifically, I have probably -- it looks like
20 five questions that deal directly with the Bryant family. And how
21 did you -- how did OCH, or OC Helicopters, come into doing
22 business with the Bryant family?

23 A. So for years, when Kobe would come into the office and -- he
24 would come in, he would see us there early, he would see us there
25 late, and the bottom line is, he appreciated the work ethic. At

1 the time, initially, when he was flying in the early days, we were
2 not -- we had -- we were in process for our 135, but it had not
3 been granted, so we could not fly him.

4 So over time he kept seeing us and saying -- telling Rick
5 that he wanted us, and his people wanted us, to fly him. And then
6 we would always talk to him. He would say, hey, I want to fly
7 with you guys, I want to fly with you guys.

8 And then his people came to us, and so we worked it out,
9 although we were in process -- at the time he was playing for the
10 Lakers, and they had special requirements to be able to fly him,
11 and so we worked and contacted Island to facilitate so that we
12 could fly him.

13 Q. Okay. And the need to go to Island was because of the
14 helicopter that they had that you guys did not have?

15 A. Correct. They have a -- it's a twin-engine, which is one of
16 the requirements that the Lakers had. They were also, at that
17 time, 135. But for him to fly, it had to be a twin-engine
18 aircraft at the time.

19 Q. Excellent. Okay. Tell us a little bit about the process
20 that you work with the Bryant family's team or -- did you work
21 with somebody specific from the Bryant family to get these
22 flights?

23 A. I did. It just depended on what type of event, where he was
24 going, if it was a personal event or a business event. The
25 Bryants -- Mr. Bryant had different people who handled different

1 things, so sometimes in concert with those people, sometimes
2 working hand-in-hand with another travel agent person he had.
3 Because they handled the aircraft; we handled the helicopter.

4 Q. Okay. On these flights, the one that occurred on the 25th
5 and the accident flight, who was the person that you coordinated
6 on the Bryant team for those flights?

7 A. For the flights for the Mamba Academy that would have been
8 his assistant, Cate Brady.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And typically, you know, she or another one of his assistants
11 would give me the information to start the process. At some
12 point, there was another assistant who was working on that prior.
13 And sometimes we know about stuff well in advance, sometimes it's
14 a few weeks before, sometimes a bit before. But this was planned
15 out; it was a planned tournament.

16 Q. Okay. Just one second. I'm a terrible typist.

17 So for the tournament flights, how far out did you guys know?

18 A. It was -- that's a hard one to quantify.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Sometimes the tournaments came up last minute; sometimes they
21 were planned, and I knew about them maybe a month in advance. And
22 on this particular one, I don't know the exact date that I was
23 first notified to put it on the books.

24 Q. Okay. For this family, was Island Express used exclusively
25 or did you use others to fly this family?

1 A. No. For -- to fly Mr. Bryant came with a vetting process, so
2 I couldn't use someone else. I mean, unless I was doing something
3 for Mr. Bryant out of state, we kept to the same people. And it
4 was because of the relationship we had and the same work ethic
5 that we adhere to is why Island was -- one of the reasons Island
6 was chosen. And so, you know, they were vetted. The Bryant
7 family loved the relationship.

8 And so it was the -- there wasn't another option. There were
9 other operators out there, we just chose not to -- they didn't
10 operate to how I felt the standards needed to be met. So we got
11 with Island exclusively. If it wasn't us, it was Island flying
12 Mr. Bryant.

13 Q. Okay. I'd just like to hear this one statement one more
14 time. Did you say that they loved the Island Express work ethic?

15 A. Yes. That's correct. And they loved the pilot.

16 Q. Well, that's my next question.

17 A. So --

18 Q. Did you request a specific pilot to fly this particular
19 family?

20 A. Absolutely. Whenever possible, Ara was requested.

21 Q. And --

22 A. And for my -- and my charters, if I chartered and brokered
23 something else besides all that, my other VIPs, I requested Ara.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. 99.9 percent of the time.

1 Q. Tell me please what it was specifically about Ara that gave
2 you that desire to have him on the flights?

3 A. So I'm not a pilot, but I know what I like. I know how to
4 deal with people; I know what makes people feel comfortable. And
5 one of Ara's many qualities was he put people at ease, besides
6 being a very technical and proficient pilot. I had flown with
7 him. I don't like flying. Let me just be honest: I'm afraid of
8 heights. So to get in an aircraft with someone, for me, takes a
9 lot. Ara put people at ease; Ara had a friendly demeanor.

10 When you're dealing with VIPs and VVIPs, a lot of times they
11 don't want to be bothered. So Ara was personable enough that
12 people brought him into their world. Did we have other pilots
13 from Island that, occasionally, were approved and vetted and
14 backgrounded and flew for him? Yes. But they always wanted Ara.

15 Q. Okay. Did Cate have that same sentiment about Ara?

16 A. Cate was a newer employee, so she went probably off of our
17 recommendation. I know she liked him. I know that the Bryants
18 felt comfortable with him. So our say-so was good enough, I
19 think, for her. Past assistants, absolutely, same thing. They
20 loved Ara.

21 Q. Okay. Let's move on to other VIP clients that you have.
22 Does Orange County broker other VIP flights with Island Express
23 other than the Bryant family?

24 A. Does -- you mean OC Helicopters?

25 Q. Yes, ma'am.

1 A. Okay. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Of those, is it the same thing? I know you've said
3 this, I'd just like to go through this question. Pardon the
4 redundancy. Does Orange County Helicopters request specific
5 pilots as well for these flights that don't involve the Bryant
6 family?

7 A. That's correct, yes.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. I -- you get a feel for people, and there's certain people
10 that, you know, have -- it's kind of like a nurse. Besides Ara
11 being technical, Ara had a passion to fly, and so Ara interacted
12 with my VIPs very well. So he was often, again, the most
13 requested. If I, you know, if I could and he was available, I
14 requested him for my other VIPs.

15 Because he flew similar to Rick. They kind of flew the same.
16 They have the same interaction with the clients, and they treated
17 him like, you know, like Rick was family. And so when looking for
18 another pilot to fly for some of my charters, my VIP stuff, it was
19 important to have the same, you know, to have -- them have the
20 same confidence that they did in Rick. So -- and Ara very much
21 did.

22 Q. Okay. Was there ever a situation or a circumstance where you
23 used a pilot other than Ara and received negative feedback?

24 A. Well, I'm not sure -- I mean, negative feedback. People have
25 different opinions on what they like. But were there pilots that

1 they didn't care for as much? You know, the Bryants were kind of
2 a demanding -- not demanding, but they liked things a certain way.
3 They didn't like, you know, like change. So were there pilots
4 they didn't like? Yes. There was a pilot who had been all over
5 the news. They didn't care for him, which is why we stopped
6 having him fly for Mr. Bryant.

7 Q. Would that be a gentleman with the last name of Deetz?

8 A. Yes, it would.

9 Q. Okey-dokey. Would you mind elaborating on that, please? I'm
10 looking for specifics on what the clients didn't care for in this
11 gentleman.

12 A. One of the things is, you know, all pilots have a certain way
13 of flying. Now, again, I'm not a pilot, but before if -- when
14 we've hired people, they have to pass all the happy tests and all
15 the -- I don't care if they have 45,000 hours and they passed the
16 FAA, they have to pass my test. So I'm more brutal than
17 everybody. And so there's a different way to fly, you know, and
18 it has to do with the smoothness, the landing, and all that kind
19 of stuff. And every pilot has their own little grooves that they
20 fly into.

21 Kurt, from my understanding, from comments and feedback that
22 I had given to me, was that it wasn't -- you know, I'm not
23 questioning or doubting any of his proficiency. However, it just
24 wasn't as smooth of a ride. And it's all about the comfort. It's
25 all about the -- making the guests feel happy. You know, often

1 there was no interaction, and there was no interaction because if
2 you were liked by Mr. Bryant, Mr. Bryant interacted. So, you
3 know, in his news reports that, you know, oh, he just was really
4 quiet. He was quiet because he didn't like the guy. And that's
5 just a fact.

6 So his interaction with Ara was very warm and friendly and
7 joking. He asked about Ara all the time. Joked with Rick. I was
8 Boss Lady. So if you knew him, it was a different relationship.
9 And so that's why he was quiet is because it was just, you know,
10 like a taxi driver was in there. It wasn't that, you know -- so
11 his relationship with Ara was warm and family, and they trusted
12 him. And he trusted him with his girls and family, which was
13 paramount to him.

14 Q. Thank you. Let's talk a little bit about flight
15 cancellations. Okay?

16 A. Um-hmm.

17 Q. Has Island Express ever had to cancel one of the flights they
18 scheduled with OC Helicopters for any reason?

19 A. Oh, absolutely. You know, weather happens, stuff happens,
20 and both of us operated -- there was never, you know -- nothing is
21 more important than the safety of everybody involved. So
22 absolutely, flights were cancelled, delayed, if weather happened.
23 Every once in a while maintenance or something would happen, and
24 there's -- if something was up, we didn't fly.

25 Q. Okay. Did some of these cancellations involve the Bryant

1 family's flights?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. When you had to cancel, would you go through Cate?

4 A. No. Cate wasn't there then, when -- again, Cate is a more
5 recent employee, so there was another employee that was his
6 personal assistant. There's lots of different layers of
7 assistants. And we would go through -- I would go through her and
8 let her know if weather was up.

9 There was often times where perhaps we had to fly him one way
10 but couldn't fly him back due to weather that came in or had to
11 cancel or had to delay it. Now, make no mistake, he didn't like
12 being told no, but we told him no.

13 Q. Just one second.

14 Now, I think we're going to, we're going to interview Cate as
15 well. Do you think she is the best person to talk with about some
16 of these cancellations?

17 A. No. Because, again, she is a new -- she was a newer
18 employee. So up until the end of the year his other assistant was
19 more intimately involved with his schedule, with his stuff, with
20 everything else.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So I mean, Cate -- the newer assistant, Cate, was more hired
23 on as Vanessa's assistant. She just kind of took over a little of
24 it, and she did some of the personal stuff. But all of the other
25 stuff, and most of the travel, involved his other assistant that

1 was with him for years.

2 Q. Okay. I don't know anybody else to ask this question to, but
3 if you don't feel comfortable answering it, please let me know.
4 Can you give me the name of that assistant that would be better
5 off answering these questions?

6 A. I can. I just need to make sure it's okay with them.

7 Q. That's --

8 A. I would imagine it's fine.

9 Q. That's perfect. So let me rephrase this. I would like to
10 speak with the assistant who is better off in answering the
11 questions about dealing with the flight cancellations for the
12 Bryant family. If you would not mind, please contact her, and let
13 her know that. And then get back --

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. -- in touch with me to let me know what their wishes are. I
16 appreciate that.

17 A. Absolutely.

18 Q. Thank you, ma'am. Let's see --

19 A. I mean, weather happens, and unfortunately, as much as we
20 want to think we can control everything -- I mean, there were some
21 games he didn't go, because we cancelled the flight, and he didn't
22 want to drive up because of weather.

23 Q. Um-hmm. When you had to make these unfortunate cancellations
24 how did the lady who usually handles these affairs, how did she
25 receive that information?

1 A. Either via text or a phone call from me.

2 Q. And did she ever give OC Helicopters grief or try to pressure
3 you into taking the flight?

4 A. Never. She had to deal with an unhappy VIP who had to get
5 his rear in a car and drive sometimes, but never pressured to fly.
6 And at the end of the day, Ara could never be pressured to fly if
7 it wasn't correct.

8 Q. Okay. But the Bryant's family contact that coordinated with
9 you, she would receive the bad news, and she wouldn't -- she would
10 not try to pressure you into taking the flight. Is that true?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. All right. Thank you. Do you -- can you recall a time when
13 Island Express ever launched out on a flight and then had to
14 return back for any given reason?

15 A. Launched out -- I mean, I can, I can recall a flight that we
16 had to go and land somewhere else because of weather, and then we
17 switched cars and drove from there.

18 Q. Okay. Just one second.

19 All right. Was that a maintenance or weather-related
20 occurrence?

21 A. Weather. Oh, no, weather.

22 Q. Okay. All right. Let's talk a little bit about Orange
23 County -- or OC Helicopters' support for Island Helicopters [sic].
24 Now, I'll get specific. Other than brokering these flights for
25 your clients with Island Helicopters, was there any support that

1 OC Helicopters gave to Island Helicopters?

2 A. I'm sorry. Can you clarify on that?

3 Q. I certainly can. Any support by way of providing fuel when
4 they would land at John Wayne Airport to pick up clients? Did you
5 guys provide fueling services?

6 A. No. That would have been -- if they, if they took on fuel,
7 that would have been done by the FBO.

8 Q. Okay. What about any type of flight following services?

9 A. Well, as a course of business, I always followed the flights
10 of my VIPs. So that wasn't a party of them necessarily, it was
11 just what we did, and I do for all my VIP people. They have
12 people, and their people have people, so everybody has to be in
13 the loop of what's happening, and their people's movement at all
14 times.

15 And so I -- in the course, especially for Mr. Bryant, I had
16 to notify sometimes security, the assistant, sometimes, you know,
17 different people asking about his movements and where he was going
18 to be and that kind of stuff. And so, as far as the flight
19 following, you know, I did do that in addition because I needed to
20 keep to schedules and let people know what was happening.

21 Q. Okay. Thank you. What tools did you use to flight follow?

22 A. As far as flight following for us it was just a matter of
23 keeping track of the time. Like in, you know, Mr. Bryant's case,
24 I know what the flight routes are typically. I know what it
25 should take. I have drivers on the ground. So I kind of, you

1 know, guesstimate and then track it from there. Sometimes off of
2 FlightAware.

3 Q. Okay. Did you ever have a need to reach out to the pilot
4 when he was on the ground, like, you know, call him on his cell
5 phone?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Let's see. I don't know if I asked this. If I do --
8 if I already have, I'm sorry. What about, did Orange County -- I
9 keep saying that -- OC Helicopters provide any type of weather
10 updates for the pilot when he came to pick up the VIPs?

11 A. They would discuss. Sometimes weather reports don't always
12 give a, from my understanding, a good indication. Sometimes
13 taking out of, you know, Long Beach, sometimes Rick would be on
14 the ground and give a on-the-ground report of the visibility
15 coming in to, like, OC. Sometimes they would discuss weather and
16 that kind of stuff.

17 Q. Okay. Do you recall if Rick had any conversation with Ara on
18 the day of the accident?

19 A. As far as weather?

20 Q. Weather or anything else that would be important to our
21 investigation.

22 A. You know, I'm sure they did. Rick was usually there --
23 usually Rick was there in the mornings and stuff to help with the
24 flight load-up if he was there and we had flights or something, so
25 I'm sure that at some point he spoke to Ara on that morning. I

1 know I did, and I had called in, and Ara was in our office with
2 Rick.

3 MR. SALAZAR: Okay. You've answered my last question, which
4 was going to be maintaining contact with the pilots. Right now,
5 that's all I have, Patti. Thank you.

6 And back to you, Dujuan.

7 DR. SEVILLIAN: All right. Thanks Fabian.

8 Garret?

9 MR. DALTON: I don't have any questions at this time.

10 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. I'll start the second round.

11 Patti, do you need a break or are you okay?

12 MS. TAYLOR: No, I'm okay. Thank you.

13 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. Yeah.

14 BY DR. SEVILLIAN:

15 Q. So you mentioned earlier that Mr. Bryant did not like to be
16 told no. Can you elaborate on that?

17 A. When you're -- I mean, most people don't like to be told no.
18 So when, you know, you have schedules and you're wanting to go
19 somewhere, and you have to tell someone that, no, you can't fly --
20 he didn't necessarily like it, but he didn't argue about it. He
21 just -- he liked to fly, and he liked to get there. He liked to
22 get his job done. So, you know, he was okay with not flying. He
23 wasn't necessarily happy, but again, nobody likes to be told no.

24 And sometimes, as you well know, you're on the ground, and
25 where you're at outside it's looking perfectly beautiful and

1 sunny, and then we're telling him, no, we can't fly, you know,
2 some -- he had to question that. But he understood, you know, it
3 was the whole picture, and that the reason -- for whatever reason
4 why, we were telling him no.

5 Q. All right. And do you have any knowledge or information
6 about the tournament schedule that he was going to on the 26th --
7 January 26th?

8 A. I mean, except for the 25th and 26th were scheduled
9 tournaments at the Mamba Sports Academy.

10 Q. And as far as -- were there any discussions to your knowledge
11 about weather that day -- on either one of those days, how the
12 weather was?

13 A. Well, I would probably say yes, there was, because we always
14 were concerned about weather. It was just a part of what they
15 always looked at, so it was always mentioned. You know, hey,
16 how's the weather? How's this? Because when you're setting
17 things up, and people have to get somewhere, we're always trying
18 to plan in advance. So make sure if there's any TFR, that kind of
19 stuff, in advance planning of the flight.

20 Q. Can you remember any weather restrictions on the 26th of
21 January?

22 A. No. None that I'm aware of. I know that it was, you know,
23 it was clear for him to come in, and it was clear -- in the
24 weather reports, he was okay to take off. But that's all I am
25 aware of.

1 Q. And you mentioned that weather happens. You mentioned that
2 statement often. So what -- do you see a lot of VIPs have issues
3 with the weather? And, you know, if they need to get to a
4 destination, do they have issues with the weather?

5 A. I'm not, I'm not sure what --

6 Q. On whether --

7 A. -- you're asking. I'm sorry.

8 Q. On whether to fly in certain areas. For example, you -- say
9 you have a VIP on board, and they need to fly to, say, Van Nuys,
10 and you know that the weather is probably not the best. How is
11 that communication to the VIP? Is it an easy conversation? Is it
12 sometimes difficult?

13 A. I think it depends. I think it depends, it depends upon the
14 VIP, and it depends upon the VIP's people. Because, again, some
15 of these VIPs have lots of people. You know, I've had people
16 where I told them we were unable to fly, and they said, well, I
17 don't understand; it's beautiful and sunny here. And, you know,
18 get upset and that kind of stuff. We had one VIP come and get mad
19 at us for a while because we refused to fly.

20 It's just kind of -- it's one of those things you can't
21 control. It's weather. And like it or hate it, you know -- most
22 people are good about it, but there are people who get upset and
23 don't understand and take an aircraft and, you know, that's their
24 option, but if it's not safe, we don't fly.

25 Q. Right. And how is -- for example, the pilots that you choose

1 for the, for the operators, if the pilots are part -- are going to
2 be flying a VIP, do you ever have any communication with the pilot
3 saying, hey, the weather's not looking good over here; we're not
4 going to be able to fly? Or is that something that you guys make
5 an internal decision before you talk to them?

6 A. I'm sorry. Can you say that again, sir?

7 Q. The -- do you talk with the pilots about the weather, and how
8 the weather -- whether it's good or not so good?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And --

11 A. We do.

12 Q. And was there ever a time where Ara communicated -- you guys
13 communicated with Ara about the weather?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And can you give me an example of how that communication was?

16 A. It could be via a phone call. It could be via text. Here
17 along the coast sometimes the fog comes in, so oftentimes I would
18 be at the airport, and the air -- he would -- Ara would be in Long
19 Beach, and I'm like, hey, there's some fog coming in or, you know,
20 what do we look like for our flight tomorrow? And so Ara would
21 look into it and kind of keep me posted on what he thought the
22 weather reports were going to be, because there's a lot of moving
23 parts. And so we were always, as much as possible, trying to be
24 on top of it prior to.

25 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay, that's all the questions I have for

1 now.

2 Fabian?

3 MR. SALAZAR: Probably one or two questions about the flight
4 on the 25th, the day before the accident.

5 BY MR. SALAZAR:

6 Q. Patti, did -- when you dealt with the Bryant family, as far
7 as departure times or arrival times, was one more important than
8 the other? Did they worry about departing or were they worried
9 about their arrival times?

10 A. With regard to who? Who are you saying was worried about
11 time?

12 Q. This is specifically the Bryant family and --

13 A. Oh.

14 Q. -- Mr. Bryant's need to be somewhere. What I'm trying to
15 understand is, was it important for the helicopter to be there
16 early to meet a timeline, or what?

17 A. Well, we always scheduled the helicopter to be on location at
18 least 30 minutes prior to any departure date. Typically and
19 historically, Mr. Bryant was always late. So as far as, like, --
20 you know, nothing was ever rushed, and we were always there on
21 standby for whenever he chose to depart.

22 Q. Okay. On the flight on the 25th, was there any -- were they
23 late when they got to Camarillo?

24 A. Were they late? I have to look and see in my notes when the
25 actual departure time for the 25th was. I don't recall it being

1 excessively late. And again, with Mr. Bryant it was, we set a
2 time. I think on those dates the times got moved back, like, a
3 little bit earlier. But we always were there. And Ara -- if we
4 had the helicopter there 30 minutes prior, Ara was always even a
5 little bit earlier just in case.

6 Q. Okay. But getting back to the 25th, I would like to know
7 what the scheduled arrival time was, but more importantly, did you
8 receive any type of feedback that told you that they had arrived
9 late on the 25th?

10 A. On the 25th? No.

11 Q. Okay. So for the flight on the 26th, did anything have to
12 change as far as departure times because they would have been late
13 on the 25th? Did anything change on the 26th?

14 A. No. The two dates were independent of each other.

15 MR. SALAZAR: Okay. That's all I have, Patti. Thank you.

16 DR. SEVILLIAN: All right. Thank you, Fabian.

17 Garret?

18 MR. DALTON: I've got no questions.

19 DR. SEVILLIAN: So that concludes our interview, Patti. We
20 really appreciate you taking time out. I know these are difficult
21 times, and so we appreciate you helping us out. Are there any
22 questions that you have for us?

23 MS. TAYLOR: No, I don't think so at this time, but if I
24 think of something, I will let you know. And, again, if you have
25 any other questions, please let me know how I can assist.

1 DR. SEVILLIAN: Okay. Sounds good. We really appreciate it.

2 MR. SALAZAR: Let me throw one thing in. Patti, this is
3 Fabian. Would you mind calling me back and letting me know what
4 the other assistant -- whether that person would be available to
5 have us do a small interview?

6 MS. TAYLOR: Yes, of course.

7 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you, ma'am. That's all I have. I'm
8 going to say farewell to you.

9 And I'll talk -- I'll give you guys a call back when we're
10 done. Okay, Dujuan?

11 MS. TAYLOR: All right. All right.

12 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you, Patti.

13 MS. TAYLOR: All right, thank you.

14 DR. SEVILLIAN: Thank you.

15 MS. TAYLOR: Bye, gentlemen.

16 DR. SEVILLIAN: Bye-bye.

17 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

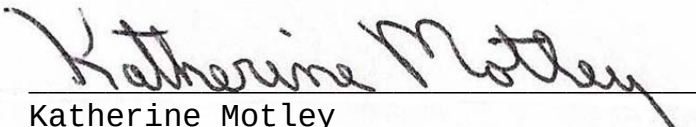
IN THE MATTER OF: SIKORSKY S76B HELICOPTER N72EX
 CRASH NEAR CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA,
 ON JANUARY 26, 2020
 Interview of Patricia "Patti" Taylor

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA20MA059

PLACE: Virtual

DATE: February 19, 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.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber