

DCA21FA174

OPERATIONAL FACTORS/HUMAN PERFORMANCE

Attachment 3

Previous Rhoades Aviation, Inc./TransAir Personnel Interview Transcripts

May 4, 2022

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TRANSAIR FLIGHT 810 CRASH *

NEAR HONOLULU, HAWAII, *

Accident No.: DCA21FA174

ON JULY 2, 2021 *

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Interview of: BRIAN BELL, Pilot

Federal Express, former pilot at Trans Executive
Airlines of Hawaii

Honolulu, Hawaii

Friday,
September 24, 2021

APPEARANCES:

DR. WILLIAM BRAMBLE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAWN ETCHER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JACOB ZEIGER, Air Safety Investigator
Boeing Commercial Airplanes

CLARENCE KANAE, Principal Operations Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

RYAN FRISKEL, Pilot
Trans Executive Airlines of Hawaii

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:21 a.m.)

DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. Today is September 24th, 2021, it is 10:21 a.m., and my name is William Bramble. I'm a human performance investigator with NSTB. I'm assisting -- with Shawn Etcher, I'm leading the operations working group for Accident Investigation Number DCA21FA174 involving Rhoades Aviation Flight 810.

The NTSB's an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the Department of Transportation or the FAA and it has no regulatory or enforcement powers. I would now like to have Mr. Etcher and each of the operations group members briefly introduce themselves.

Mr. Etcher?

MR. ETCHER: Hi, good morning, I'm Shawn Etcher. I'm the operational factors investigator with the NTSB.

MR. KANAE: Hello, I'm Clarence Kanay with the FAA. I'm stationed here in Honolulu at the Certificate Management Office. Operations are my specialty.

MR. ZEIGER: My name is Jacob Zeiger, I'm an air safety investigator for Boeing Commercial Airlines.

DR. BRAMBLE: And Ryan?

MR. FRISKEL: Ryan Friskel, Rhoades representative and assisting the investigation.

1 DR. BRAMBLE: All right. Is there anybody in here, Brian,
2 that you wish to not be present in the interview?

3 MR. BELL: No.

4 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. Today we will be using a digital
5 recorder. After the interview, we will send the recording out for
6 transcription and the party members will have an opportunity to
7 review that transcription and correct it for any typographical
8 errors.

9 Once again, the purpose of the investigation is to determine
10 probably cause and prevent recurrence. Our role is not to assign
11 fault, we're simply here for you to share your insight with the
12 goal of preventing accidents. Having said that, however, we
13 cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity and the
14 transcription of this interview will eventually be part of the
15 public docket for this accident investigation.

16 Each of the group members will have a chance to ask
17 questions. We'll ask questions one at a time, everyone's been
18 instructed not to interrupt the person who's asking questions at
19 that time. There will be an opportunity for each group member to
20 ask follow-up questions after each person's had a turn.

21 Please answer all questions to the best of your recollection.
22 If you don't know, you can say you don't know, if you don't
23 understand a question, just say so, and if you realize you
24 misstated something or you want to correct something, please just
25 let us know. You're entitled to one representative of your

1 choosing in the NTSB interview and I believe you declined having a
2 representative?

3 MR. BELL: Correct.

4 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. All right, does anyone have any
5 questions before we begin? All right.

6 INTERVIEW OF BRIAN BELL

7 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

8 Q. All right, Brian, can you tell us your full name and spell it
9 for us?

10 A. Yeah, Brian Kaopua Bell, B-R-I-A-N, middle name, K-A-O-P-U-A,
11 last name Bell, B-E-L-L.

12 Q. Okay, and how old are you?

13 A. 46.

14 Q. Okay, and what's your date -- what was your date of hire with
15 Rhoades Aviation?

16 A. February 16, 2013, I believe.

17 Q. And when did you leave Rhoades?

18 A. September 20, yeah.

19 Q. September 20th, 2021?

20 A. Correct. Actually, 2016 to 2020, sorry.

21 Q. 2020?

22 A. Correct, 2020, yes.

23 Q. In other words, last year?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay.

- 1 A. Yeah, just over a year ago.
- 2 Q. All right, and where do you work now?
- 3 A. Federal Express.
- 4 Q. And what's your position there?
- 5 A. I am Oakland Base 767 first officer.
- 6 Q. Okay, and what positions did you hold at Rhoades?
- 7 A. I started off as a first officer. I did not have any jet
8 experience prior to getting on property, so I had to get 500 hours
9 per the company -- FA hours and type upgraded shortly after that
10 into the left seat. You know, I spent a bunch of time in there
11 and put my name in the hat for check airman and finished as a
12 captain check airman -- line check airman.
- 13 Q. All right, and can you give us a brief overview of your
14 aviation related background before you came to Rhoades?
- 15 A. Yep. So, first 121 -- I started in 1998, right out of
16 college, got all my ratings and what not. First 121 opportunity
17 was in 2000 with Island Air and fast forward to 2013, got hired
18 with Empire Airlines operating Ohana by Hawaiian as a captain in
19 the ATR 42500. I stayed there for three years and then got on
20 property with TransAir as a FO and then obviously FedEx is where
21 I'm at today.
- 22 Q. Okay. How many total flight hours would you say you have
23 now?
- 24 A. 8,000, 9,000, something around there.
- 25 Q. How many did you have when you were hired at TransAir?

1 A. Probably seven-ish.

2 Q. Thousand?

3 A. Yeah, 7,000 something -- something around there. I don't
4 know, sorry.

5 Q. Right, yeah. Okay, who was your supervisor when you were at
6 TransAir?

7 A. Chief pilot was Wallace Horibata, director of operations was
8 David Seest.

9 Q. And in your role as a check airman, what did you do -- what
10 were your duties and responsibilities.

11 A. I was -- I shared responsibilities with Ed Rinsma, who is a
12 fellow check airman, and together he and I did the training for
13 the first officers and getting them up to speed so that we can get
14 them checked out and online.

15 Q. Okay. Did you supervise anyone?

16 A. No.

17 Q. All right, and who provided your training when you came on
18 with TransAir?

19 A. I started off ground school with Bob Lander (ph.) and he did
20 our initial training for the right seat and when I upgraded it was
21 Wallace and there on -- thereafter it was Wallace.

22 Q. Okay. What would you say about the quality of training that
23 you received?

24 A. I thought it was good. You know, having previous 121
25 experience obviously helped prepare in knowing what to expect

1 going into training events and I thought it was good situations
2 where we had training in yearly events -- I guess every other six
3 months of the yearly recurring; it was scenario based. It was --
4 you know, initially when I first started, naturally it was a big
5 fire hose, so after those -- that one year I was like that's kind
6 of like the plant, the way I call it -- the soil dried and then
7 now it can take on more water and learned more stuff. So, I
8 thought it was really good.

9 Q. Did you go to Miami for the simulator?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What did you find satisfying or difficult about working for
12 the company here -- for TransAir?

13 A. The difficulty was, you know, not knowing what lies ahead for
14 that night. You come to work at -- you show up at 11:30 and when
15 I first got hired it was -- we did a lot of FedEx contract work,
16 And so, we'd show up at 11:30, 1:00 the freight's still not there
17 and where's the freight, like, why aren't we leaving, you know,
18 finally it shows up and then your night actually gets started.
19 So, it was coming to work not knowing what time everything is
20 going to start to move.

21 But it was a great opportunity of learning and experiencing
22 that to where I'm at today with FedEx and it's the same thing. We
23 show up at, you know, 2:00 and we're waiting for freight to show
24 up and starts one-hour-and-a-half late. So, it's the same thing,
25 it really can turn you off for the FedEx experience. Though it

1 was hard, it was a good -- then of course you have those nights
2 where we've got an extra flight, you know, okay. So -- but we
3 learn to adjust and prepare yourself and get rest.

4 Q. All right. Did you know Captain Henry Okai?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. How well did you know him?

7 A. I did his training as a first officer when he first came on
8 property.

9 Q. What was he like as a pilot?

10 A. He was good, he always had a good work ethic and strived to
11 do the right things. But he had a good attitude and I had nothing
12 wrong with him. Some guys pick up a lot quicker, some guys it
13 takes a little bit of time and, you know, he was probably right
14 around the average, I guess.

15 Q. Okay, and what kind of person was he personality wise?

16 A. Nice guy, I mean, he always -- you know, if he had a
17 question, he always asked you hey, Brian, you know, I was
18 wondering whatever the question is, oh, yeah, you kind explain it
19 and he goes okay, so I see -- so, what you're saying -- you know,
20 just make sure that he's understanding what I'm saying, just
21 making sure. So, it wasn't like okay and then you walk away and
22 does he really understand, you know?

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. Or is he really unsure and he just doesn't want to -- he's
25 shy of trying to get that confirmation. But he always, you know,

1 made sure that we were always talking apples and apples and orange
2 and organs.

3 Q. How many 737's did the company have when you left?
4 Operating?

5 A. When I left, we had five, I believe.

6 Q. Okay. Do you remember anything unusual about the number 810?

7 A. I believe that was the Dash 9 engines and that was the only
8 Dash 9 on the property if I recall correctly.

9 Q. Okay. Anything else stand out about it?

10 A. Not really. Obviously, you know, an older engine, it took a
11 little more time to get up to altitude versus the 15's and the
12 17's that the other aircraft have. But nothing -- you know,
13 engine running hot or whatever, no.

14 Q. Did you encounter any issues with compressor stalls in any of
15 the airplanes?

16 A. We had situations with that. I don't recall which planes had
17 them, but I know they did have some issues with that.

18 Q. Did you personally experience it?

19 A. Coming out of the gates initially on the block out, you would
20 have that. But it wasn't, like, every flight it did it, you know,
21 maybe the first flight of the night for the whole night, you know,
22 no matter where you were, whether you're in Hilo, Maui, Kona, or
23 Honolulu. And I tried to baby the engines a little bit, I'm not
24 sure how other guys fly. My thought process was like my dad
25 instructed, if you take care of the things that take care of you,

1 they'll last a lot longer. So, I always tend to let the airplane
2 roll to the end in Kona versus trying to get up at that taxiway,
3 it's, like -- it's a three-minute difference, you know.

4 Q. Did -- so, was it, like, a daily occurrence you'd have a
5 compressor stall?

6 A. I wouldn't say a daily thing, no.

7 Q. Weekly?

8 A. Probably. I mean, obviously, you have to get that aircraft,
9 I'm not sure what other guys incurred, but you know --

10 Q. Was it just one aircraft that did that?

11 A. I can't recall, sorry.

12 Q. Okay. So, when that would happen, would you always write
13 that up or was that something that wasn't (indiscernible)
14 compressor stalls?

15 A. Talk to maintenance about that and, you know, I wrote up
16 stuff to get corrected. I guess it's known that there's a lot of
17 MEL stickers and I -- my opinion is a lot of it is time, you know,
18 you write one and you have three others that you have to -- it's
19 tied into that one. But my thing was, you know, you talk to them
20 and hey, you know, this happened and some guys would be like all
21 right, tell me more about it and some guys are like okay, write it
22 up, you know.

23 So, my thing was, like, hey, let's talk about it, if this is
24 a serious -- I mean, if there's something that you can duplicate,
25 like you know it's coming then you can write it up. But there's

1 other stuff in there that it's just like okay, I can write it up
2 and I get on the ground, you can't duplicate it. Okay, I get
3 back, you know, the whole it might not come on again, you know,
4 and then you fly that same plane a week later and it -- five
5 entries prior to, somebody else wrote it up, okay, but I won't get
6 it that night.

7 So, I just tried to -- I looked at the last ten entries and
8 figured okay, what has transpired, what's the trend with this
9 aircraft and okay, FO this is what we're looking at. And whenever
10 it did come up, I wrote it up because, like, hey something needs
11 to be done because obviously, you know, it happened ten flights
12 ago and it's still happening now.

13 Q. Yeah, one of the things we're figuring out is whether or not
14 that's a reportable event, we just don't know.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. And so, that's why we've been trying to sort that out lately,
17 you know, if you had occasional backfires, I mean, is that just a
18 thing that happens, it's already been reported, you don't have to
19 keep reporting it every time or do you have to report every single
20 instance of it. What would -- I mean, would you feel like every
21 single time it happened you would have to write up or what was the
22 story with that?

23 A. I guess the -- what was portrayed -- the way I understood it
24 was yeah, we know it's happening, but it's within limits. It's
25 what I was told -- from what I recall, I should say. Okay, and

1 then, like I said, it will happen again, you know, for the rest of
2 the night. I get the plane the next night, it never happened
3 again. So, it was kind of like okay, how do I tell you this is
4 happening, but then you're there, it doesn't happen.

5 Q. So, it mostly was verbal -- you'd tell the mechanics
6 verbally?

7 A. Yeah, I mean, obviously, there were times where okay, you
8 know, if it happens again, I'm going to -- you're telling me it's
9 within limits or that's a known thing, what's the gauge showing,
10 nothing on the gauge, you know. I don't know what to tell you.

11 Q. Okay, and let me ask you another thing about the older
12 engines in these airplanes. Did you commonly see EGT's in the --
13 get up into the yellow range during takeoff quickly, right at
14 thrust?

15 A. No.

16 Q. So, that wasn't a -- did you ever see it?

17 A. I kept them down. So, I mean, if it was 97 percent, I tried
18 to get it to 97 target, most of the time I was probably in a 95.
19 But I don't recall anything in the yellow.

20 Q. Okay. All right. Any unusual problems with hydraulic
21 pressure or loss of hydraulic fluid?

22 A. No, not in my experiences.

23 Q. Okay. Did anybody in the maintenance department ever ask you
24 to delay a maintenance writeup that you were discussing with them
25 until after you came back from a trip rather than reporting it

1 before you left?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Did you hear of anybody else being told that?

4 A. No. From my experience, you know, if I'm in Maui, or another
5 island, you know, it was -- talking about -- talk about it and
6 just basically say okay, we're stuck here, I mean, you guys got to
7 come figure out how to -- what's going on because I can't risk my
8 ticket going somewhere else or back to Honolulu and something
9 happening.

10 Q. Uh huh. So, nobody ever told you that?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay, and were you aware of any rejected takeoffs due to high
13 engine temperatures?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Any recurring issues with cabin pressurization?

16 A. We had 306 I want to say was a pressurization when it --
17 after it came back from a heavy check there was pressurization
18 issues with that. I figured it out by self, you know,
19 investigation, like, if I lift the throttles up a little bit, it
20 kept the pressure up and it would hurt my ears. So, therefore you
21 just plan your decent, you know, a little bit earlier. And I
22 wrote those up too because I couldn't handle it with my ears.

23 Q. What was up to --

24 A. When you're at altitude.

25 Q. Uh huh.

1 A. So, it was mostly on a descent that it would happen.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. So, what I would do is I would keep the thrust levers up just
4 a little bit versus all the way back to idle to keep the pressure
5 from going up. But first I would have to -- you know, instead of
6 doing 60 miles, you got to start at 80 miles.

7 Q. Yeah. All right, do you recall any flight crews being afraid
8 to write up maintenance issues because they were afraid of losing
9 their job?

10 A. No.

11 Q. And did you have any concerns about writing up maintenance
12 issues or grounding airplanes?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. How often did you see the FAA?

15 A. On property?

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Like walking around or --

18 Q. Did you -- how often did you interact with FAA inspectors
19 when you were on duty?

20 A. Not very often.

21 Q. Okay, and who is responsible for managing safety at Rhoades
22 when you were there?

23 A. I'm guessing David Seest. As far as the pilot safety?

24 Q. Company overall.

25 A. What was that guy's starts with a -- Orlando?

1 Q. I know it's been a year -- Orlando? Okay.

2 A. I don't -- I'm not sure if he was safety or not.

3 Q. If you had a safety related concern when you worked at
4 Rhoades, how would you communicate that to management?

5 A. Document it on a (indiscernible) report.

6 Q. Is that a company (indiscernible)?

7 A. Or whatever form they had for safety. I forget what they
8 called it, but there was a form for that.

9 Q. Okay. Did you ever do that?

10 A. Not to my recollection.

11 Q. Okay. Did you feel supported by management and able to make
12 safety related decisions as a pilot without fear of repercussions?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Did you feel pressured from management to do things you
15 thought were unsafe?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Did you have any safety related concerns about the company
18 when you were employed there?

19 A. No.

20 Q. And how would you describe the organizational safety culture
21 at Rhoades?

22 A. I thought that it was okay. I mean, they were there, they
23 were around, they were present and they had, you know, the forms
24 for us to fill out. I mean, I always told people it was a great
25 company to work for, you know, the (indiscernible), the MEL

1 stickers, and they explained the people that we're looking at the
2 company, like, all of the times. Like I said, they're
3 interrelated and then a lot of the times too, the aircrafts are so
4 old, finding parts for that replacement part is hard. So,
5 overtime it'll get corrected, it's just trying to find that part.
6 I think that's, you know, kind of a challenge for them as far as
7 flying those older airplanes.

8 Q. Okay, and how would you describe the relationship between the
9 pilots and maintenance staff at Rhoades when you were there? Was
10 it good or strained or difficult?

11 A. Neutral. I mean, you've had guys where hey, have you talked
12 to -- yeah, no problem, wow, yeah, you know. I mean, like, you
13 might hate you and you might like them and hate me. I mean --

14 Q. Just kind of going on --

15 A. It's all personalities and you just try to figure out, like,
16 look, you're here to do the job and you get it done correctly and
17 safely and, you know, I'm trying to give you as much information
18 as I can as far as what's the problem and asking you how to
19 correct it.

20 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah. Okay, thanks, Brian, I appreciate it.
21 And Jason?

22 Actually, Shawn, sorry.

23 MR. ETCHER: Sure.

24 BY MR. ETCHER:

25 Q. You doing okay?

- 1 A. Yep.
- 2 Q. All right, great. You were a line check airman?
- 3 A. Correct.
- 4 Q. When did you become a line check airman?
- 5 A. July of '19 I want to say.
- 6 Q. July of 2019?
- 7 A. 2019.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. And you said you did FO's or did you do you captain and FO's?
- 11 A. Strictly FO's.
- 12 Q. Strictly FO's. Who did the captains?
- 13 A. Wallace.
- 14 Q. Wallace. Did you do the FO's OE or were you in the SIM?
- 15 A. Just OE.
- 16 Q. Just OE? Okay. When you go out with FO's to do OE -- and I
- 17 think you said you did the captain -- asked the captains OE, did
- 18 they come to you prepared to handle a (indiscernible) flight? Or
- 19 did you really have to help them along through OE? I know OE's a
- 20 lot of work --
- 21 A. Like I said, you know, there are some guy's that their
- 22 previous experience really helped them and then there's other guys
- 23 that never had the experience and there's guys that didn't have
- 24 experience that did really well, too. For me, personally, I think
- 25 it's more of a personal thing and how much time are you willing to

1 put into what we need to do to get it done.

2 But as far as having issues with anybody coming out of
3 training? No. I mean, the biggest thing that I saw was the
4 autopilot system because it's a little bit different and I think
5 trying to understand the vertical guidance -- the lack of, should
6 I say and know what to do. If it's not doing what you want, click
7 off the auto pilot, fly the airplane, think about what you want to
8 do and then let's try and go through that process; okay? If
9 you're still stumped, okay, well let's do this. The next trip,
10 same thing. Remember what we did last -- one hour ago, okay,
11 let's do that again and you kind of work through. But that was
12 the only thing with the autopilot because it was just a little bit
13 unique than what most guys are used to.

14 Q. How long were your typical flights?

15 A. Half hour average.

16 Q. All right. Now, doing training is a challenge in flight, you
17 know, there's a lot of stuff going on and all that.

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. But on a short flight, did that add complexity to being able
20 to train first officers?

21 A. I think the load for a new guy, it was really quick. But
22 there are -- you know, we had -- I try to get it -- I'm like okay,
23 let's go to the plane. Okay so, let's talk about what we're going
24 to experience in this half an hour trip because by the time we get
25 up to top of climb -- cruise, we're starting down. So, there

1 really is no cruise. For instance, going to Maui, that's usually
2 the case where -- okay, remember when we talked about on the
3 ground, okay now let's apply it, you know.

4 One flight, I remember, was with -- actually with Ryan, I
5 think it was his first day and we were coming back into Honolulu
6 and we had these step downs from control ATC and I was like this
7 -- I think I told you correctly, I was like Bro, this is the best
8 experience you could've ever gotten because this usually doesn't
9 happen. But it forced him to kind of grasp the concept and I
10 think it helped you in your training, you know, my -- what I
11 perceived.

12 Q. I know we talked about you did the accident captain's OE when
13 he was an FO. Did you do the accident FO's OE at all?

14 A. Yes, I did some of it, yeah. Both of them, yeah.

15 Q. Okay. Can you -- I know it's been a while, so it's okay if
16 you don't know an answer, I don't know works fine, but can you
17 recall kind of how his abilities were?

18 A. Greg was really sharp and I'm sure you guys know he has a
19 lawyer background. He was really sharp, I think -- if I recall
20 correctly, his issue was speed control and not knowing when to
21 start down or when to start your checklist or what not. I think
22 that comes with experience. I experienced the same thing as far
23 as -- when I first started. It was okay, at what point do I need
24 to start descending to get down to altitude, it's like
25 configuring.

1 Same thing with FedEx, when I'm at FedEx -- when I first
2 started, is there, like, a general consensus of at 60 miles I'm
3 going to do this, at 30 -- I found out that they're all different
4 because we're doing approaches. With TransAir, everything -- it
5 pretty much stayed consistent because we're doing the same thing
6 every night. So, I think as time goes on, he ended up being a
7 really good FO. But initially, I think it was speed control, if I
8 remember correctly. But once he mastered that and figuring out --
9 I reiterated just remember, you know, we're at 20,000 feet, 60
10 miles, you know, you're at three to one.

11 Q. Did you ever fly with either of them outside of OE or were
12 you pretty much tied up in the OE?

13 A. I'm sure I did. You know, I try to have the pilot hat on,
14 although I was still a check airman just kind of hey, just
15 remember now, you know, what we did two weeks ago on our OE. Oh,
16 yeah, that's right. So, it was a good refresher for them to kind
17 of -- my job at LCA was basically like I wanted these guys to be,
18 you know, super pilots so that when they came through like wow,
19 you're really good. Well, yeah, this guy really helped me, you
20 know, back in 2017 -- or 2019 I guess it would be. And I -- to
21 me, that was my -- kind of my pride and joy was to see these guys,
22 like Ryan, you know, where they are today. Dude I remember when
23 you were the little pion guy that did really well and look at
24 where you are now.

25 Q. All right. How many hours, from what you can recall, would

1 it take a new hire FO to finish OE? How many hours were they
2 usually given?

3 A. On an average maybe 40.

4 Q. Okay. Did you feel like at 40 they were ready to fly with
5 any captain out there or --

6 A. I mean, there were some guys that were really raw. I mean,
7 there was -- not -- gentleman that went -- that came from
8 Southwest --

9 MR. FRISKEL: Shawn Morgan (ph.)?

10 MR. BELL: You know, I did his OE his first two days and I
11 told David -- I'm like this guy is ready. I mean, he had previous
12 experience in the 737. No, it was more of an hours thing, making
13 sure that we're still following the rules and doing that. For
14 him, it was like you're ready to go, you just got to get the hours
15 at this point, whereas other guys are like okay let's hold your
16 hand a little bit.

17 But my thing was I didn't want to send anybody to Victor, who
18 was the number one captain, you know, Victor Antonov and having
19 Victor come to me and say did you sign this guy off? I'm like
20 yeah and then how could you? I'm like -- you know, I didn't want
21 that, I want it to be like he or she showed me the skills that
22 needed to be successful. I can't control what happens after that,
23 you know, I can tell them what to do and what's right, what's
24 wrong, but once they go -- as you probably know, once they're off
25 the line, now we're going to catch them on a training event or a

1 line check if that captain is not going to spank their hands
2 saying hey, this is what we need to do.

3 Q. All right. Did you do any other duties? I mean, I know line
4 check airman is a big duty at any airline. Did you do anything
5 else at Rhoades as well?

6 A. I was jump seat coordinator at one point. I set up a lot of
7 the agreements initially and then once we got kind of -- we
8 stagnated a little bit -- which was fine because the only ones we
9 were missing -- I think to this day is United and Delta, the big
10 ones -- and Southwest. But I was able to get a lot of contracts
11 set up, you know, FedEx, UPS. I always told the guys, like, hey,
12 I'm here representing you guys, so you tell me what you want. I'm
13 coming from St. Louis, it would be great to get Southwest, they're
14 like I understand. I'm trying, trust me, Southwest would be
15 great, but other than that -- that was jump seat coordinator,
16 which I ended up, you know, showing to Mr. Friskel here.

17 Q. Okay. With your experience as a line check airman, did they
18 have you help with any of the main rules or any of the programs
19 they use?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Did you work with the weight and balance system at all?

22 A. No.

23 Q. No? Okay. On weight and balance -- you know, how was weight
24 and balance given to you? Did you guys have to manually deal with
25 it or was it provided to you guys before departure?

1 A. It was provided first from Bobby Lehman.

2 Q. Okay, and did it seem like the numbers were what you would
3 anticipate? That's a bad question, I'm sorry. When you were
4 given the load manifest or the weight and balance form and then
5 you took off, did the airplane feel like what your load manifest
6 said? In other words, did it feel overly heavy compared to what
7 was on the form?

8 A. Not -- no, I mean, what I normally saw every night was kind
9 of what I expected. Nothing really stood out, like, an overload
10 of some sort, no.

11 Q. Okay. So, they gave you the weight and balance, but did they
12 give you your performance numbers, like you V1 speed -- V speeds
13 or EPRS?

14 A. That's what we got through the QRH.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Did you guys do normal thrust takeoffs or did you do D rate
18 or reduce thrusts?

19 A. Most of the time we did reduce thrust.

20 Q. Was there a reason? Just help me understand, I just want to
21 --

22 A. I think it was because the engines were old and to keep them
23 cool -- keep the temperatures on, you know, normal. I think
24 that's what the process was.

25 Q. Okay. Kind of walk me through, you get your paperwork and

1 you got your numbers. How would you determine your reduce thrust
2 settings?

3 A. I recall it was to the QRH with the scales that they have in
4 the book.

5 Q. Okay. So --

6 A. Kind of -- I don't recall exactly what it was, but I remember
7 there was some kind of chart where you had to mix and match okay,
8 here's our -- this is the number, here's our D rate number.

9 Q. Who determined that number, was it -- who did that number,
10 was it you as a captain or was it the first officer?

11 A. We both did it to verify that we were both looking at the
12 same numbers, same chart.

13 Q. Was that a pretty simple way of doing it? Okay, for example,
14 you're on an OE -- you're conducting an OE with an FO, did that
15 give them challenges to figure out the reduce thrust or was that
16 --

17 A. It was pretty -- I mean, it was a simple process once you
18 understood making sure you're going to the correct performance
19 chart. You know, I -- you get -- obviously, you know, fatigue
20 comes through the not and what not and focus maybe gets lost on
21 one flight, that's why we both do it. Like I got 90, I got 92,
22 okay, let's look at why we have different numbers. Oh, crap, I
23 looked at the wrong line, you know, instead of 80 -- instead of
24 20, I looked at 21 or something, or I took the average of the two
25 versus the higher number and used the higher number or something

1 like that.

2 Q. Okay. All right. We always try and ask this, but at any
3 point in your career, did anybody try to get you to modify any
4 paperwork after the fact? Like oh, we've kind of miscalculated
5 something here, can you resign this off, it's better or anything
6 like that? Did you ever encounter that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Did you ever hear of anybody encountering that?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. Was there any point that -- whether it was
11 specifically stated or just implied, was there ever pressure to
12 complete the mission? You know, you're sitting on the ramp and --
13 you know, was there that pressure like let's get this thing out of
14 here, let's go.

15 A. Yeah, Bobby -- I mean, Bobby Lehman is Bobby Lehman, I mean,
16 from what I know him and he was always we got to go. I'm like
17 okay, I'm only going to go as fast as I'm going to go so --
18 because I'm not going to get busted for something that you put me
19 in a hole, you know. So -- and I always told guys on OE as well,
20 like, don't let anybody rush you because when they rush you and
21 something happens, guess who gets busted? Me, I thought yep, so
22 don't let anybody rush you.

23 On the same token, don't be lollygagging back to make them
24 push you. Like, be on your toes -- like, that was Wallace's thing
25 like, you know, you guys come in, take a break, go to the

1 bathroom, but get back to the plane. You know, I don't want to
2 hear I can't find the pilots when you're right next door in the
3 next office or something like that. I mean, we kind of knew the
4 process, like, two planes come in, all right, who's going next.
5 Okay, 809's going next, okay, I'm in 810, okay, I'll just wait
6 until they push out and then walk right out so that we're just
7 sitting in the plane for 30 minutes doing nothing.

8 Q. Okay. Doing OE, did you ever -- was there any requirement
9 with the FAA to come and observe your OE duties?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. How often did that happen?

12 A. I believe on the initial sign on it did and I believe every
13 year we had a line check as far as check airman certification if I
14 recall correctly.

15 Q. Okay. Do you remember who that -- by chance, the last time
16 you did it, who that was?

17 A. I want to say John Murakami, but I'm not sure.

18 Q. Okay and that's okay, not sure is fine too. When that FAA
19 guy came out -- and I think you said earlier that you didn't see
20 them him that often, but when they did come out, did that cause
21 your FO's to become nervous for any reason?

22 A. I think naturally, I mean, with the inexperience -- you know,
23 we're all there, I was there. Like FAA is like there we go, get
24 busy or something. If you're experienced it's like no, that
25 actually what you don't want to do, you know, you actually want to

1 go there and meet them and get their confirmation that hey, I
2 questioned you and you answered my questions, let me see you go to
3 work, oh, I can trust this guy, and I try to do that.

4 That was from Island Air days where we used to turn in our
5 packets at the end of the day and naturally -- you can correct me
6 if I'm wrong, but you you'd go over there and you see everything,
7 it's not, you know, the edges aren't meaning. They're going to
8 red flag, like, this guy doesn't pay attention to detail, let me
9 see what I can -- if there's anything in here. Like, okay, let me
10 check this guy, like oh, good, you know, all right let me check,
11 no, a couple months later, let me check this guy, still good.
12 Like, all right, this guy is presenting something, takes pride in
13 his work -- or her work and maybe you'll get somebody I'll get
14 periodically versus maybe I'll check this guy a little bit more
15 because the attention to detail is not there. Maybe that least to
16 his or her work ethic. So, I always told the guys, you know, go
17 out there, they're just a guy. They're doing their job, you do
18 your job and not problem, no harm no foul.

19 Q. Did you ever have an FO not successfully complete OE?

20 A. No, not on my -- I never did not recommend anybody if that
21 makes sense.

22 Q. No, it does. Was it ever done? Has anybody ever not
23 recommended someone?

24 A. A lot of the times, you know, Wallace would come up and hey,
25 how's is so and so doing? I'm like well, they're all right, I

1 mean, it's a work in progress. Yeah, they're taking a little
2 longer than person A, but they have a good attitude, you know, we
3 can get to that point. But it wasn't like so, do we keep them, do
4 we not? Like, I mean, if someone's showing a good attitude and
5 positive movement, I don't see why you would not. Okay, well let
6 me put them with Ed. Okay, yeah, Ed, same thing -- I see the same
7 things Brian's seeing, so I'm just going to keep working with this
8 person and hopefully, you know, get them out of line.

9 Q. All right. Did you ever have an engine failure at TransAir?

10 A. No.

11 Q. No? Okay, that's good. In training -- did you feel like the
12 training that crews are getting whether training FO's, which
13 that's what you would've seen, but also captains? Did you feel it
14 was preparing them for the tasks as a crew member?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. So, I got to ask, why did you leave TransAir for your current
17 employment?

18 A. Quality of life.

19 Q. No, that's fine, that's a valid reason.

20 A. Have a pension.

21 Q. No, that's a good, valid reason. How is the pay at TransAir,
22 from what you can recall, compared to other cargo operators?

23 A. Initially, when I started as an FO, I believe it was like 51,
24 52,000. It wasn't much, we had guys leave, you know, for more
25 money and then it worked out where they upped the contract I think

1 right after I upgraded. So, I upgraded to, like, 84,000 or
2 something like that and then the new contract came in three months
3 after that and it jumped it way up to be more competitive. But, I
4 mean, to be home every day, I guess -- not every night, but then
5 to have a week off every four weeks. You know, there's a lot of
6 good things that other companies can't give you.

7 Q. And you said they upped the contract to -- TransAir is not a
8 unionized --

9 A. No.

10 Q. Right, okay.

11 A. Right.

12 Q. So, was it a contract with you -- with each individual pilot?
13 Or was it a contract for all pilots?

14 A. All pilots.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. All pilots under the same pay scale.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So, everyone knew how much -- you know, obviously, you don't
19 know the years of service unless you ask that person but -- or you
20 figure out like okay, they came right before me, now they're a
21 captain so they're right before me even though I'm an FO because I
22 don't have a thousand hours or something like that.

23 Q. Was there any training contracts for new hires that come in?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What was that training contract like that you can recall?

- 1 A. Two year prorated, 30,000, I want to say.
- 2 Q. Okay. So, it was a two-year prorated contract?
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. Okay. Did that -- did you ever hear of crews staying just
5 until the contract was done and they could leave so they didn't
6 have to pay that money?
- 7 A. I know there -- I mean, naturally, it's human instinct.
- 8 Q. Right.
- 9 A. My thing was, you know, I'm here, I got a type rating and I
10 give my commitment to them. Obviously, if somebody calls with a
11 better package, I'll deal with the consequences at that point.
12 Never happened for me, so I flew my contract and, you know, house
13 miles.
- 14 Q. Just running through my notes here. One last question and
15 then I'll hand it back. When you were getting a brand-new FO to
16 do OE with, typically -- I know that's a big term, right, but
17 typically did you keep that FO all the way through their 40 hours?
- 18 A. No.
- 19 Q. They weren't assigned just to you?
- 20 A. No.
- 21 Q. It was split amongst all of you?
- 22 A. Yeah.
- 23 Q. And how many line check airmen were there?
- 24 A. It was just Ed and I.
- 25 Q. Just Ed and you?

1 A. Ed Rinsma and I, yeah.

2 Q. Did you guys brief each other?

3 A. Yeah, we had our reports that we fill out every night.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And then kind of share hey, have you done OE with Friskel?

6 Oh, yeah, you know, yeah, he did great on this, we experienced
7 this. Kind of gave him a brief verbal because there wasn't, like,
8 a file where we had here's Friskel's folder, you can read
9 everything. We didn't have that access to us.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So, it was more of a verbal thing, although we did do
12 reports.

13 MR. ETCHER: Okay. All right, I think I'm good for this
14 round. I appreciate it. I don't have any more questions.

15 Did you -- who'd you want to pass to next?

16 Jason?

17 MR. ZEIGER: Yeah, I can go.

18 BY MR. ZEIGER:

19 Q. I have just a few, thank you for your time. I wanted to go
20 back, we were talking about D rated thrust takeoffs and maybe you
21 contemplate maybe you needed 97 percent or something like that and
22 then you'd get 95. Was that based on the EGT values keeping the
23 EGT out of the yellow?

24 A. No, not -- as far as -- if I understood your question, was I
25 -- are we doing this number to keep it out of the yellow?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. No.

3 Q. No? Okay.

4 A. No.

5 Q. So, it was -- you'd set what you needed and then the airplane
6 would respond and you'd get the thrust basically that you were
7 asking for?

8 A. Yeah, right.

9 Q. Okay. My next one, you mentioned the pressurization issues,
10 I think it was -- you said it was on 306 --

11 A. I believe that's the first -- after it came, I noticed -- if
12 I recall correctly, in my opinion, that was the best airplane -- I
13 mean, landed the best, never gave me any problems.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. The best of the best. You give me five planes, pick one,
16 306.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. It went to heavy check and it came back and I was like let me
19 fly 306, it smells clean and then I thought dude, we got pressure
20 problems, you know, like okay, then you try to -- what is it
21 doing? Okay -- and they do whatever they do, the run up -- you
22 know, you write it up, you do the run up and oh, yeah, we found
23 it, we corrected it. Okay, three nights later you get 306, oh,
24 yeah, let me try this, I'm like dude, it's the same problem. So,
25 trying to replicate what happens at 20,000 feet on the ground, I'm

1 not sure, I'm not a mechanic, I'm just a pilot. But 306 had that
2 pressure and I figured it out, like I said, you keep the thrusters
3 up just a little bit versus pulling them back to idle, which is
4 what the norm was on a descent, it helped. The thing is you just
5 got to think about it okay, I got thrust a little bit and then you
6 start down 20 miles prior to 60, 80 miles and no problems.

7 Q. Yeah, thank you. So, did I hear you said that you wrote that
8 when that --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay, do you happen to remember what the response was from
11 maintenance?

12 A. We'll take a look at it, if I recall correctly.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I mean --

15 Q. Well, because you also mentioned that you'd come back to the
16 airplane and, you know, kind of flip through and say oh, I
17 remember this. Did -- was there any part of that when you were
18 going back to see what the write up response was and
19 (indiscernible)?

20 A. No, I never did. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay. Did -- but did you generally -- would you say you
22 generally trusted what the mechanics were doing and that they --

23 A. Yeah, I never had any kind of doubts that they're trying to
24 cut corners.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. If that's kind of what you're leaning towards.

2 Q. That answers, thank you. One last question from me, you
3 mentioned a little while back that one of the things that was on
4 your mind when it came to recommending an FO was the potential for
5 getting good feedback. Could there be negative feedback from
6 Victor?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Am I getting that correct?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. So, did that ever happen? Did he have negative feedback?

11 A. There was one person that I did sign off and then -- I'm not
12 sure if it was Victor or who it was, but -- you know, let's say it
13 was Victor. You know, hey, let me talk to you for a sec (sic).
14 What's up? He goes, you know, how did you sign off Joe Smith?
15 I'm like because he did everything he was supposed to do, like, I
16 mean, there was nothing I could do to hold him off of the line.
17 Like -- because now it's, like, oh, he doesn't like me because
18 blah, like, no, you do what you're supposed to do, I sign you off.
19 Like I said, once I pass you off on the line, there's nothing I
20 can do other than draw up -- you know, catch you on a line check
21 -- when I fly with you, correct you, catch you on a line check, or
22 (indiscernible).

23 Q. I see. Was there -- in this case that you're thinking of,
24 was there a particular trait about the FO that --

25 A. In this case -- yeah, I think it was his attitude.

1 Q. Okay, anymore that you think was going on?

2 A. It was probably -- from what I understand, he was supposed to
3 be a straight captain, he had every -- he met the criteria to be a
4 straight captain, although when it came to SIM, I guess something
5 -- I'm not sure what happened up there. But it was like no,
6 you're going to be a FO, like, you promised me captain. So, of
7 course he had this attitude because now I'm supposed to get this
8 much money, now I'm only getting this. So, now you have a --

9 Q. I see.

10 A. I want to help you out, but you've got to help yourself too,
11 you know.

12 Q. Understood. So, to your knowledge, then that kind of
13 resolved itself between this person and --

14 A. Yeah, he ended up -- he did end up upgrading.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And I think shortly after, he found out he had cancer or
17 something and ended up passing away.

18 Q. Oh, wow, okay.

19 A. But that's the only person that I've heard about that after
20 OE was signed off that he went back to his old self.

21 MR. ZEIGER: Understood. Well, thank you very much. That
22 was it for me; I'll pass it back to Bill.

23 DR. BRAMBLE: Clarence?

24 BY MR. KANAE:

25 Q. I have a couple questions, Brian.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Can you explain at the outer island stations, the preflight
3 procedures, getting your weights, your weight balance, and your
4 release? How is that accomplished?

5 A. So, like, let's say I land in Maui, they offload the plane,
6 the FO does his walkaround postflight -- preflight if you want to
7 call it that and then, you know, usually I talk to the master
8 loader. He ended up leaving and going to UPS, but he was a really
9 good guy and would just, you know, talk to him and how we looking,
10 oh, yeah, all we have is these cans and whatever. Once everything
11 is done, somebody else that was in the office would come out with
12 the weight and balance, update the weather, give us that
13 information, and then we would proceed on.

14 Q. And from that information, then you would have your V speeds
15 and make sure that your wind and weight balance within the limits
16 of the aircraft then?

17 A. Yes, correct.

18 Q. Okay, so it wasn't computed prior to you leaving Honolulu,
19 then, it was all done at --

20 A. To my knowledge, no.

21 Q. Okay, got you. Also, during your operation of OE, did you
22 notice any discrepancy in the aircraft logbook with notation of an
23 I or an F?

24 A. I believe that was information only, if I recall correctly,
25 and I think F was for flight crew. I'm not -- I don't recall.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But I remember there was some kind of indication of a letter
3 represented something else.

4 Q. So, did you ever have to indicate that status after closing
5 out a flight, for example?

6 A. I did, there were -- some were info (sic) only, you know,
7 because it wasn't something -- it was just like hey, this was --
8 we just heard this, it never happened again.

9 Q. Was that a normal procedure?

10 A. No, most of the time it was a straight write up that we did.

11 Q. I see. As a check airman, as you were in your -- training
12 your FO's, do you recall the rows engine failure procedure after
13 takeoff? Takeoff meaning first leg of climb, engine failure out
14 of Honolulu.

15 A. Correct. What I do recall is briefing the engine out
16 procedure for that specific airport. But after that, I didn't
17 want to recall, sorry.

18 Q. Any headings or altitudes to --

19 A. Well, whatever was on that -- depicted on the chart was kind
20 of what we were -- this is what we're going to do -- the plan of
21 attack. Should we lose an engine, we're going to track outbound
22 -- I think it was on the 171 to Ohana if I recall correctly, which
23 is what the chart says.

24 Q. Got you, okay. So, the chart meaning that was a copy of the
25 procedure, or was that a chart that was published by --

1 A. (Indiscernible) or NOAA.

2 Q. Okay. All right, and my last question is do you recall any
3 concerns -- major concerns that you wanted to bring up to the
4 chief pilot or to the director of operations?

5 A. No, everything -- you know, Wallace and I have a really good
6 relationship up to this day. I've always been a straight shooter,
7 you know, there's no bow in my arrows. I always tell people, you
8 know, you're welcome to ask questions, if you don't like my
9 answers then don't ask questions because some -- a lot of people
10 in general -- the whole population have a hard time understanding
11 the truth and the facts. And that's -- like I said, if you're
12 going to ask me a question, I'm going to tell you what my opinion
13 is or what my answer is and if you don't like it then hey, go
14 ahead and ask someone else, you know. I do that to my kids, so
15 they go to their mom a lot and ask questions. Although, they know
16 I'm the teddy bear.

17 MR. KANAE: All right. Thank you, Brian, that's all I have.
18 Back to you.

19 DR. BRAMBLE: Ryan?

20 MR. FRISKEL: I don't have any questions at this time, I
21 appreciate it.

22 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah, no problem.

23 All right, I don't have anything else. So, we have a couple
24 things -- Shawn --

25 MR. ETCHER: I've got just a few.

1 DR. BRAMBLE: Oh, you do have some? Okay.

2 BY MR. ETCHER:

3 Q. I realized as I've gone through my notes that I forgot to ask
4 what pilot certificates do you currently retain -- or have?
5 What's your pilot's certificates?

6 A. Commercial ATP.

7 Q. Okay. Any type ratings?

8 A. ATR 42/72, Dash-8 100, 737, 757/767.

9 Q. Okay. How would you classify staffing -- pilot staffing, or
10 ramp staffing, or just staffing in general at Rhoades when you
11 were there?

12 A. There were times where it was challenging and those were the
13 times where, you know, you had a mass exodus and everybody feels
14 it, right. I mean, no matter where you are today, two guys leave
15 it takes two-and-a-half or three months to get two guys back
16 online. So, how do you resolve that problem? You reduce flights,
17 which no company's going to do unless you're forced to do it or
18 hey, does anybody want to work extra? And there was never a doubt
19 where, you know, if you guys can't do it, don't do it, just --
20 that was it. If you think safety is an issue and you're fatigued,
21 then don't do it. I mean, that was from Wallace.

22 Q. When you were here, did they ever terminate any pilots that
23 you can recall?

24 A. Not that I know of.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I think most people left on their own.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And I may have asked this already, so please forgive me, I
5 didn't get it off my list that I did. The weight and balance
6 Excel program, did you have any dealings with that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. I thought I'd asked that earlier but I wasn't sure, so
9 I figured --

10 A. Yeah, somebody did, but in a different context. But somebody
11 did, yeah.

12 MR. ETCHER: Okay. All right, that's all I have. Thanks,
13 Bill.

14 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

15 Q. All right. In that case, is there anything that we haven't
16 asked you about that you expected we would or something you'd like
17 to share with us?

18 A. No. I just hope, you know, I gave -- like you said, give the
19 information that you guys are looking for and that you guys need
20 to help, you know, solve the reasons why what happened. Like you
21 said, how do we stop it from happening again? To me, that was the
22 main thing. We all make mistakes, fortunately these guys lived
23 through it and have made it out. Obviously, there's some mind
24 repercussions that maybe mentally did not stably fit there.
25 (Verbatim) But, you know, how do we prevent it, that's the main

1 thing. So, like my wife said, this is the second company you've
2 worked for that went in the water, so hopefully the third one
3 doesn't. I'm like yeah, it better not.

4 Q. Any -- obviously, there's not a lot known about the cause of
5 the accident right now, but we always give everybody the
6 opportunity to make recommendations for change. Do you have any
7 safety recommendations in mind already that you'd like to share
8 with us?

9 A. Nothing. I had recurrent training for a couple weeks after
10 the incident happened and our instructor did the same things with
11 -- when the captain was flying, I was supporting and, you know,
12 everyone can be a Monday morning quarterback. But the captain in
13 this case, it was -- it was, like, an engine failure, V1 cut and
14 then he put a fire out on another engine or something like that.
15 And the captain's like we're going to turn around and you run the
16 checklists appropriately and I'm going to start -- I got the
17 radios and kind of tried to reenact what occurred here and then
18 got to the point where I didn't even finish the checklist and he
19 was like all right, get this up, we should checklist every three
20 miles in the file mission. Okay.

21 So, it was good experience for him and myself. Obviously,
22 what do you do when you're in that situation? I mean my training
23 can only do so much, right, because you know you're not going to
24 physically die, it's going to show a red screen that you didn't
25 make it. But when you're actually there in the minds going -- you

1 know, we've gotten to the point at FedEx where we don't have
2 memory items anymore and we've tried to get that at TransAir, you
3 know, when I was there. Like, hey let's get a checklist out so
4 that the guy that's not flying can looking at the checklist and
5 say one, two, three, four, done, right. You know, the few QRC,
6 quick reference card is what we call it, is complete, you know,
7 standing by on the checklist.

8 Q. Okay. Anything else you want to share with us?

9 A. No.

10 DR. BRAMBLE: All right, we'll call it complete, then.

11 Thanks very much for your time, Brian.

12 MR. BELL: All right, thank you guys.

13 (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: TRANSAIR FLIGHT 810 CRASH
 NEAR HONOLULU, HAWAII
 ON JULY 2, 2021
 Interview of Brian Bell

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FA174

PLACE: Honolulu, Hawaii

DATE: September 24th, 2021

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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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TRANSAIR FLIGHT 810 CRASH *

NEAR HONOLULU, HAWAII, *

ON JULY 2, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Accident No.: DCA21FA174

Interview of: DAVID HOSHOUR, Pilot

Former Pilot at Trans Executive Airlines of Hawaii

Honolulu, Hawaii

Thursday,
September 23, 2021

APPEARANCES:

DR. WILLIAM BRAMBLE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAWN ETCHER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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Boeing Commercial Airplanes

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:10 p.m.)

DR. BRAMBLE: Today is September 23rd, 2021, at 3:10 p.m.

MR. ETCHER: Good afternoon, do you prefer -- what would you like us to call you, David, Captain?

CAPT HOSHOUR: David's fine.

MR. ETCHER: David? Okay.

CAPT HOSHOUR: David's fine.

MR. ETCHER: Well, David, my name is Shawn Etcher. I am an operational factors investigator with the NTSB. Dr. Bill Bramble and I are leading the Operations and Human Performance Working Group for the accident investigation Accident Number DCA21FA174, which involved the Rhoades Aviation Flight 810.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the Department of Transportation, nor the FAA, and it has no regulatory or enforcement powers. I would not like to go around the room and have everybody introduce themselves to you and I will start with Dr. Bramble.

DR. BRAMBLE: I'm William Bramble, I'm a human performance investigator with NTSB.

MR. ZEIGER: My name's Jacob Zeiger, I'm an air safety investigator for Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

MR. KANAE: And I'm Clarence Kanae, an aviation safety

1 inspector, operations is my specialty. I'm with the Honolulu
2 Certificate Management Office.

3 MR. ETCHER: And since you're coming to us via video, I just
4 want to make sure you're aware that that is everybody that is in
5 the room. And is there anybody of us four that you don't want in
6 the room as you're talking to us?

7 CAPT HOSHOUR: No, but can I see you, Shawn, real quick? I
8 think you're the only face I didn't put a face to. (Verbatim)

9 MR. ETCHER: Do what?

10 CAPT HOSHOUR: I didn't see your face, Shawn.

11 MR. ETCHER: Oh, there you go, is that better?

12 CAPT HOSHOUR: I saw everybody else.

13 MR. ETCHER: All right.

14 CAPT HOSHOUR: I'm sure you're the best-looking guy there.

15 MR. ETCHER: Yeah, or not.

16 CAPT HOSHOUR: Can you just turn the camera, like, your way
17 for, like, two seconds?

18 MR. ETCHER: How's that?

19 CAPT HOSHOUR: Okay, thanks bud.

20 MR. ETCHER: All righty.

21 CAPT HOSHOUR: All right.

22 MR. ETCHER: And I'll move it when we start talking -- when
23 everybody else starts talking, how's that?

24 CAPT HOSHOUR: Yeah, that's fine.

25 MR. ETCHER: Today we're going to be using a digital

1 recording. After the interview, we will send this recording out
2 for transcription and the party members, which is everybody here,
3 will have an opportunity to review it just to make sure we use --
4 that the transcription has correctly identified terms that are
5 specific to aviation. So, we make sure that there's no misspelled
6 aviation terms.

7 The purpose of the investigation is to determine probable
8 cause and prevent reoccurrences and our role is not to assign
9 fault. We're here simply for you to share your insight with the
10 goal of preventing accidents. Having said that, however, we
11 cannot offer or guarantee any confidentiality or immunity and this
12 transcript of the interview will actually be a part of the public
13 docket when this even is beginning to close and it'll be publicly
14 available.

15 Each of the group members here will have the chance to ask
16 questions. We're going to ask them one at a time, so you'll be
17 talking to me and we'll pass it around so you can -- you'll be
18 talking to just one of us at a time. And then they'll be an
19 opportunity after we go around once for all of us to ask a few
20 follow-up questions if we have some. One thing we ask is that you
21 answer any questions we have to the best of your recollection.
22 But if you don't know an answer, I don't know works just fine. If
23 you realize you misstated something or something is incorrect,
24 please say so. We want to make sure everything we have here is
25 correct. You are entitled to one representative of your choosing,

1 but you informed me the other day you did not need a
2 representative with you. Is that still correct?

3 CAPT HOSHOUR: At this time, yes.

4 MR. ETCHER: And does anybody have any questions?

5 Do you have any questions, David?

6 CAPT HOSHOUR: Yes.

7 MR. ETCHER: Please.

8 CAPT HOSHOUR: If you're done? Are you done?

9 MR. ETCHER: Yes.

10 CAPT HOSHOUR: Okay, I'm willing to cooperate 100 percent,
11 however, I do want full immunity from any enforcement action from
12 any federal agency, any state law enforcement agency, any
13 certificate action, any OSHA violations, any environmental -- EPA
14 violations, anything in the future on this -- regarding this --
15 the time that I worked at this company and this certificate op,
16 rather.

17 I understand you guys are going for the -- after the company
18 and I will cooperate with anything with that. I'm not admitting
19 to doing anything wrong, but in the fallout of this, it may come
20 back to some of the pilots if we operated aircraft that may have
21 been in the gray area or may have been illegal, I don't know. But
22 in the thread of your investigation, if things come out that you
23 can find fault and disseminate that fault to myself or any of the
24 other pilots, then I want full immunity for any future enforcement
25 action.

1 MR. ETCHER: Well, as we said earlier, we can't guarantee you
2 any immunity, we don't have that ability. The FAA --

3 CAPT HOSHOUR: Well, Clarence is there, he's from the -- he
4 represents the FAA.

5 MR. ETCHER: Well, he also is -- he's representing the FAA,
6 but he's on the safety side. He has nothing to do with the
7 enforcement side in regards to this even. He cannot even
8 intertwine with those if there would ever be an enforcement
9 action.

10 CAPT HOSHOUR: Okay. Well, I understand that, but if some of
11 the paperwork that you guys find that the company did or if the
12 company coerced the pilots into doing something that we shouldn't
13 have been doing regulatory wise, then, you know, I can't -- I can
14 help you against the company. But, you know, if there's any
15 chances of it coming back on us, I can't give you anything.

16 MR. ETCHER: Well, as we said, we can't guarantee you
17 anything, so, you know, if you have to have immunity, I would
18 suggest you not provide that information because we can't
19 guarantee immunity. We're just here strictly to try and figure
20 out what happened with this event, this operator, everything
21 surrounding it, and if you can shed light into that, that would be
22 greatly appreciated. We can't -- again, we can't guarantee you
23 any kind of an immunity. Clarence does not have the ability to
24 grant that either because he is working with us on a detail, on
25 the safety side. So, he really has nothing to do with that side

1 of the enforcement action if there is any.

2 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah, but the -- you know, I mean, to your
3 concern, I mean, the transcript would eventually be a part of the
4 public docket for the accident investigation and so, you know, if
5 you were -- people would know -- people are going to know what you
6 said. And so, you know, if somebody wanted to come after you for
7 some kind of enforcement action, they could. They'd have to
8 generate their own evidence, but they could come after you.

9 So, I guess the thing is, we really don't have the latitude
10 -- we don't have the power to provide, you know, like, a shield
11 from other organizations that might use public information to come
12 after you and we don't have the ability to offer confidentiality
13 either, unfortunately. So, I guess, you know, in terms of your
14 quandary, the only thing that we could do is offer you the
15 opportunity to share information that you think my related to
16 safety that you feel comfortable sharing and if you need time to
17 think about that, that's fine too. So -- yeah, there's just --
18 there's a limit to what we can do because we're essentially --

19 CAPT HOSHOUR: Well, I can talk about the culture and some of
20 the things everybody has said and done. But -- if you're okay
21 with that?

22 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah, I mean, you can decline to answer any
23 question if that -- you know, if you'd want to proceed that way.

24 CAPT HOSHOUR: I don't want to say take that broken airplane
25 and fly it, and I take the broken airplane and I flew it, SPIC,

1 who gets in trouble?

2 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah.

3 CAPT HOSHOUR: The company doesn't.

4 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah.

5 CAPT HOSHOUR: Yeah, so, you know, as an example.

6 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah. So, how do you want to proceed, do you
7 want us to ask you general questions? Do you want -- do you need
8 time to think about it or what do you think?

9 CAPT HOSHOUR: I'd like to get -- I'd like to help you guys
10 out and give you more information on the culture, and the lack of
11 safety practices of this company, and the way that the management
12 bullied their employees.

13 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay.

14 CAPT HOSHOUR: But I guess certain specifics, I'm sorry, I
15 don't think I'm going to be able to help you out. If it's of
16 myself, it's incriminating, and if it's about another pilot then
17 it's hearsay.

18 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah. So, do you want us to --

19 CAPT HOSHOUR: And even if I didn't do anything or even if I
20 did do anything, either way things could be used against all of
21 us.

22 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah. So, do want us to ask some questions or
23 do you want to --

24 CAPT HOSHOUR: You can ask them, yeah. Go ahead -- let's
25 just go ahead and ask questions and if I can't answer it then I'll

1 let you.

2 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay.

3 MR. ETCHER: And that's fine. Please, feel free -- if you
4 don't know something or you don't feel comfortable answering
5 something for that, just feel free to tell us.

6 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah.

7 MR. ETCHER: Will that work okay for you?

8 CAPT HOSHOUR: Yeah, we'll try it.

9 MR. ETCHER: All right.

10 INTERVIEW OF CAPTAIN DAVID HOSHOUR

11 BY MR. ETCHER:

12 Q. So, I'm going to start with questions right here and we'll
13 see if we -- you know, keep them as general as we can and
14 hopefully you can educate us, I'm sure you will, on the culture --
15 A. And I do have several examples.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Screen shots, texts from management to myself to -- you know,
18 to give examples of how the company culture was.

19 Q. Okay. Well, we'll get into the company culture here as we
20 start going through the investigation -- or through these
21 questions. So, please make sure you educate us to the best of
22 your ability. So, we -- I always start with the tough ones. Can
23 you say your full name and spell your last name for us?

24 A. David Hoshour, H O S H O U R.

25 Q. And how old are you?

- 1 A. 51.
- 2 Q. All right, and this event took place back on July 2nd, and at
3 that point, were you employed at Rhoades or TransAir?
- 4 A. I had already given my two-week notice.
- 5 Q. So, you were no longer there?
- 6 A. So, I was still technically on the books until I think July
7 12th.
- 8 Q. Okay, and when you --
- 9 A. But the last time I flew was on July -- or it was on June
10 28th and it was in that aircraft to be exact. I flew eight legs
11 that night.
- 12 Q. Okay. So, what was your job title when you were employed at
13 TransAir?
- 14 A. I was captain on the 737.
- 15 Q. Okay, and how long had you worked at TransAir?
- 16 A. A little over two years. I started in May of 2019.
- 17 Q. Okay, and what kind of airman certificates and type ratings
18 did you have?
- 19 A. About 12,000 hours -- 11,000 hours when I started, ATP,
20 multi-engine land, commercial single-engine land. Several type
21 ratings, I think I had four or five type ratings at the time.
- 22 Q. And one of those type ratings would've been the 737, correct?
- 23 A. I got typed in the 737 after employment with TransAir.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. (Indiscernible) express.

1 Q. All right, and do you remember your last training event that
2 you at TransAir, whether in the simulator or in flight?

3 A. It was in the simulator, I think it was in April of this
4 year.

5 Q. All right. Who did that training?

6 A. The chief pilot and director of training, Wallace Horibata.

7 Q. Okay. Can you give us just a very broad, Cliff's Notes
8 version of all your experience at flying -- your aviation
9 experience just so we know who you are?

10 A. I worked for a regional airline for 20 years and then came to
11 TransAir.

12 Q. Okay, and were you ever -- this is the toughest question I
13 always hate asking, but were you ever fired or terminated from any
14 other employers?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay. When you were at TransAir --

17 A. Actually, I was terminated from SkyWest, the regional airline
18 I worked for.

19 Q. Okay, and may we ask what the reason for that termination
20 was?

21 A. When I had come back from losing my medical -- I was out for
22 three years, but I wasn't at quite 36 months. So, the training
23 footprint that they put me through was for the one that I had been
24 at if I was out just for 12 months because that's just different
25 cycles. And during the time I was gone there was a complete

1 revamp of SOB and the aircraft operating manuals and all the
2 flight manuals for the company.

3 So, when I came back, they stuck me in the sim and I could
4 fly the plane fine, deal with emergencies fine, delegate authority
5 fine. But they said that since I had -- was not familiar with the
6 new procedures, and callouts, and the flows that they had changed,
7 and with the massive influx of new hires they had in the time that
8 I was gone. They said that even though I knew how to fly the
9 plane, I'd be dealing with brand-new guys and it would be kind of
10 awkward. So, they failed me a couple check rides on that.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So, that led to -- there's some other things, social media, I
13 got into it with the chief pilot -- my chief pilot while I was
14 out. So -- and then the company's very anti-litigation and I had
15 an incident, it was a mechanical issue in Mexico and a colleague
16 of mine who was a first officer -- I was a captain there -- he is
17 also an attorney. Well, he kept threatening the company that I
18 was going to sue the company, which I was not. I had no
19 intentions of doing that. So, when they got a wind of that, they
20 were looking for an excuse to get rid of me.

21 I had -- my sole intent was to protect younger, junior
22 pilots. The incident happened at one -- my whole crew at been
23 with the company almost 20 years plus, three of us spoke Spanish
24 fluently -- two of us spoke Spanish fluently, I was about 50
25 percent. So, I knew that if something similar happened again and

1 with a bunch of new, young pilots we had and they didn't speak
2 Spanish, the company would have bigger issues in Mexico. We were
3 able to get out of it and we advised the company of our situation
4 and they didn't like the fact that we were bringing attention to
5 any problems with the company. And all I was trying to do was
6 protect the younger guys coming in behind me in case that ever
7 happened again.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So, when that training event happened, they said goodbye
10 after 20 years.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I was shocked.

13 Q. All right. Well, that helps. I understand that, so I
14 appreciate that. So, back here, your time with TransAir, how
15 would you have classified their staffing when you were here?

16 A. Minimal to understaffing -- or short staffed. We had four or
17 five airplanes, they'd always have one in long term check in
18 Taiwan, so that was always out for a few months. So, they'd
19 always have four operating. But of the four, I think the last six
20 months or so, they could only keep one or two operating at a time.
21 So, they had ten pilots -- ten captains and ten FO's for one to
22 two airplanes and we did approximately -- I think 12 to 15 flights
23 every night, seven nights a week. So, we were always incredibly
24 short.

25 Q. Okay. All right, when you were at TransAir, if you had an

1 issue with something, whether it's the airplane, the loading, an
2 airport, weather, anything, how would you communicate that issue?

3 A. It was a daily occurrence. I would talk to the mechanics, I
4 became friends with many of the mechanics and even the director of
5 maintenance gave me his person phone number and some of the
6 maintenance supervisors, I have their personal phone number. I
7 would just talk to the mechanics on duty and -- if they could fix
8 it or not and, you know, they'd say hey, we did this, check it
9 out, see if works. You know, it should work, let it know if it
10 doesn't, you know, if it doesn't work, then you can try this
11 little trick to get it back.

12 So, I mean, that was a daily occurrence. That was part of a
13 challenge of the job that I actually enjoyed. Most people can't
14 handle that, especially from airlines, they want the mom-and-pop
15 flying. This was thinking outside of the box, problem solving all
16 the time. So, I even spoke with management about that. That was
17 the type of flying I liked was how are we going to get the mission
18 done tonight?

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Military background, so very mission oriented and some things
21 I'm kind of an overachiever. So, you know, let's get this done,
22 you know, make it safe, of course, I want to get home, but let's
23 get the mission done too.

24 Q. Okay. You just said --

25 A. And let me go down to that because I am sure that's going to

1 go to your next question.

2 Q. Sure.

3 A. (Indiscernible). If we were not willing to do that, we would
4 get yelled at by Wallace, or by the chief pilot, or by the cargo
5 manager, Robert Lehman. He, in fact, would also yell at some of
6 the mechanics to ignore writeups, to scratch out writeups, to fill
7 in the blank of could not duplicate for a writeup in the
8 maintenance logbook. Or -- yeah, a lot of it was do not -- could
9 not duplicate because that seemed to be the fix all for
10 everything, can't duplicate on the ground, so the MEL's cleared or
11 it's cleared to fly, so go fly it. And then when we spoke to
12 supposedly our ally on the pilot side, Wallace Horibata, the chief
13 pilot, he would say do your -- excuse my language, do your effing
14 job. If you don't want to do your job, I have 50 with resumes on
15 my desk who will do the job and if we lose this mail contract by
16 you don't doing your job, we will all be out of work. So, that
17 was routine occurrence and comments by management.

18 Q. Okay. Well, you're right, those were -- that was a question
19 I was going to ask down the road, so thank you. By routine, are
20 you talking that happened -- give me just a -- you know, once a
21 month, once a week, every night? Just kind of help me understand
22 --

23 A. Almost every night.

24 Q. Okay, and so they -- you flew at night, I assume, most of the
25 time. They had some day flights, right, but most of the flying

1 was at night?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. Was the chief pilot there at night to yell at you guys or was
4 it via something --

5 A. No, most of the time he conducted -- he was also the director
6 of training, so most of the time he was down in the -- in Miami at
7 the training center at Pan Am Flight Academy where they rented the
8 simulator. I think it's the only remaining 200 sim in existence.
9 The Boeing guy will get a kick out of that one. So, he spent six
10 months out of the year at least in Miami.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And I know it was six months because when I was talking to
13 him and he said -- he mentioned he had been there more than 180
14 days and should change his taxes to Miami, so -- to Florida. So,
15 that was -- he was there and I offered with -- from my background
16 to be his eyes and ears in Honolulu since he was gone all the time
17 and I would just report directly to him since they had meetings
18 once or twice a week every week and he was never there and they
19 would never include him. He complained himself about -- they make
20 decisions all the time without consulting with him and I said
21 well, since you're gone all the time, I'll be more than happy to
22 be your eyes and ears, I'll let you know what's going on and he
23 didn't want to entertain that, I guess.

24 Q. Okay. So, it sounds like you had a rapport with the chief
25 pilot. Would you call it a good rapport, or a professional

1 rapport, or not?

2 A. It was good until he was in a bad mood and then -- but then
3 I got to know him and I'm like okay, whatever, it's just Wallace.
4 He's just blowing off steam again and it was all the time and I
5 got to the point of laughter, you know. Do your effing job, I'm
6 like okay, boss.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And that was via text, so not, you know -- I don't know. Not
9 too smart to say that over text when you could say it over the
10 phone where there's no documentation of it.

11 Q. Okay. So, help me understand something, you turned in your
12 two-weeks' notice before the accident flight -- the accident
13 occurred, but you -- it sounds like you understood, you kind of
14 enjoyed this type of work. What made you turn in your two-weeks'
15 notice, did you find greener pastures or was it something else?

16 A. Yeah, my contract was up. It was a 20 -- I thought it was a
17 24-month contract and it ended up being a 26-month contract, so my
18 contract would've been up July 8th and so I gave my two-weeks'
19 notice. We would've worked three weeks on and one week off, so I
20 timed it so that my one week off scheduled was already passed that
21 final contract date. So, I just ended up -- yeah, the last two-
22 and-a-half weeks I was not working.

23 Q. Okay. Do they extend contracts or could they have given you
24 another contract or --

25 A. Oh, no, they everybody knew they liked to extend it, but once

1 the contract's up it's totally at will.

2 Q. Okay. So, they won't give you a new contract?

3 A. No, so the contract wasn't for employment. The contract was
4 actually for training, for like a training bond -- training
5 contract. If we left prior to the 24 months or 26 months, then
6 you would have to repay the cost of training, which was 15,000
7 dollars and I don't remember seeing anywhere on the contract where
8 that was prorated or not. So, that was always up in the air, that
9 was always a question.

10 Q. Okay. Did everybody leave after their 24 months or did a lot
11 of people stay around for the at will?

12 A. Smart ones did.

13 Q. Okay. All right, so I know you kind of explained that you
14 would get pressure from the chief pilot to complete a flight. Was
15 he the only one --

16 A. And the cargo manager.

17 Q. And the cargo manager.

18 A. Bob Lehman.

19 Q. Was there anybody else who would push --

20 A. The way -- another way they would do it is if you did ride up
21 in an airplane -- if they had two planes that night -- the number
22 of flights don't change usually at night, it's usually 12 to 15
23 flights. Sometimes it's 12, sometimes it's 13, 14, sometimes it's
24 15 if they get extra loads. But pretty regularly I think it was
25 12 flights, I can count them out to see how many there are

1 exactly.

2 But usually, you have three or four flights to every
3 destination of the four destinations to go to. If you do write up
4 an airplane and ground it, most airlines you're done, you go home
5 and they'd call on a reserve. Well, they didn't have any
6 reserves, so they'd make you sit there until the first plane that
7 got finished with their trips for the night were completed and
8 then you'd take that airplane. So, that was a punishment to
9 ground an airplane.

10 Q. So --

11 A. Because that would make you day go from midnight to 4:00 in
12 the morning to -- midnight to 6:00, usually that's about what it
13 was, sometimes you'd be there until 9:00, 10:00, 11:00 in the
14 morning. So, some of the pilots would write up airplanes or
15 outstations knowing that the plane was broken just so they could
16 sit there and get stuck because after ten hours we get paid
17 overtime. So, there was a couple of pilots that would do that,
18 they'd pay the legal game and okay, the planes broken, I'm going
19 to break it out here in Hilo and I've got to wait for the
20 maintenance. I got to wait for all the planes to be finished up
21 that night and then they could fly the maintenance crew out, you
22 know, 10:00, 11:00, noon the next day. So, they would get paid
23 the bonus time -- time-and-a-half -- or double time.

24 Q. Okay. I assume you guys had all out and backs? There was no
25 overnights scheduled, correct?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Okay. All right, I think we kind of know the answer to this
3 question, but I want to just make sure we ask it. How would you
4 classify this -- the working environment at TransAir or Rhoades?

5 A. Well, the very first day that I had walked into the hangar --
6 and I had not worked for a cargo company before, I had only worked
7 for major airlines. The first day I walked in and I'm like what
8 the hell have I signed up for? But I was like well, you know,
9 it's cargo, I'll give it a shot. They've been doing this for a
10 long time, let's see how it goes and it never really got any
11 better than that. The impression just never really changed much
12 from that.

13 Q. What gave you that impression?

14 A. All the junk in the hangar, all the dirt in the hangar. It
15 looked like it was, like, a yard sale, a bunch of, like, old crazy
16 cat ladies that finally decided to sell their -- like an estate
17 sale.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. If you can see that -- if you can picture that in your mind.

20 Q. Okay. So, that's the work -- that's the hangar environment.
21 How would you classify working, you know, with the pilots, did you
22 guys have good rapports with each other, with management? Kind of
23 give me that work environment?

24 A. Most of the pilots are good guys, some guys who live on the
25 island and don't ever want to leave the island. I guess they're

1 from there or they've moved to Hawaii and they don't ever want to
2 leave, so they'll put up with whatever they have to do and there's
3 only basically two jobs -- flying jobs on the island. Well, I
4 guess there's three, there's Aloha, there's TransAir, and then
5 there's Hawaiian. And TransAir and Aloha are both in the same
6 business, they're both flying 737's, cargo, interisland. I hear
7 they have more pilots, and maybe better schedules, and newer
8 airplanes, that's relatively -- you know, they don't have 45-year-
9 old airplanes, they have 40-year-old airplanes. So, I don't know
10 if Aloha's better or not.

11 I know that TransAir recently, while I was there -- in the
12 time that I was there had raised their pay rates to be more
13 competitive or even exceed what Aloha was flying. So, Aloha and
14 TransAir were about the same -- comparable. I mean, I don't know,
15 I don't know the pluses and minuses of Aloha, or Hawaiian and
16 those passengers. So, some of the guys wanted to stay there in
17 Hawaii and if that was the only job they could get, that was it.

18 Some of the guys couldn't get jobs elsewhere, fired from
19 somewhere else, multiple failures I guess, program -- I don't know
20 what you guys call the human -- HIMS programs, I'm trying to be
21 politically correct here -- HIMS factors, program (indiscernible),
22 a couple of those. Other ones had other investigations going on
23 from other carriers -- other operators. So, it was not the cream
24 of the crop of pilots. I mean, some are good pilots, but, you
25 know, on paper they're not -- you know, none of us were Air Force

1 Academy graduates flying F22's. We're all in aviation, we know
2 that type. None of us were that.

3 Q. Okay, and how about the work environment in general and
4 management from your perspective?

5 A. We got along -- oh, with management?

6 Q. Yes.

7 A. It was a very captain-centric company, so whatever the FO's
8 did or said didn't count for a hill of beans and then -- well,
9 actually, what captain's said didn't really count either. But if
10 you were to make a complaint -- and we would just text Wallace
11 since he was the chief pilot. But he never really did anything
12 formal.

13 They did have some approved forms, but I think I wrote one or
14 two of those official forms. Outside of, like, FAA forms, they
15 did have one or two incident reporting -- irregular operations
16 reports-something form. I filled out a couple of those but mostly
17 it was just text or email to Wallace. That's how most of the --
18 or a phone call. I'd say 80 percent of the -- 90 percent of the
19 time it was a phone call to him and maybe ten percent of the time
20 email or text.

21 Mostly texts directly to Wallace which is why I have some of
22 the responses do your effing job, shut the eff up, nobody wants --
23 you know, I even offered to help out and he goes your job is to
24 fly the planes and don't do anything else. I'm like I see so many
25 opportunities of improvement here in the company that, you know,

1 if we all chipped in -- it's a small company, if we all did
2 something extra, you know, we could make this a really good place
3 to work and I offered that and he just told me to shut up and do
4 my job.

5 Q. Give me some examples of some of the improvements you wanted
6 to see done or would've done yourself to make it a better company?

7 A. I -- maintenance is the biggest thing, I know these -- the
8 parts are hard to get for the airplanes. I was -- I actually
9 wrote a proposal and I was going to give it to Teimour -- the
10 owner, Teimour Riahi, newer airplanes, bigger airplanes, different
11 contracts, I have connections in the mainland and in Southwest
12 Pacific, Australia, and Oceania, some commercial contacts. So, I
13 was offering to use those connections to try to get additional
14 contracts for the company, bigger airplanes, more contracts.

15 I talked to people with the company who'd been there longer
16 than me and they're like you know, you're not the only person
17 who's come along with a list of ideas to make this place a better
18 place. But the owner doesn't want it. He's happy the way things
19 are and he's happy with the division and divisiveness between
20 management and even amongst management players and the pilots, and
21 maintenance. He wants everything adversarial; he doesn't want us
22 working together. But as a line pilot, I have to talk to
23 mechanics on a daily basis.

24 So, the owner likes to divide and conquer, he keeps all the
25 departments separate. I know the chief pilot told me many times

1 he does not get along with the director of operations. The
2 director of maintenance does not get along with the director of
3 operations. None of the mechanics like the director of
4 operations. So, my take is the owner says do it this way and then
5 he has his director of maintenance and director of operations
6 execute those acts. And then when all the employees are like what
7 are we doing, this is wrong, they all do this, and the owner looks
8 like he's just the nice guy. But he's the -- he's really pulling
9 all the strings.

10 Q. Can you give me an example of an event he wanted done and
11 pushed down on you guys that wasn't working?

12 A. Well, maintenance, you know, stealing parts from other
13 airplanes. I understand that parts are hard to get and they would
14 do stuff like if an inch of your gauge was INOP on a plane, they'd
15 just switch -- and we would write it up, they would take that part
16 and put it on another plane. So, instead of fixing the problem,
17 they would just kind of, like, hide the problem. I used to call
18 it hide the turd. It's kind of like hot potato and whoever gets
19 stuck with it last gets crap all over them.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So, even the planes that were operating, they would take
22 faulty equipment from one airplane and put it on another airplane
23 and that way the first airplane was oh, well that's good to go
24 now. And so, they would extend MEL's -- in fact, the FAA office
25 -- I'm sorry, his name -- he probably realizes this too, it got to

1 the point where the local FAA office was no longer extending our
2 MEL's because they realized what they were doing.

3 And I've also spoken a lot with Mark Butin -- so it's kind of
4 sad that he was already in the process of shutting us down when
5 this accident happened. So, he's been working with them for
6 almost two years and he saw every little thing and he would try to
7 make corrections and the company would just tell him to get lost.
8 And so, he finally said, you know, we've -- he's complained so
9 much to his higher ups and trying to help us out -- I mean, we'd
10 talk to him, he'd come out to the line and usually when the FAA
11 comes around it's like when the cops show up behind your car, you
12 know, it's like oh, crap, there's the cops.

13 But Mark was very friendly and he was -- he's a local pilot
14 on the field too, he's an instructor down the street. So, he's
15 very much -- make things -- let's make things compliant and safe
16 as opposed to just penalizing things. But I even saw on the news
17 that the company's got their many hundred and thousands of dollars
18 in fines, and penalties, and violations and the owner doesn't
19 care. He just keeps paying it. He doesn't care. He won't fix
20 things; he just pays it.

21 But you had asked for a specific example. There's so many,
22 maintenance issues, staffing -- yeah, it's just -- they would
23 never ask us to do anything illegal like fly over eight hours or
24 too many times or anything. They would -- there's a lot of pencil
25 whipping, though, and of course anytime we said no, we're not

1 going to take this airplane, then okay, they take us out of
2 rotation and we sit for six hours and wait for a better airplane
3 to come along.

4 But the last couple of months they only had one airplane.
5 So, that was 810 and they were flying the pants off it and it was
6 the oldest airplane, it was the first one ready to retire. It had
7 the weakest engines, it had the JT89's, so it's got a lot of duct
8 tape and chewing gum holding those -- not just the planes
9 together, but the whole operation together. And I think if it
10 wasn't for some of the pilots that are willing to go the extra
11 mile, and problem solve, and work with maintenance, that, you
12 know, the place would -- I don't know how they'd still be
13 operating.

14 Q. Okay. All right, you mentioned that you flew the accident
15 airplane a few days prior?

16 A. That's correct, Sunday the 28th of June.

17 Q. When you were flying it, did you notice -- how did it perform
18 for you that you can recall?

19 A. All the engines in all the airplanes were old -- no, I take
20 that back, they recently got one new rebuilt engine. I can't
21 remember if it was on 737CS or 326TR. I think it was the right
22 engine, the number two engine and I think it was a 17-series
23 engine. That was the newest engine in the fleet and it had just
24 been rebuilt from -- I don't know if it was rebuilt or if it was a
25 brand-new engine -- not a brand-new engine, a remanufactured

1 engine they had gotten from somewhere else because it had blown an
2 engine I think back in March or April. So, that was the newest
3 engine in the fleet and then the other engine was bad.

4 So, on 810, yeah, the engines were old entirely and they
5 knew, that plane was supposed to retire I think in October or
6 November of this year due to the number of cycles. So, I don't
7 think they were putting any more money into it. We asked the
8 mechanics about this, it would not -- if we did -- it would not --
9 none of the planes could hit max thrust for takeoff, we only used
10 to use reduced thrust takeoffs. If we did max thrust, we'd over
11 temp the engine. If we did reduce thrust, the engine, especially
12 on this airplane -- well all the airplanes we except for the one
13 good engine, you'd be deep in the yellow arc in the EGT gauges, so
14 the temperature gauges. There's a five-minute limitation of
15 operating in the yellow arc, so we knew we could use it for
16 takeoff, even though it was reduced thrust, we'd be in the yellow.

17 But then after takeoff, we'd climb up to a thousand feet,
18 we'd have to pull it out of the yellow and some of those numbers
19 were -- so, I know for, like, the 810 engine -- the engines 810 --
20 the nine series engines, I think max thrust would be about 1.92 or
21 1.93 based on the temperature and the sea level conditions. It
22 was in the low 1.9's. Some of the other airplanes were, like,
23 1.97, 1.98, 2.3, 2.13 for the 17's -- for the new engines.

24 So, the nine H series engines have the lowest backs EPR
25 setting for takeoff. It couldn't even hit that number and then

1 the max continuous thrust should've been at, like, 1.78 and it
2 couldn't hit those numbers either without still being in the
3 yellow. So, we would have to put it back out of the yellow on 810
4 and I'd be hitting, like, 1.4 or 1.5 max EPR for climb out and
5 that would be below the yellow line.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So, let's -- we just have old engines and we talked to the
8 mechanics about that, asked about the limitations and -- you know,
9 because we have our limitations of five minutes in the yellow and
10 after that, it's supposed to be -- the airplane's supposed to hit
11 max continuous thrust. I couldn't find anywhere in any
12 regulations where if the plane's not hitting max continuous
13 thrust, what we're supposed to do with that. It wasn't until
14 afterwards that -- yeah, I don't know. Any mechanic expert here
15 that can answer that question?

16 Q. This is the --

17 A. The plane can't hit max continuous thrust. I mean, what's
18 the rule on that? I couldn't find out. I talked to the chief
19 pilot and I talked to the head mechanics, the director of
20 maintenance, I talked to the director of operations and all they
21 said was they're just old, tired engines. That's what we got --
22 that was the line we got. So, not knowing anything else, we're
23 like okay well, I know we always operate well under max gross
24 weight and, you know, max gross weight's 125,000 pounds and the
25 heaviest load I ever saw was a hundred-and-eight thousand. So, I

1 knew we were well under max gross, but we usually operated around
2 90 to 95,000 pounds. So, we were always under -- well under gross
3 takeoff weight.

4 Q. So, just your opinion, please, if you couldn't achieve
5 reduced thrust or derated thrust takeoff without getting in the
6 yellow band, did you ever try and do a max -- a normal takeoff
7 thrust?

8 A. We were very -- I think did three the entire time I was there
9 -- in two years.

10 Q. Okay. So --

11 A. And it is out of a short runway in Maui, that's why. So, out
12 of operation necessity and, you know, the engines were screaming,
13 they were, you know, up against the red and as soon we got to a
14 thousand feet, just pull it back right away.

15 Q. Okay. But do you remember the last time you did one of
16 those? Was that a couple weeks before, months, years?

17 A. I don't know which airplane it was in. I'd say within four
18 to six weeks prior.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So, in probably May.

21 Q. All right.

22 A. And it wasn't an airplane, I think it was an 809.

23 Q. Did you ever write up a plane for getting in the red arc?

24 A. Oh, several times.

25 Q. And what was the response from maintenance, from chief pilot,

1 from whomever gave you a response?

2 A. One time they said noted. That was the written corrective
3 action, noted.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Another incident was removed to replace the EGT gauge.

6 Q. All right.

7 A. I mean, you go through the logbooks, you're going to see day
8 after day of the same writeup on all the planes.

9 Q. Did you bring --

10 A. And, you know, as pilots, they tell us well, if the mechanics
11 fix it then we're good to go. So, you know, legally we're -- if
12 it's written up and there's a corrective action, all we can do is
13 take it and then keep running it up and that's the response we got
14 from management too.

15 Q. Okay. Did you ever have an engine failure or a compressor
16 stall on any of the airplanes?

17 A. Compressor stalls? Often. I was the -- I think I was the
18 only pilot that didn't have an engine failure at TransAir. I was
19 waiting my turn. One of the pilots had seven, but he's been there
20 seven years -- or ten years, something like that. So, compressor
21 stalls, yes, on several different engines, on several different
22 airplanes, yes.

23 Q. Can you recall if you had any of those in 810?

24 A. I think I did a couple weeks prior to the crash. I flew --
25 they only had one or two planes operating the last month or two I

1 was there. So, it was -- I think it was the left engine though.
2 I don't know which engine failed, but I think it was the left
3 engine that had the compressor stall on 810. Let's see, there's
4 so many. I mean, I aborted takeoffs for compressor stalls in
5 flight all the time. At different regimes of flight, too, climb
6 out -- takeoff, climb out, in cruise, in descent, you pull the
7 power back, boom.

8 I talked to the mechanics about that and they said that these
9 engines -- because I know any other engine turbofan, I could see a
10 fan or any other airplanes I've flown, you hear the compressor
11 stall, the engine's toast. But they said these engines -- the
12 mechanics who have worked on these engines for years, they said we
13 probably need JT8 engines, they're like bullet proof. They're
14 like a -- we need D6, they can do a compressor stall and that's
15 okay.

16 They're remedy -- and this is most ridiculous thing I ever
17 heard, I never did it. They said if you get a compressor stall on
18 takeoff, turn the engine anti-ice on and that'll get rid of the
19 compressor stall. And I'm like but that will increase the
20 workload of the engine, take away more bleed air, they'll get
21 more -- less, you know, airflow to the engine, doing its job that
22 it's supposed to be doing and they were saying something about it
23 relieves back pressure and it gets rid of the engine stalls. But
24 it also reduces your takeoff performance. I'm like I'm not doing
25 that, I've got takeoff performance numbers for full thrust or

1 reduce thrust takeoff without engine anti-ice. If I do engine
2 anti-ice takeoff, it's a different set of calculations that we
3 don't have inform for it.

4 So, that's what the mechanics always said to do, I never did
5 it. I don't know if any other pilots did either. That's another
6 thing too, when you're rolling down the runway at 80 knots, boom,
7 you don't have time to reach over, turn the engine anti-ice on.
8 It's either a go or a no go. So, that was one of the dumbest
9 things I've heard one of the mechanics say.

10 Q. All right. I think the last question for me this round and
11 then I'll pass it onto my colleagues here, did you ever have to do
12 a rejected takeoff due to an overtemp or an engine issue?

13 A. Yeah, compressor stalls. I can't remember if it was 810 or
14 809, I could probably look back in my records.

15 Q. And it's okay if it's not handy there.

16 A. Okay, yes. I don't know which airplane, but I did have
17 compressor stalls in almost all the airplanes and I did have an
18 aborted takeoff. I think that was the one, like, four -- about a
19 month prior. It might've been in 810, I don't remember.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Let me see if I can find that.

22 Q. Did you write it up?

23 A. Yeah. We wrote it up, yeah.

24 Q. Okay. Well, we can find it. If it was written up, we can
25 find it. Do you remember what the corrective action was by the

1 mechanics was by chance?

2 A. I know they were (indiscernible) a lot. They looked at the
3 fuel control valve -- the fuel control units, they looked at the
4 -- some of the bleed system valves. I don't know which ones
5 exactly, but they looked at several different things.

6 MR. ETCHER: Okay. All right, I think you're probably tired
7 of talking to me. I'm going to pass you on. In fact, I'll move
8 the computer closer so you can actually see bill as he's talking
9 instead of from afar. How's that?

10 CAPT HOSHOUR: Okay -- that's okay, whatever. Yeah.

11 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

12 Q. Hi, Dave.

13 A. Hey, Bill.

14 Q. Yeah. Okay, so you mentioned you talked to somebody in
15 management about not being able to -- I think you said not being
16 able to maintain max continuous thrust without keeping it out of
17 the yellow arc on the EGT gauge and I know you mentioned a couple
18 of -- I think you said maybe the chief pilot and the director of
19 maintenance. Did I get that right?

20 A. That's correct.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Chief pilot and director of maintenance, that's right.

23 Q. Did you tell any other managers about it?

24 A. Both of the chain of command that was -- no, those were my
25 direct supervisors. Actually, the director of maintenance, that

1 was out of the chain.

2 Q. Okay. I thought maybe I missed a third one. But I could --

3 A. No, well the director of the operations but --

4 Q. DO?

5 A. Yeah, the DO, he -- I learned very quickly he was pretty
6 ineffective.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So, we stopped communicating with him all together.

9 Q. So, you didn't tell him about it?

10 A. I'm sure in one of the emails I sent to Wallace, I cc'd
11 David Seest as well. (Indiscernible) to know what are -- I think
12 the two safety reports I wrote, it goes to him also.

13 Q. And when you told them --

14 A. I mean, it was like a broken record, though. Every night,
15 you know, whoever had one of those airplanes, it was acting up at
16 that time. It was just rotating around, hey we'll give it to the
17 next guy and then they would say something, but nothing would ever
18 get done. You'd write it up, you'd talk to the mechanic, you'd
19 talk to the chief pilot who was gone all the time. Most of the
20 interaction was with the mechanics directly and I even brought up,
21 when I was brand new, an issue that they were not having effective
22 communication between shifts amongst the mechanics.

23 They pulled me in for a meeting -- they had weekly meetings,
24 they had the director of operations, Seest -- he pulled me in to
25 address my concerns to upper management. Then I talked to the

1 director of maintenance afterwards and his assistants and knowing
2 all the players involved -- and I was new at the time -- they said
3 oh, yeah, they already know about that. Seest just pulled you in
4 so you could make Mike Johnson, the director of maintenance, look
5 bad in front of the owner and in front of the other departments.

6 Because when I said hey, there seems to be a lack of
7 communication between day shift and night shift, what seems to get
8 worked on, what doesn't seem to get worked on, he said oh, well we
9 have a shift change book. And so, that's supposed to get taken
10 care of but I'll get on the guys to make sure they get into that
11 better. Because when you're talking to the mechanics -- the
12 front-line mechanics, they were saying that nobody knows -- the
13 left hand doesn't know what the right hand's doing.

14 Q. All right. But on that -- specifically on that -- the issue
15 of not being able to maintain max continuous thrust without
16 keeping it out of the yellow range, that's what you told them?
17 You said I cannot keep it in -- after leveling off from a takeoff,
18 you couldn't keep it in -- at max continuous thrust without
19 keeping it -- without it going into the yellow range?

20 A. That's correct. I couldn't even get it into reduced climb
21 thrust. So, there's max thrust, max continuous, reduced, and then
22 climb thrust settings, you know, we couldn't even hit the climb
23 thrust or the reduced climb thrust settings.

24 Q. Okay, and that was on 810?

25 A. That was on almost all the airplanes.

1 Q. Okay. Do you remember the last flight you flew on 810, how
2 the engines performed?

3 A. Specifically in that airplane they were in the yellow.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I'd pull it back to about 1.4, 1.5 to keep it out of the
6 yellow. I'm talking about EPR settings.

7 Q. After you got to a thousand feet?

8 A. That's correct and the plane still would perform, you know,
9 we'd still -- with our normal cargo weights, we'd still climb to
10 the altitudes that we routinely flew to. Short flights, 12 to
11 13,000 feet, long flights 19 to 21. I don't think I ever took
12 that plane up to that high.

13 Q. Okay. So, what -- were you concerned about the implications
14 of that? Like, if something went wrong, like, what were the
15 implications of that issue for -- in case you lost an engine, for
16 example?

17 A. Well, from all my training and experience, two engine
18 airplanes are supposed to have enough performance to operate
19 safely on one engine. So, I knew that if we lost an engine based
20 on the temperature that we could still come back around and land.
21 I mean, that's part of the certification of the aircraft. So,
22 that was -- the safety aspect was not a concern and like I said,
23 we -- everyone there had had at least one engine failure. So, I
24 mean, I was just waiting my turn and they had all come back and
25 landed safely.

1 So, based on the regulations I know, the certification of the
2 aircraft, everyone else's experience in the airplane at losing an
3 engine, you know, I thought that it would -- if it had happened to
4 me, I think I thought I would be okay. I'd still get it to land
5 and plus, our flights were so short, I mean, we could almost glide
6 in anywhere.

7 Q. Yeah, okay. Did you ever see hydraulic leaks under the main
8 landing gear bay, like big hydraulic leaks?

9 A. Hydraulic leaks? No.

10 Q. Yeah, like, under a main landing gear?

11 A. No, nothing that would jump out. Of course, old airplanes,
12 you know, some drips here and there, but nothing catastrophic, no.
13 I didn't see anything like that.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Not saying it didn't happen, I just -- I never saw it.

16 Q. Okay. How many times would you say you wrote up the engine
17 temperature issue on maintenance logs?

18 A. So, I was there two years, the first year everything seemed
19 to be okay -- I should probably say the first year-and-a-half
20 everything seemed okay. The last six months, just everything
21 started kind of falling apart, I don't know why, maybe it was just
22 the number of cycles, the number of hours in the airplanes. I
23 don't know, I don't really have an explanation for that. But the
24 last six months, things just really started falling apart. So --

25 Q. Like, if we go digging, are we likely to find -- can we find

1 dozens --

2 A. I don't know a number. I mean, there were so many writeups
3 all the time, I don't know which ones are specifically for the
4 engine temperature.

5 Q. If we were to go look for them --

6 A. Maybe a dozen times in the past six months to a year.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Specifically engine temperature and that would've been --
9 that's going to be more clustered towards the end.

10 Q. Okay. Were you aware of anything unusual about the condition
11 of the accident airplane before the accident besides the engine
12 temperature issue?

13 A. No, not that I recall. Pressurization problems were kind of
14 an affliction amongst all the airplanes, it usually ended up being
15 the pressurization controller, which they were so hard to find.
16 810, no that -- so, you know, that was the only plane operating at
17 that point -- the last few weeks -- just the engine temperature
18 gauges, I don't know of anything else that was going on with that
19 airplane the last month or so -- anything other than that.

20 Q. Okay. All right, and who did you talk to about the engine
21 temperature gauges besides the chief pilot and director of
22 maintenance? Like, were -- you say you were communicating
23 directly with some mechanics, did you talk to them about that or
24 anybody else?

25 A. Yeah, of course. Yeah, do you need names?

1 Q. Sure, yeah.

2 A. There's a lot of mechanics, Brett -- I think it was -- I
3 mean, I'm sure you've got everybody's names. Mike Jernigan (ph.),
4 he was the -- one of the head mechanics, Greg Taisipic, he was one
5 of the supervising mechanics also, he was really good, he would
6 really get in there. We would talk to him and he would go -- he
7 went with us on a couple flights to fix things. He would really
8 dig in there and try to get things fixed.

9 A lot of the times, the line mechanics at night, there would
10 usually be two on every shift and they'd go on rotation, I think,
11 every four to six weeks. So, we worked with the same guys every
12 night for a month or two at a time. They -- the line flight --
13 the line pilots -- or the line mechanics just didn't have time to
14 do major repairs, so we'd write the things up. They can do minor
15 fixes at night, you know, if it took less than an hour, they could
16 do it that night and we'd be up flying.

17 Q. What was their take on the engine temperature --

18 (Audio lapse)

19 A. -- mechanics like Mike Jerigan, he was the daytime shift
20 supervisor. But all the guys who've -- all the line mechanics, I
21 talked to them every -- they're all my friends, I talked to them
22 every night.

23 Q. Yeah. Sorry, we lost you for a minute there because the
24 internet was intermittent.

25 A. Yeah, I saw that.

1 Q. But --

2 A. So -- okay, I'll just go back -- I'll just repeat the last
3 minute. The line mechanics, I'd see them every night, I would
4 talk to them every day, after, between -- before and after every
5 flight.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. The -- most of the maintenance of the aircraft was done
8 during the daytime and that was the dayshift. So, they'd have two
9 mechanics on at night just to keep the planes flying, you know,
10 get the next flight done.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. Oil, MELs, certain things like that. But all the big-name
13 stuff was done during the daytime.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. So, we'd write up the planes and then talk to the mechanics
16 and we would rarely see the daytime mechanics because we'd usually
17 be done with our shift before then. But occasionally, we would
18 see the day shift mechanics and that's where more of the dayshift
19 -- maintenance was done, during the daytime.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. So, like, a fuel control unit would be changed in the daytime
22 or anything that would take more than an hour, they would do
23 during the daytime.

24 Q. Did the mechanics that you interacted with, did they ever say
25 -- did they ever acknowledge look, we know you're writing this up

1 all the time and we can't seem to fix it or what -- how did that
2 go?

3 A. Yes. Yeah, you know, they were frustrated too. They would
4 shake their heads and just be frustrated and a lot of it was
5 coming down to we just think it's the old wiring on these old
6 airplanes. You know, they'd change the gauges, they would change
7 -- oh, gosh, what was the latest thing -- some of the flight --
8 the air-data computers and that runs so much stuff on these
9 airplanes -- oh, the instruments, the pressurization, you know,
10 some of the flight controls, it just runs so much information.

11 They would change the -- everything from top to bottom, you
12 know, the gauges to the wiring -- well, they didn't change the
13 wiring, they'd change the gauges and they changed the -- both
14 components that they had access to, the inside and the outside.
15 But they couldn't get the middle part a lot of the times because
16 of just old wiring. So, there were a lot of times they would
17 twist a wire and the gauge would work and they'd put the gauge
18 back in and it wouldn't work again. So, a lot of it was old,
19 brittle wiring in those airplanes.

20 Q. So, they were convinced that it was reading hot because of
21 old wiring?

22 A. I don't know what their take was on that, all they said was
23 we'll take a look at it, you know, we'll try to fix it.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. But old airplanes, old engines, tired airplanes, tired

1 engines, old wiring, brittle wiring, that's -- you know, that was
2 every day.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. The (indiscernible).

5 Q. Yeah. All right, let me ask you a few questions about --
6 just sort of standard questions about organizational culture.
7 You've already provided us some information, but I just want to
8 give you these prompts. So, did you feel supported by management
9 and able to make safety related decisions as a pilot without fear
10 of repercussions?

11 A. Not at all, never.

12 Q. Why not?

13 A. They would say, you know, you don't this, you're going to
14 lose your job, we're going to lose the contract, we'll all be out
15 of work, yeah, termination, loss of job, loss of livelihood. But
16 there was a couple of us that firmly said no and when we stood up
17 to it, he's like okay and that was in discussions with the cargo
18 manager, Bob Lehman, the chief pilot, Wallace Horibata, and the
19 director of operation, David Seest, and occasionally even the
20 director of maintenance, Mike Kraus (ph.).

21 Q. Those are the people that --

22 A. You know, it even got to the point where there were a couple
23 of pilots -- and I'm going to go ahead and say his name, the guy
24 who was in the crash, I mean, we all made fun of him, I hate to
25 say it. I hate to say that we all made fun of him because he was

1 the one saying all the time, I don't feel comfortable taking this
2 airplane. And then that would put the burden on the rest of us
3 because there would be crews that get to fly at night -- two or
4 three crews and he says I'm not flying it and they would leave all
5 that same amount of work to the rest of us.

6 Q. So, was that Henry Okai?

7 A. I'm sorry, go ahead.

8 Q. Was that Henry Okai?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. So, he would decline airplanes and then they would make the
11 rest of you fly it, is that right?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. What happened to him for declining the airplanes?

14 A. I heard he was talked to several times and at risk of losing
15 his job several times. I don't know, I didn't speak to him
16 directly, but Wallace mentioned it. Wallace had no qualms telling
17 any other pilot what his actions and conversations were. So,
18 Wallace said yeah, I told him if he doesn't take the flight, we'll
19 get rid of him or we'll then lower him to an FO.

20 Q. Okay. Do you know what issues he was refusing to take the
21 plane over?

22 A. A lot of times it was oil clarity. His nick name was the tin
23 man because he was always looking for oil just like the Wizard of
24 Oz or oil can Okai and I was a part of that and I feel horrible
25 now.

1 Q. Have you talked to him since the accident?

2 A. I didn't talk to him much before, we always had different
3 shifts. A lot of times they questioned his ability to fly period,
4 so I, myself -- well, myself and one other pilot would have to be
5 called in to do his shifts. There was a couple pilots that they
6 didn't feel comfortable with operating the airplane, specifically
7 in the short runway in Maui, runway five.

8 So, the Maui runway -- the major runway in Maui, 220, has
9 been under construction a lot for the past year and they'd be
10 closed -- they'd close them all night. And when it was closed, we
11 had to operate on the short runway and there were times that they
12 had to call on myself and Shawn Morgan up because we're the most
13 experience pilots or the check airmen. I think they'd get -- so,
14 they would pull Henry and they would pull Tim Kaiser (ph.) off
15 those flights and they'd call us in to do them. So, you know
16 instead of fixing the problem, they would just grab us to plug the
17 holes I guess with duct tape, and rubber bands, and chewing gum.
18 Those were the day-to-day operations there.

19 Q. Did --

20 A. And we didn't care, we got paid overtime for it. So, I'm
21 like okay, you hired weak-ass pilots and we're the good ones who
22 you're calling on to do their job and you're going to pay us
23 extra? Okay, well just pay us extra and we'll do it.

24 Q. Did Henry ever express safety concerns to you in general
25 about flying the company's airplane?

1 A. I never talked to him much, maybe only two times in two years
2 in passing, you know, hey what'd you ground the plane for, what's
3 wrong with it this time? That was it. He never talked about --
4 he never talked about the threats that he received, but Wallace
5 bragged about the threats he gave. So, I don't know if Wallace
6 made those up just to try and intimidate the rest of us like oh,
7 well, you know, I almost fired Henry for refusing to fly. I don't
8 know if that's true or not, but that's what Wallace told us.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Also, I have to go on the record --

11 (Audio lapse)

12 Q. We're losing you, Dave.

13 A. -- Henry and Greg --

14 Q. Okay, I'm sorry we lost you about the last ten to 15 seconds.

15 A. When I heard that Henry and Greg had crashed, someone sent to
16 me within 24 hours the audio ATC recording of them talking. I'm
17 good friends with Greg Ryan, I know him very well and hearing his
18 voice on the radio, I could tell he was scared. I heard it in his
19 voice. Henry seemed very calm, but he always seemed that way all
20 the time. So, I don't know if that was skill or lack of skill. I
21 don't know.

22 As pilots, you know, we always -- anytime there's a crash,
23 especially if it's so close to him -- like, what would I have done
24 differently because I had flown that plane just a couple nights
25 before. So, when he said -- when Henry said I'm going to go

1 extend out, you know, 15 to 20 miles, we're going to do some
2 checklists and then we'll come back and land, at first, I'm like
3 why would you do that? That's the thought I had to myself, why?
4 Why do that? Henry, what are you thinking? But then I'm like,
5 wait a minute, it's Henry and not to bad mouth Henry, but the
6 experience I know that Henry's had the past four months prior,
7 Wallace beat him up pretty good and threatened him a lot. I
8 didn't hear that from Henry, but I heard that from Wallace.

9 Henry had had -- I was flying that night and I heard what was
10 going on, he had -- a few months prior to the crash, he had, and
11 I'm sure you guys already know this, a fuel quantity gauge problem
12 and the FO he was flying with totally screwed him on that. They
13 declared an emergency and they landed and he was getting bad
14 information from the FO that was flying the airplane at the time.
15 So, he had declared emergency for a bad fuel carbon gauge. I
16 heard it happen, he goes we're declaring an emergency, we have a
17 bad fuel carbon gauge.

18 So, I know the company got mad at him for that because I
19 don't know if that's an emergency item or not because the plane's
20 -- the engine's still flying, the engine's still running. You
21 could tell there was not an imbalance, you know, it's a 25-minute
22 flight, that could go from 15,000 pounds to zero in that short
23 flight and the engine's still on. You know, if you had an engine
24 leak, why is the engine still running? So, I know he got beat up
25 pretty good for that one. And then about a month or two after

1 that, he had an engine failure and he did not declare emergency
2 for that because he got beat up for declaring an emergency on the
3 non-emergency issue a few months prior. So, I know he was pretty
4 beat up by Wallace and the company and I know he was threatened
5 because Wallace bragged about it.

6 So, when -- my first thought was Henry, why are you going out
7 to do checklists, just get down and land and then my second
8 thought was oh, it's Henry because he's been beat up so much. If
9 he doesn't do everything by the book -- this is what Wallace said,
10 if he doesn't do everything by the book, the next time something
11 happens, he's out of here. So, I'm like okay, he's going to do
12 everything by the book. He's going to play the game the company
13 wants him to play and there's nothing wrong with that, but you
14 know, you've got to self-preservation too. (Verbatim) So, when
15 he did that, I'm like okay, that's because it's Henry. So, I feel
16 that Henry was forced into that corner by his previous experiences
17 with management.

18 Q. Do you have any --

19 A. And I heard Greg and he said why don't we just turn back
20 around and land right away and I think he mentioned that in the
21 ATC transmission. And then I think Henry came in and said no,
22 we're going to go out and do some checklists and then we'll come
23 back and land when we're ready.

24 Q. Do you have any documentation of Wallace threatening Henry?

25 A. Just conversation from Wallace. No, I don't have any

1 documentation on that unfortunately, but that totally goes along
2 the line with everything else Wallace has said and done.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I mean, he threatened me, so I know he threatened everybody
5 else.

6 Q. And then how about Greg, did Greg express any safety related
7 concerns to you before the accident?

8 A. Actually, he did. He spoke with me -- I think that accident
9 was on a Thursday, he called me up the night before and I had two
10 conversations with him over the phone -- with Greg Ryan directly
11 leading up to the accident. One was the day before and it was
12 about the company offering him a captain position because after
13 I'd left, we were short a captain -- the company was short
14 captains, so they were talking to Greg about taking the upgrade.

15 And the first conversation we had -- so, I had two
16 conversations regarding Greg Ryan's upgrade that the company had
17 offered to him. The first one he asked if he should do it and he
18 was excited to tell me that the company had offered him a chance
19 for a promotion and upgrade and I said good for you, that's great.
20 I go but remember, they're going to make you sign another two-year
21 contract and you're going to be stuck there two more years. But
22 being his primary business was on the island, he was like I'm okay
23 with that, you know, I'd like to go onto a different airline
24 eventually, but I also need the PIC time that he did not have.
25 So, he was like I'm thinking about taking it and I said okay, well

1 just, you know, keep that in the back of your mind who you're
2 working for, and what they ask of you, and the planes you're
3 flying. You know, if you have the chance to get out of there
4 before then, I would take that and he's like okay, thank you for
5 your sense because we were friends and we talked. That was the
6 day before.

7 The day of, he called me again, this was maybe six or eight
8 hours before he flew that night and he said you know what, I
9 thought about it, I can't do it because I can't stay with this
10 company. He goes it's not safe, he goes I'm not going to stay
11 here another two years, I don't care what they offer me. I don't
12 care if they upgrade me or not, it's not worth it. He goes the
13 stuff that this company's doing -- because he was also working at
14 -- he was taken off of flying off of flying status to help out
15 because he's an attorney, he'd been rewriting the manuals to
16 comply with the FAA.

17 (Audio lapse)

18 -- conversation that happened 24 hours prior -- this company
19 is so screwed up. He goes I am neck deep into the manuals -- you
20 know, I'm speaking with the FAA directly and I'm working on the
21 manuals directly. He goes this place is so screwed, he goes it's
22 beyond my help. He goes I'm an attorney, I'm trying to help them
23 out but this place is so far beyond help. He goes I got to get
24 out of here and I'm like you know what, Greg, that's a good call.
25 I go and thank you for letting me know because, you know, I just

1 quit and it's kind of scary to know that the company was that bad
2 off. I got I knew the company had problems; I didn't know the
3 problems were that deep. So, I go yeah, I'll get you over here
4 with my new company if you want. He goes okay, you know, I might
5 take you up on that offer and then he flew that night and he
6 crashed.

7 So, he's ruined, he's not ever going to fly again. He's not
8 even working out of his office; he's not even doing his real job
9 anymore. He's still locked up in house, it's been a month and a
10 half. I talked to him yesterday, he's not even leaving his house
11 right now. So, physically he's okay, but emotionally, he's so
12 screwed up.

13 Q. All right. Well, Dave --

14 A. And I hear second had -- you have to talk to Henry about
15 this, they're beating him up again and they're threatening that if
16 you come back -- you have to come back, you're under contract, so
17 I don't know what they're saying. It's all secondhand, so it's
18 all hearsay. I've heard he's back and they've demoted him and
19 they said that if you come back to work for us, you have no
20 choice, we're going to demote you. So, you have to talk to Henry
21 about that one.

22 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. Dave, I'm going to give the other guys a
23 chance to ask you some questions, so I'm going to go ahead and
24 pass the computer down the table. Thanks.

25 CAPT HOSHOUR: Okay. I hope I answered everything.

1 (Audio lapse)

2 CAPT HOSHOUR: -- jump back in.

3 DR. BRAMBLE: I appreciate it. Yeah, we'll do another round
4 after this.

5 CAPT HOSHOUR: Okay.

6 MR. ZEIGER: Hi, Dave.

7 CAPT HOSHOUR: This is the Boeing guy?

8 MR. ZEIGER: Yes, it is.

9 BY MR. ZEIGER:

10 Q. My colleagues have been pretty thorough in their questions,
11 so mine are just going to be very few. I wanted to start -- early
12 on you did a good job of discussing the -- talking to maintenance
13 if anything came up and you said you had a pretty good rapport
14 with a lot of the line mechanics. I wanted to ask about that, it
15 was pretty good when -- did you generally trust them would you say
16 to fix anything you brought to their attention?

17 A. To the best of their abilities, yes.

18 Q. Yeah? Okay --

19 A. The guys that I spoke with directly -- I started to realize
20 that one of the maintenance supervisors -- I don't know what his
21 title -- lead mechanic or head mechanic -- he would just kind of
22 blow us up, you know, we're over stupid pilots. And after a
23 while, I'm like -- it was such a small company, we knew who was a
24 good worker, someone you could trust, and someone you could not.
25 And, you know, the ones that were good, we'd work together and get

1 the job done and then there were the few that were in management
2 like oh, you know what, don't even tell that guy, he don't even
3 look at look at his email. He's just going to blow you off or
4 he's just a jerk and that's a nice way of saying it, you know,
5 he's not going to do anything anyway. And then you hear comments
6 back oh, he's just a stupid pilot, he doesn't know what he's
7 talking about, although, he would get in the airplane, but he was
8 afraid to fly in the airplanes anyway.

9 Q. I see. So, from a logbook perspective, would you say that
10 when the pressure came down from management, it was pressure maybe
11 either not to write something up or to write something up
12 differently than how you truly saw it? Or was there maybe also
13 pressure on the mechanics side -- how did that kind of work?

14 A. There wasn't direct pressure on me to change a writeup or to
15 not write an airplane up. But there's always the if you ground
16 that airplane, you know, if we lose this contract, you know. So,
17 they always had that -- they tried to have the big picture in
18 mind. I'm like well, you told me before to keep my eyes off the
19 big picture because I offered to help with the big picture and you
20 told me to shut up and do my effing job. So, you want me to do my
21 job? Okay, I'm writing the plane up.

22 Q. Yeah. How often --

23 A. And --

24 Q. Oh, go ahead, sorry.

25 A. And then Wallace and Dave would be like okay, well you did

1 your job and then mechanics are like well, we're doing our job.
2 You know, a lot -- it got to the point where it was just kind of
3 cover your ass and -- but like I said, some of the mechanics and
4 some of the pilots were all friends, let's just get the job done,
5 let's do what we can, you know, baby this, baby that, go easy on
6 this system, try to milk it through a couple more flights. I
7 mean, it was all legal, it was all safe, you know, it wasn't
8 perfect -- nothing's ever perfect.

9 I mean, I don't know if you come from the factory or not, I
10 mean, you have pristine airplanes, you know, these are old birds.
11 And I kept telling myself -- look, I'm a big history buff, Boeing
12 made the B17 Fortress, so -- and I've seen pictures of that plane
13 coming back, it should not have been flying and it still flew.
14 So, I'm like look, Boeing built this airplane, I know it's going
15 to fly. What's the saying, if it ain't Boeing, I ain't going?
16 Well, I can testify, these planes were so old and just held
17 together, you know, I hope it (indiscernible).

18 But, you know, it -- they worked and they got me home every
19 night, so -- that and the faith and trust I had with the mechanics
20 that I worked with, you know, that the one thing that kept me
21 going. And when the mechanics were like it's getting tough, we
22 can't find parts, you know, management's saying this, trying to
23 cut back, I knew as soon as my obligation was up, it was time to
24 get out.

25 Q. I see. How often would you say you grounded an airplane?

1 A. Well, as soon as you write something up, it's grounded until
2 the mechanics either MEL it or fix it.

3 Q. Oh, right.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. I mean, that was -- we did almost every night.

7 Q. Well, so I would say --

8 A. So, seriously grounded?

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. Myself personally, maybe in two years maybe a handful of
11 times.

12 Q. Okay. Was there --

13 A. There's a lot of it where it was, like, little things, like
14 pressurization. I mean, we could fly unpressurized and still get
15 the job done, like, okay, this is going to such, but we can still
16 get the job done, we still keep our jobs. You know, that's -- you
17 could MEL that and it's good for (indiscernible), you know,
18 whatever it was. That's what we do. It was never -- like I said,
19 the planes were strong enough, it was usually -- you know, we
20 could get it there unless it was a flight-control problem, then it
21 was grounded.

22 Q. I see.

23 A. You know, we did what we could to keep it going.

24 Q. I see.

25 A. But, I mean, I would never not write a plane up. I mean, we

1 all wrote the planes up and they would all try to fix it. There
2 was of fixing was sometimes taking a piece of this airplane and
3 swapping it with that airplane. They keep things flying and I
4 trust the mechanics. So, we did -- you know, sometimes we do test
5 flights, I did a couple of engine write ups. I was one of the
6 guys the mechanics are willing to work with, so I got to become
7 friends with the upper mechanics, Greg Taisipic, Mike Johnson.
8 You know, they knew I was willing to work with them and they were
9 willing to work with me I wasn't writing up every little thing,
10 you know, the pen holder's broken, you know, that's an MEL,
11 grounds the airplane.

12 When you can't find it -- so, I would write up things that
13 were safety or make the planes not fly, you know. I mean, I --
14 you know, I didn't write up -- I didn't make BS writeups, some
15 pilots did and so I was the one who worked with them, so they knew
16 that, so they would want to work with me. So, they said hey, we
17 have a test flight, do you want to do it? We trust you, and we
18 don't -- it's you and this other guy we trust, so come on out if
19 you're free.

20 Q. I see. Thank you. So, would you say that there were maybe
21 pilots who wrote up grounding items maybe more often than others?
22 And my -- where I'm going with this is, were there any cultural
23 differences in how maybe those pilots were treated within the
24 company?

25 A. Well, there was one who would complain all the time, but he

1 -- we joke around, he was a relative of the owner, we'd say oh,
2 that's just your uncle. And so, he'd -- and he would also be the
3 one who'd write up the plane in an outstation to get extra
4 overtime. So, like, is the plane really broken are you just doing
5 this so you can get overtime? So, that's the talk amongst the
6 pilots and he was notorious for that. And then there was another
7 pilot would be okay, well, I'm not taking the plane because this
8 light's not working. So, you know, the company had -- we all knew
9 who did what, and how we operated, and who was trying to skate --
10 who was trying to get out of work, who was trying to make extra
11 money, who was not trying to fly the airplane.

12 Q. I see, thank you. And then you finally -- this is my last
13 question, for those cases where you mentioned that maybe one pilot
14 might have an issue that they might not be willing to fly a plane
15 on a particular flight or on a particular night and then maybe
16 another pilot was called to come in. You mentioned that that
17 might happen on some occasions. In those cases, were there --
18 were these pilots making writeups for those issues that they
19 identifies, or was it more of a verbal discussion about what they
20 had seen and what was causing them not to take the airplane?

21 A. Oh, I don't know.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. If I got called in, they wouldn't even tell me why I got
24 called in and then I'd talk to the mechanics and they'd say well,
25 this person, he refuses to take the plane because of this. I'm

1 like well, if that's true, I'm not taking the plane either. That
2 happened a couple of times.

3 Q. I see.

4 A. But mostly we would get called in because they didn't want
5 certain pilots operating certain airports and certain runways.
6 So, it was more of an operational thing and then other -- they
7 called Shawn Morgan and myself up to do those flights and I'm like
8 well -- he got really upset, he's like why are these guys that
9 we're doing the shifts for allowed to be captains because we are
10 supposed to be flying into all these airports and all of these
11 runways. If they are captains that cannot perform, why are they
12 still captained? I'm like well, that's a good question. That's
13 above my paygrade and he's like well, that's one issue.

14 Q. I see.

15 A. Actually, I do have some things, I think I wrote an email to
16 Wallace about that. The things -- I have several emails regarding
17 operational stuff. Okay, so this one in particular is based your
18 question you asked. So, of the two captains that Dave did not
19 feel comfortable with operating into Maui, runway five
20 specifically, which is the short runway -- so, if we do nothing,
21 then there is going to be an increased liability of the plane
22 going off the end of the runway.

23 Okay, so that's one -- noise complaints from the neighborhood
24 surrounding the airport, also other exposure to FAA enforcement
25 actions, okay, and then -- so, I have like five -- six items here.

1 I can send this to you guys if you want. If they do -- so, this
2 is based on pulling those two captains from flying and making us
3 fly. Another thing, so if they're going to give captains two of
4 those ships, then they should pay us more in case we did that.
5 So, this is all company stuff and I gave this to Wallace. Or give
6 the captains that do fly into that runway some additional
7 incentive pay because there's extra risk because it's such a short
8 runway and they don't want just the average Joe pilot to do it.

9 They're making us do it, you know, they should pay us more
10 extra incentive pay because -- we're taking the additional risk
11 and liability for flying and operating out of there. Or they
12 should terminate those pilots or downgrade those pilots because if
13 they can't be captains and fly into every airport then -- and
14 they're refusing to do it and making us do, then why are they
15 making them do it? Why are they letting -- why are those guys
16 captains? Or -- I said one way we can do it is just prohibit
17 operations into that runway completely.

18 So, I have a list of things I sent to Wallace about that, you
19 know, hey, if you're going to keep calling us in to do their
20 flying, you know, either pay us more because we're taking the
21 increased liability or demote those guys. I don't know if that's
22 in your department -- I don't know if that's your area. But
23 that's something I did officially write to Wallace about.

24 And then I have another thing here regarding -- oh, that's a
25 whole other can of worms, the lack of trust and faith I have in

1 the director of operations. I do have several letters and emails
2 I've written to Wallace and to David Seest over the two years I
3 was there and nothing was ever done. So, I'm like okay, who can I
4 address this to?

5 Q. Okay. Yeah, thank you. I'll probably let my colleagues
6 weigh in on that aspect of things.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. I did think of one more. I apologize, I told you that my
9 question was my last question.

10 A. No, go ahead.

11 Q. When it comes to the compressor stalls that were happening on
12 some of the airplanes, was there any -- ever any, like, general
13 guidance from management on how to handle the airplanes with
14 respect to these compressor stalls? Or maybe with respect to any
15 general writeup, I should make my question more general than that,
16 but anything that came down on, you know, some kind of fleet-wide
17 guidance for anything like that?

18 A. Okay, generally is if it flies, take it, specifically for the
19 compressor stalls. Well, so we -- the only input we would get
20 from our chief pilot would be write it up and we would never get
21 any input from the director of operations. We could email, we'd
22 call, he wouldn't answer his calls, he wouldn't answer his texts,
23 he would just defer it to -- either to Wallace or to Mike Johnson.
24 That was every issue we had.

25 We even had -- when ADS-B became mandatory in January 2020, I

1 believe, I mean, ADS-B is not new to technology, it's been around
2 for 15 to 20 years. But it was required to be installed in 121
3 aircraft by January 1st, 2020. Our planes were not equipped and
4 they were not -- well, they were equipped, but they were not
5 operating properly. So, they were installed, but they were not
6 operating properly and we're like well, we're operating the planes
7 as pilots and this is part of the thing I'm concerned about with
8 the FAA gentleman. But, you know, I emailed the director of
9 operations directly, there were many phone calls given.

10 ATC was starting to complain, hey you're ADS-B's not working
11 and we're like okay, well, they're installed, you know, you look
12 -- try looking for regulations, it just says installed. Now,
13 technically that means installed and working, you'd think, if it's
14 a requirement to be in the airplane. And I know this isn't -- if
15 he's willing to have this discussion and not come after me for
16 enforcement, we can have this discussion. But that was an issue,
17 that was a concern the pilots had and I emailed David Seest that
18 concern -- and I can send you that email too, and no response.

19 He deferred to Mike Johnson, he said that's a maintenance
20 issue. We're like no it's not, it's an operational issue, most of
21 the FAA regulations say must be installed in any plane that must
22 be operated. If it's got to be installed, that's an operational
23 thing. Well, he says well, give it to -- no comment from him at
24 all, he'd just defer to Mike Johnson.

25 So, we had to get a letter from the FAA saying okay, we're

1 allowed to operate this airplane, on this night, without this
2 equipment operating. They did that for about a week until it was
3 all fixed again and we're like are we putting our butts on the
4 line here -- our certificates because we're doing this? But we
5 contacted the tower every single night, hey, we're operating this
6 airplane, it might it not and we need a letter from you saying
7 it's okay. And fortunately, the Honolulu ATC was willing to do
8 that, so, I mean -- but we had to do that on our own as pilots and
9 the dispatcher, no leadership, no guidance from the company at
10 all.

11 Q. I see. Okay, well thank you --

12 A. So, that was --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. That was kind of the way things ran for the director of
15 operations.

16 DR. BRAMBLE: All right, I think -- David, I think next, I'm
17 going to pass you onto Clarence. See if Clarence has any
18 questions that you can answer.

19 MR. KANAE: Thanks.

20 BY MR. KANAE:

21 A. Hey Chief, how are you doing?

22 Q. Good, hi, David. Thank you for your time, I appreciate it
23 very much. If you can't understand me, just let me know. I've
24 got this mask on, so excuse me for that. But I don't have that
25 many questions for you. I think most of my colleagues have asked

1 you quite a lot of questions. But I wanted to start off with in
2 your preflight planning prior to departing, did you have any
3 concerns about how the weight and balance computations were
4 computed during your preflight?

5 A. I'd seen how it was done. We were small enough, I could see
6 them loading up, I could see them weighing each individual can.
7 I'm good friends with one of the load supervisors, you know, I
8 know all of the load supervisors and most of the people that
9 worked on the ramp. I saw the computer program, how it worked,
10 they would weigh it and give the numbers to -- usually Bob Lehman,
11 who was the cargo manager at night. He'd then put the numbers
12 into the computer, I saw the numbers, I saw the weight and
13 balance. That was -- as far as I could tell, it was legitimate
14 I'll say.

15 Q. Okay. My next question is you mentioned during takeoffs of
16 high temperature operations of the engines. Was this also evident
17 at the outer island airports as well, Hilo, Kona, Lihue, Maui?

18 A. Every -- it wasn't airport specific; it wasn't even aircraft
19 specific, it was every airplane, every engine, except for that
20 brand new one.

21 Q. Okay. All right, did you -- or does the company refuel at
22 the outer airports -- outer island airports at all?

23 A. No.

24 Q. And could you determine if you had a heavy load versus a
25 light load performance wise on the aircraft?

1 A. Yes. I mean, we would know beforehand by looking at the
2 weight and balance sheet and we would talk about that. But the
3 heaviest flight I ever saw was, like, a hundred-and-eight thousand
4 pounds and gross is a hundred-twenty-five. So, most of the time
5 we were operating, we were doing 80 to 95,000.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. I mean, I'd say the average would be between 90 and 95,000
8 pounds.

9 Q. Okay. All right.

10 A. That was a daily, typical load every flight.

11 Q. All right, and I just have one more question. In your
12 training, did you all have an engine out failure procedure for
13 Honolulu eight right just after takeoff? Like, on the first
14 segment, you had an engine failure on your --

15 A. Of course.

16 Q. What was the procedure?

17 A. It would be (indiscernible).

18 Q. Could you run through --

19 A. That's the departure procedure. We also have a partial
20 departure procedure, exit to the far right.

21 Q. Do you --

22 A. That's correct, yes, we did.

23 Q. Do you remember what that might be heading altitude.

24 A. I don't remember exactly because it's been a couple months
25 and it was very different runways.

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. Generally, without -- I can't remember the DME (ph.), but at
3 a certain DME point -- or within a certain DME, it's basically you
4 turn right to 220A, that was it -- to avoid the mountains. So,
5 400 feet turn right 220, get to a thousand feet or whatever safe
6 altitude you want to get to and get into the (indiscernible).

7 Q. Did you all get to experience that in the simulator in Miami?

8 A. Yes, we did.

9 MR. KANAE: Okay. Well, that's all I have, David. Thank you
10 very much, I appreciate it.

11 CAPT HOSHOUR: Thanks.

12 DR. BRAMBLE: We're going to move you back to Shawn, so over
13 here now.

14 BY MR. ETCHER:

15 Q. Hey, David, are you doing okay?

16 (Alarm goes off)

17 A. Thank you.

18 Q. So, now we go around for round two. No. It is a lot --

19 A. Is this the bonus round?

20 Q. It is, it's the big money round for you. It's -- usually the
21 second round takes a lot less time and you have answered a ton of
22 questions, so I appreciate that. I've got -- I think I counted
23 seven, maybe eight questions. So, that's -- won't take you long,
24 I'm sure. But before I start, I definitely -- I'll make the
25 request to you now, but I'll also send you an email. We'd love to

1 see those screen shots, emails, anything you think that will help
2 us understand the culture, what pilots deal with?

3 A. Of course.

4 Q. Anything you can do to help that. I'll send you an email
5 tonight after we get done requesting that just so we can, you
6 know, see the whole big picture.

7 A. Of course.

8 Q. I know Clarence ended his with talking about some training
9 and just one quick follow up on that. You were at SkyWest for
10 several years, how is this training compared to sky west? Is it
11 similar, is it better, is it not as good?

12 A. It was much more airplane specific because SkyWest you had to
13 deal with the passengers also, so there was the customer service,
14 passenger, people factor that they had to take into consideration.
15 It was just flying a plane. I don't mean that's the tone, it was
16 just -- the training was just flying the airplane because we
17 didn't have to deal with passengers or customer service.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. Or delays, or -- you know, we didn't have to deal with the
20 weather much either, restricted air space, I mean, none of those
21 things really took into effect. So, there were some things that
22 were similar, but it was just more airplane specific.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. That's basically what the training is, it was aircraft
25 specific training.

1 Q. Okay. That helps a lot, I appreciate that. You always hear
2 people talk about that famous open-door policy with management,
3 did you --

4 A. I have Wallace's number on speed dial and I have Mike
5 Johnson's, the director of maintenance, number, you know, every
6 mechanic that I've worked with, I have their phone numbers. Hey -
7 - I call from the other station hey, this is what the -- you know,
8 it's doing this right now. Oh, okay, we'll take a look at it when
9 we get back, you know, stuff like that.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So, it was -- like I said, they knew who they need to work
12 with.

13 Q. Okay. Could you walk into the director of ops and sit down
14 and have a conversation, or to the owner, or the vice president,
15 or anything like that?

16 A. The vice president was on a different island and he was not
17 very friendly. I had him in jump seat several times and I think I
18 had to disinfect the seat when he got out and these are 50 year
19 old airplanes (indiscernible)

20 Q. What --

21 A. Cockroaches and centipedes. (Verbatim)

22 Q. Let me ask for a little clarification.

23 A. -- with llamas and yada.

24 Q. You said he was on a different island, do you mean physically
25 on another island in the Hawaiian chain?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. He was -- he lived on Maui and he did most of his operations
4 out of Maui.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. He was also the state manager, which is ironic because Maui
7 was the worst station in the company.

8 Q. Okay. All right, so I'm going to take it that your
9 interactions with the vice president probably weren't always the
10 best?

11 A. I can get along with everybody and I tried to get along with
12 him.

13 Q. Okay. Thank you for making sure that was clear in my brain.
14 I appreciate that. I can't remember -- I want to say it was Bill
15 might've been asking something and you said a term -- you felt the
16 DO was ineffective. Can you just kind of help me understand what
17 you mean by ineffective? Just a quick understanding for me, just
18 -- I want to make sure I understand what -- you know, we're on the
19 same sheet of music of what you think.

20 A. Did nothing, did not communicate with the pilots at all,
21 anytime there was an issue that had to be addressed with the FAA
22 or ATC, he wouldn't do it. Like I said, we had to take care of it
23 on our own, I had to talk to the ATC controller personally that
24 night instead of the director of operations doing it. That's not
25 my job as a line pilot to be making arrangements to keep the

1 company flying, that's his job. He didn't do it -- he wouldn't do
2 it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Anytime we'd address an issue, nothing would take -- nothing
5 would be resolved.

6 Q. Okay. All right, that helps me understand.

7 A. From maintenance, to personnel, to manuals, to, you know,
8 compliance, you know, hey, ADS-B -- maintenance -- the mechanics
9 said we got to the point where they're not ever going to renew our
10 MEL's. So, that's all director of operations stuff and he kept
11 deferring it to maintenance. I mean, everybody -- it was very
12 adversarial, all the mechanics hated the director of operations
13 and it's not just oh, that's just another company. Look, I know
14 there's -- that's not my manager so I don't like him, no, this
15 company was so small, he'd come up to the airplanes and the
16 mechanics would walk away. They'd see him coming and they'd walk
17 away.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And they refused to have a conversation with him and if he
20 did corner them, the mechanics would tell him to get lost, and eff
21 off, and I'm not listening to you. If you have a problem, go talk
22 to my boss, the director of maintenance. So, it was very
23 separate.

24 Q. Okay. All right, you were talking earlier about the
25 airplanes getting up into the yellow arc -- yellow band and, you

1 know, power issues. Did you ever have a point in flying one of
2 these airplanes that you either barely reached cruise altitude or
3 couldn't achieve the cruise altitude you were going for?

4 A. Yeah. But I would -- we talked about it beforehand, like
5 look, this plane's getting old and tired and we're fighting for
6 this altitude, let's just go at a lower altitude and the FO's like
7 sounds good to me.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So, you know, it was known -- we all knew about it.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. These were old and tired and they weren't performing up to
12 the way they should've been. We also -- we were expected to be up
13 there like it was a plane off their showroom floor. So -- but
14 safety wise, we always knew we were within 15 miles of land. So,
15 if we got up to altitude and we lost an engine, we knew we could
16 get back to the land somewhere.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Now, if we were flying long flights, I think it would've quit
19 a long time ago.

20 Q. I guess you didn't ferry the airplanes over to Thailand or
21 wherever?

22 A. No -- Taiwan? Yeah, no.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. I wanted to, but when I was new, I thought it'd be a cool
25 flight. But then I'm like I don't I would do that.

1 Q. Okay. Have you ever refused an airplane?

2 A. Looking on the -- based on the writeups or if I wrote a plane
3 up -- well, yeah, once you write a plane up, you're not flying it.

4 Q. Right, I mean, that's an open writeup. But have you ever
5 said --

6 A. There was like -- for me personally, there was never any
7 plain, like, oh, I'm not flying that airplane. Like, I would not
8 come into work that day for my shift and say oh, I'm not flying
9 that airplane, no.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Because I knew they were all old, I'm like okay, let's see
12 what's wrong with it tonight.

13 Q. All right.

14 A. I would take every day as it came. I could roll with the
15 punches, that's why everyone liked working with me and if it got
16 too much, I'm like okay, we're not chancing this anymore. I'm
17 done.

18 Q. Okay. Who did the preflights? Was it you or -- the captain
19 or the FO?

20 A. FO.

21 Q. Okay. So --

22 A. Occasionally I would do one or a postflight.

23 Q. Okay. So, if the FO found something walking around the
24 airplane, a fluid leak, an engine cowling dent or whatever, you
25 pick anything. Could he write it up in the logbook, or did you as

1 a captain do that?

2 A. We would write it -- the captains would write it up.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. But they would either tell the mechanic directly because the
5 -- usually -- so, they'd have two or three planes out getting
6 ready for flight every night if that had any working and the
7 mechanics would be out there, they would open the doors, they'd
8 usually turn the external power on or maybe make sure the
9 (indiscernible). So, the mechanics are usually out there at every
10 flight, so if I was still inside doing paperwork and the FO was
11 out there ahead of me and he saw something, he would -- they
12 usually tell the mechanic right away.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And if -- yeah. I usually would just -- they usually tell
15 the mechanic right away and then they would tell me by the time I
16 got up to the airplane.

17 Q. Okay. My last question and then I'll pass it around just
18 everybody else has a chance. You've said several times that the
19 chief pilot would threaten to terminate somebody or, you know,
20 whatever. Did the company ever terminate anybody that you're
21 aware of?

22 A. No, in the two years that I was there, they did not.

23 Q. Okay. So, I'll add one more question then. In your mind,
24 were those statements valid to you or were you -- was anybody
25 concerned that they would actually get fired?

1 A. I can't speak to other people, but to me, I realize the whole
2 thing was a joke. I mean, to me, I was laughing -- he would
3 threaten me and I would laugh at him like Wallace, you can't fire
4 me, I'm one of your best pilots and you'd be short if you fired
5 me. He's like well, I got 50 resumes on my desk. I'm like okay,
6 call them up, let them fly this piece of crap.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Let them work for you.

9 Q. Okay. I think you've answered my questions, I appreciate
10 that.

11 A. I said that. I'm his -- I mean, he and I had the
12 relationship where I could say that to him.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I would literally say go ahead, give them a call, let them
15 fly this piece of crap and he wouldn't fly it because he'd be in
16 Miami doing training all the time. So, he wasn't flying regularly
17 like we were.

18 MR. ETCHER: Okay. All right, let me pass you to Bill and
19 like I said, just in case everybody has a few more follow-up
20 questions and we'll get you on your way then, hopefully.

21 CAPT HOSHOUR: (Indiscernible). If this takes all night,
22 that's fine.

23 DR. BRAMBLE: I think I've actually --

24 CAPT HOSHOUR: I guess you're in Hawaii, you're on vacation.
25 So, you know, the sun's still out. I do not know if anything's

1 open still, you go get a Mai Tai after this, I don't know.

2 DR. BRAMBLE: I think I'm actually good on questions for
3 right now, Dave. But I would encourage you -- do you have Shawn's
4 email? I would encourage you to send that -- whatever
5 documentation you have that might sort of go along with some of
6 these issues so that we can take a look at that and we'll get back
7 to --

8 CAPT HOSHOUR: A lot of it was -- the majority of the emails
9 I have are personnel related and operational related, you know,
10 this person can't do this, can't do that.

11 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah.

12 CAPT HOSHOUR: You know, maybe send them back to training,
13 you know, it's kind of like that. You'll see the pictures. I
14 don't know if that's relevant to what you guys want.

15 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah, I mean, I would be selective and just
16 only send things you think might be related or potentially related
17 to the investigation of this accident. But I'll leave that to
18 your discretion of what you think is relevant?

19 CAPT HOSHOUR: I don't think I have anything directly related
20 to that. They're the things I've already addressed.

21 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay.

22 CAPT HOSHOUR: You know, raise your hand to say something,
23 you know, hey, this is a red flag and there'd be no response.

24 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah.

25 CAPT HOSHOUR: You know, like, I mean, we've already

1 addressed it, though.

2 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah, I mean, the kind of thing we would
3 definitely want to definitely see would be, you know, if somebody
4 was threatening pilots with termination for doing things they felt
5 were unsafe. And so, it sounds like what you're saying is they
6 didn't respond to things in writing that you were concerned about,
7 so.

8 CAPT HOSHOUR: That's correct.

9 DR. BRAMBLE: All right, these two guys have signaled to me
10 that they're done with their questions.

11 MR. ZEIGER: Yep, I appreciate it. Thank you for your time.

12 MR. KANAE: Yeah.

13 DR. BRAMBLE: So, I'm going to hand you back to Shawn and
14 he'll close out for us.

15 MR. ETCHER: See, I told you the second round was a lot
16 quicker.

17 CAPT HOSHOUR: The speed round.

18 MR. ETCHER: But no, you did -- you answered a lot of our
19 questions, I appreciate it. I feel like you've enlightened us a
20 lot. But I'm always worried that there will be something we
21 didn't ask that we should've.

22 CAPT HOSHOUR: Is this the first time you've heard any of
23 this stuff? I'm shocked if it is.

24 MR. ETCHER: I wouldn't say it's the first time, maybe not in
25 maybe this much detail. But, you know, we've heard it around the

1 grapevine type thing, so, you know, you're kind of giving us a lot
2 of detail, so appreciate that. But is there anything we should've
3 asked that we didn't? I feel like you've given us a lot of info
4 but I'm always afraid we've missed something.

5 CAPT HOSHOUR: No, I can't think of anything. Let me go
6 through this real quick. I have things -- so, a couple letters to
7 Wallace about individual FO's, how they're performing, how they're
8 not performing, the one letter to the director of operations
9 regarding the -- we had to contact ATC. I'll send you that one,
10 all of it sounds kind of important. No, that's about it. It's
11 most of the letters and emails I have are specific times and
12 operational performance. That's about it. I don't think I have
13 anything else.

14 MR. ETCHER: Okay. Well, I mean -- and I'll send the request
15 in email, but like Bill said, use your discretion. If you think
16 it's safety related that will help us, please, we'd love to read
17 it. But use your discretion, you know what you've got more than
18 we do.

19 CAPT HOSHOUR: Yeah, I've sent some of everything. The
20 biggest things are the do your effing job and I've got 50 pilots
21 who will do your job if you want to do it, stick to your job,
22 don't try to do other stuff. I mean, that's just -- that was
23 between Wallace and I and I wasn't offended, you know, but I think
24 it's -- it kind of shows the atmosphere.

25 MR. ETCHER: Yeah.

1 CAPT HOSHOUR: Yeah, no, I wasn't offended.

2 MR. ETCHER: Okay.

3 CAPT HOSHOUR: I wasn't really threatened either because it
4 got to the point where I'm like Wallace, yeah right.

5 MR. ETCHER: Okay. Well, we don't want to take up all night.
6 I know you've offered us all night, but we know you want to enjoy
7 your days off as well. So, unless -- do you have any questions
8 for us?

9 CAPT HOSHOUR: Nothing that I don't have a right say or do
10 anything. I mean, we can talk about this all night, but it's only
11 hearsay.

12 MR. ETCHER: Right.

13 CAPT HOSHOUR: You know, like, he said, she said, maybe some
14 things you can't talk about.

15 MR. ETCHER: Okay.

16 CAPT HOSHOUR: I just want to make sure that -- and I'm
17 shocked if this is the first time you've heard these things. I
18 mean, you said it's not exactly, so I'm glad that.

19 MR. ETCHER: But no, you --

20 CAPT HOSHOUR: I'm sure you've heard these things numerous
21 times by now.

22 MR. ETCHER: But, like I said, you at least expanded on that
23 a little bit so that helps. So, you know, if you have other
24 questions or any questions, you've got my email, you've got my
25 phone number, don't hesitate. Reach out, holler at us, whatever,

1 you know, we'll listen. We can't always guarantee we can do
2 something about it, but we want to listen because we don't want
3 this to happen again to anybody.

4 CAPT HOSHOUR: Of course.

5 MR. ETCHER: But I do appreciate it and if you have nothing
6 for us then we'll call this concluded at 1723 Honolulu time. But
7 we appreciate it.

8 CAPT HOSHOUR: Bye.

9 (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: TRANSAIR FLIGHT 810 CRASH
 NEAR HONOLULU, HAWAII
 ON JULY 2, 2021
 Interview of Captain David Hoshour

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FA174

PLACE: Honolulu, Hawaii

DATE: September 24, 2021

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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

TRANSAIR FLIGHT 810 CRASH *

NEAR HONOLULU, HAWAII, *

Accident No.: DCA21FA174

ON JULY 2, 2021 *

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Interview of: MIGUEL RAMIREZ, JR., (Position)

(Place of Employment OR Relation to Accident)

Honolulu, Hawaii

Wednesday,
September 24, 2021

APPEARANCES:

DR. WILLIAM BRAMBLE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAWN ETCHER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JACOB ZEIGER, Air Safety Investigator
Boeing Commercial Airplanes

CLARENCE KANAE, Principal Operations Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

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I N T E R V I E W

(7:57 a.m.)

MR. ETCHER: All right. Well, good morning. It is September 24th at 7:57 Honolulu time. This is an interview with Mr. Ramirez.

My name is Shawn Etcher. I'm an operational factors investigator with the NTSB. Dr. Bill Bramble and myself are leading the Operations Human Performance Group in the into the accident of TransAir 810.

Just so you're aware, the NTSB is an independent federal agency. We're charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the Department of Transportation or the FAA, and it has no regulatory enforcement or enforcement powers.

I'm going to go around the room here and have everybody introduce themselves. That way you have a face, a name, and what they do, and also for the recording. And I'll start with Dr. Bramble.

DR. BRAMBLE: I'm Bill Bramble. I'm a human performance investigator with NTSB.

MR. ZEIGER: My name is Jacob Zeiger. I'm an air safety investigator with Boeing Commercial Aircraft.

MR. KANAE: Good morning.

MR. RAMIREZ: Morning.

MR. KANAE: I'm Clarence Kanae with the FAA, stationed here

1 at the Honolulu (indiscernible).

2 MR. RAMIREZ: Oh, good.

3 MR. ETCHER: Well, Mike, that's everybody that's going to be
4 in here talking with you. Is there anybody that you object to
5 having in here?

6 MR. RAMIREZ: No.

7 INTERVIEW OF MIGUEL RAMIREZ, JR.

8 BY MR. ETCHER:

9 Q. Okay. Great. Thanks. So today we're going to be using a
10 digital recording. After the interview, we're going to send the
11 recording out to have it transcribed. All the party members here
12 are going to review that transcript just to make sure that they've
13 spelled aviation terms correctly. We're not going to change any
14 of the content of it, because it is a transcript. We just want to
15 make sure they used the right terms and spelled them correctly.

16 As I stated earlier, the purpose of this investigation is to
17 determine probable cause, and more importantly, to prevent
18 reoccurrence of any event like this ever occurring. Our role is
19 not to assign fault. We're here simply for you to share your
20 insights, with the goal of preventing accidents in the future.

21 Having said that, however, we cannot offer any guarantee of
22 confidentiality or immunity. This transcript of this interview
23 will eventually be made part of a public docket for this accident
24 investigation. Each of the group members will have a chance to
25 ask questions. I'll start, and we'll just kind of go around the

1 room.

2 We're going to ask questions one at a time, and there'll be
3 an opportunity for every group member to ask questions, so you
4 don't have to worry about that. Please answer all the questions
5 to the best of your recollection. More importantly, if you don't
6 understand a question, ask for clarification, because if you give
7 me an answer that I don't understand, I'm going to ask for a
8 little bit more information.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. If you realize you misstated something or want to correct
11 something, feel free to do so. And if something is an opinion,
12 please let us know that, too. We just want to make sure we have
13 that full picture, all right?

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. Now, you are entitled to have one representative of your
16 choosing, but you told me the other day you did not want one, is
17 that correct?

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. ETCHER: Does anyone have any questions?

21 BY MR. ETCHER:

22 Q. If during the interview if you need a break to use the
23 restroom, get a drink, just say so.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. That's perfectly fine, all right?

- 1 A. No problem.
- 2 Q. All right. So we'll start with the harder questions first.
- 3 Can you please state and spell your full name?
- 4 A. Miguel Ramirez, M-I-G-U-E-L. Last name R-A-M-I-R-E-Z. And
- 5 there's a "Jr." at the end.
- 6 Q. Okay. And what is your age?
- 7 A. Sixty-eight.
- 8 Q. Okay. Are you currently working at Rhoades TransAir?
- 9 A. No, I'm not.
- 10 Q. All righty. When did you leave that position?
- 11 A. Left around the 8th of September.
- 12 Q. Of?
- 13 A. This year.
- 14 Q. Of this year?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. So a few weeks ago?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. So you were employed at the time of the accident?
- 19 A. Yes, I was.
- 20 Q. All right. And what was your role with TransAir at that
- 21 time?
- 22 A. I was one of the SMS safety auditors for the company.
- 23 Q. Okay. Can you kind of give us an understanding of what that
- 24 is?
- 25 A. Okay. I would go to the different areas and observe what was

1 going on, see if they were in, I guess, compliance with the --
2 what they were doing and if they met the FARs. And I used to
3 follow the DCTs from the FAA on the different areas and evaluate
4 them.

5 Q. Okay. All right. And how long had you done that at
6 TransAir?

7 A. I did that since February.

8 Q. Of?

9 A. Of this year.

10 Q. Of 2021?

11 A. Right.

12 Q. Okay. Do you have any pilot certificates?

13 A. I do have a commercial multiengine commercial pilot's
14 license. I have a flight engineer license. I have a ATP -- I'm
15 sorry -- a dispatcher's, A & P, and ground instructor.

16 Q. Wow. So that's a lot of certificates. So can you kind of
17 give us a Cliffs Notes' version of your aviation history, then?

18 A. Okay. I started back in high school. I went to Aviation
19 High School, graduated in 1972. I did get my airframe and power
20 plant license from the school. I went into the Air Force, did 20-
21 plus years as a mechanic, and then I cross-trained as a
22 flight -- as a deno (ph.) lab because I wanted to go to school, a
23 couple of associate's, bachelor's, and then went into flight
24 engineering, finished out my career as a flight engineer.

25 I worked for different companies, Ogden Aviation, Northwest

1 for 14 -- 12 or 14 years. And then I worked for different
2 companies, Polar, Atlas. I was a maintenance rep at McGuire. I
3 had access to the base, so that's why they hired me.

4 I taught at Aviation High School for 23 years as an airframe
5 and power plant mechanic. I retired. And got divorced, one thing
6 led to another, and I wound up out here in Honolulu.

7 I did work for TransAir at one point in 2015 for a couple
8 months. Things were not good, and I was not going to jeopardize
9 my license, so I left. Yeah, I went to Mokulele, got hired by the
10 FAA, went to Alaska, came back here, and got picked up by
11 TransAir. And then TransAir had the accident, and I left.
12 Mokulele re-hired me, and now I just accepted a tentative offer
13 from the FAA.

14 Q. Excellent. Well, thank you for that Cliffs Notes' version.
15 So I've got to ask since you brought it up. You were here back in
16 2015?

17 A. 2015.

18 Q. Okay. And you said you were here a few months, and it wasn't
19 looking good, so you left. Can you kind of help us understand
20 why?

21 A. Okay. They hired me as a mechanic, so my job was to fly with
22 the airplane; in case something broke, we were there to fix it.
23 The OM at the time -- he's no longer there -- Roger, he wanted me
24 to take a part off one airplane, put it on the next one, don't
25 sign it off, he'll take care of the paperwork. And then the next

1 day, it was take the part off that airplane, put it on another
2 airplane, "I'll take care of the paperwork." And it was just a
3 "you're going nowhere fast" part. It went back on the original.
4 And then I found out the reason was they were clearing MELs. And
5 it was me on the airplane. It was like, this, this is not a good
6 thing. It's not going to happen. So I left.

7 Q. And just so I make sure I understood, that was just you
8 worked there a couple of months or --

9 A. I worked -- yeah, I would say maybe six months. I would have
10 to look at my financial records.

11 Q. That's a good ballpark. I just wanted to make sure it
12 wasn't, you know, 14 months, right?

13 A. No, no, no, no.

14 Q. Just wanted to make sure. So let's kind of move forward to
15 when you were there in the recent time you were there.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. Who was in your chain of command there?

18 A. Okay. My boss was Orlando. He was the director of safety.
19 And then from him, we reported to the VP, which was Tracy Reasoner
20 and then T-Mor (ph.).

21 Q. Okay. All righty. So just so we all understand a day-in-
22 the-life of what you did there, can you kind of walk us through
23 that day-in-the-life of what you were looking at doing?

24 A. Okay. I walk in the office, and we had DCTs to do. So we
25 broke them down for -- I was doing the maintenance stuff. Velari

1 was doing the operational stuff. And we were in the office, and
2 we get assigned a DCT. So I'd go out to the different areas, and
3 being a former teacher, I would just look and see and just ask
4 some easy questions. I'd tell -- look, "Hey, I'm here. I'm not
5 the FAA. I'm just here to see what's going on. Any questions,
6 let me know." It's -- no names would be recorded, according to
7 the Part 5 and the company policy. And I would just watch.

8 And I would ask, I would ask questions, you know, "Why you
9 doing this?" You know, "Why you guys doing that?" And sometimes
10 I'd get a smart answer, and sometimes they would, like, "Go away.
11 You're bothering us." So I would go away. But I would just hang
12 out and watch. And then I'd come back in the office and do my
13 reports.

14 Q. Did you enjoy the work?

15 A. Oh, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. What brought you great satisfaction doing your job?

17 A. Being a teacher again. Sometimes they were doing stuff, and
18 I was like, well, you know, when I was at Northwest, we kind of
19 did this or that, or, you know, I'd see my students, and I'd kind
20 of explain this and that. And "Do you have the paperwork?" Half
21 the time, it was no. Well, you know, "Let's go by the paperwork
22 and see." And then I'd get some resistance once in a while, so
23 I'd get the paperwork and bring it back. Some appreciated it.
24 Some didn't. And just watching the work, you know? I wanted to
25 get my hands greasy, but that wasn't my job, but --

1 Q. Okay. What were some challenges with that job?

2 A. Seeing stuff that was going wrong, reporting it, and nobody
3 wanted to hear about it.

4 Q. Can you give us an example?

5 A. Well, they're different problems. One that I can remember is
6 we had a period there of compressor stalls on the airplane. I
7 think in a month period, there were, like, 15 to whatever
8 compressor stalls. And I would get a hold of the logbook, and the
9 entries was "cannot duplicate on the ground."

10 So I started explaining to the other operations SMS how
11 compressor stalls worked, and it just wasn't being done. You
12 can't -- if you have an airplane flying at 23,000 feet and you
13 have a compressor stall, several compressor stalls, you can't take
14 the airplane and run it at idle and say, "Ops check okay." It
15 doesn't work.

16 And then I would ask them -- well, I would ask a couple
17 people, and I was told that the airplanes were run, but they were
18 never moved. So how can you take the airplane to a run spot and
19 do a high-power run, and they never left the spot? That was one
20 of the problems.

21 There was another time where they would sign off MELs -- and
22 again, I just started looking deeper and deeper, and the MELs
23 weren't done correctly. They were using the wrong MELs. The
24 procedures that were supposed to be followed were not complied
25 with. And I would ask the mechanics, "Hey, what's going on?"

1 "Oh, you know, we were told not to do it."

2 There were a couple other times where pilots would say,
3 "Well, we were told by maintenance not to write it up." And I was
4 like, "Well, it's your life and your -- it's your butt." "Well,
5 we were told not to write it up because we would get canned." And
6 this was several people.

7 One pilot told me that he landed, he told maintenance there
8 was a problem. By the time he got down the stairs, walked to the
9 office, and then came back because he forgot his cell phone, the
10 items were signed off, could not duplicate. So that was the
11 frustrating part.

12 And there was another item with 810, I believe it was, where
13 the steering was messed up. Four different people worked on the
14 airplane, and four different times, nothing was done. The plane
15 was never moved, and the sign was for ops check. So if you have a
16 steering problem and you don't move the airplane, how can you ops
17 check?

18 I mean, I've been doing maintenance for a long time. I've
19 been teaching for a long time, and it's just not right. And it
20 got to the point where I started having indigestions and an ulcer,
21 and that's when I decided to leave.

22 Q. You said they were having many or multiple compressors
23 stalls -- I think you said 15 or so --

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. -- in a period of a month. Was that on one specific airplane

1 or was that on --

2 A. They were -- I believe there was maybe three airplanes that
3 I've had documentation for, but when I'm looking at the sign-offs,
4 it's, it's not right. I mean, you don't ops check it. You know,
5 you don't -- they didn't borescope it. They didn't look on the
6 inside.

7 One time they changed -- I mean, I saw this for a fact. A
8 plane came in. It parked at the last spot, because our office
9 oversaw the flight line. They parked the airplane. They came in.
10 They changed some random part, put it back into service (ph.), and
11 the plane left. And all the pilots were told to look the other
12 way, not to -- and this is what I heard from the pilots. Don't,
13 don't cause any waves. And it was just a bad situation.

14 Q. Okay. I think you said something about people weren't doing,
15 you know, looking the other way because they were afraid to get
16 canned?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. What do you mean by canned, just for the record?

19 A. To be terminated.

20 Q. Okay. Did you ever observe TransAir or Rhoades terminate
21 people for --

22 A. I never saw it, but I did do my first report about the
23 situation, and then the day after the accident, where it was a
24 meeting with me, the owner, and a couple other people, and I was
25 told, "Well, here's the report. Can you just tone it down?" And

1 I'm like, "It's the day after the accident. Are you serious?"
2 "Well, you know, it doesn't look good for us," and whatnot. I
3 redid it, but I never signed the report, and I gave it to them.
4 And that was the day that my fate was sealed. I was like, "I'm
5 out of here. This is, this is not right."

6 Q. So what were they having you tone down on the report?

7 A. I went from -- there was a lot of systemic problems that I
8 put on the DCT, and the director of maintenance at the time, he
9 was livid, and he talked to T-Mor, and T-Mor talked to me, and
10 Tracy was there, Linda was there, training was there, and that --
11 that's a joke. And it was like, you know, "It doesn't look good
12 for us." I wanted to be a team player, but I after I did it, it's
13 like, you know, this ain't right. So like I said, I never signed
14 the report. I gave them, and I told them, you know, "Whatever
15 happens, it's on you guys." And that was the end of me.

16 Q. Did you retain a copy of that report?

17 A. Oh, yeah.

18 Q. Do you have it with you?

19 A. I have it right here in my --

20 Q. Would you like -- do you need to reference it so you can give
21 specifics?

22 A. Sure. Just give me a minute, and I'll --

23 Q. Sure. Take your time.

24 A. Yeah, one thing I learned in the military, make copies of
25 everything. Plus the teacher in me.

1 Q. I'm glad you did that. You can educate us even more.

2 A. I always told my students do it the right way the first time,
3 and you don't have to go back and explain yourself. Okay. Okay.
4 I have it in here. I do have the original, and I have the watered
5 down.

6 Q. Okay. So in the original, what had you stated?

7 A. Okay. On the original, there were a couple items that -- I
8 hate this mask, fogs up -- there were a couple things on the DCT,
9 where I put down regulatory compliance, regulatory noncompliance.
10 There were systemic -- one, two, three, four, five, six -- six
11 items on page 6, where it was just the systemic problems, no clear
12 communication between management, maintenance, and the operators.
13 Chief pilot and others were unaware of the FARs and the Part 5.
14 They were missing QA people, QC people, just a lot of key people
15 that were not there.

16 And then on the watered-down version, because the DOM wanted
17 the new chief inspector to look over this, and he would go and
18 kind of, like, agree to some stuff, and it went from a systemic
19 problem to isolated incidences. Another, on number 24, again went
20 from systemic to -- or ineffective. It just doesn't sit right
21 with me, so that's when I was like I'm out of here.

22 Q. Okay. Yeah, okay. I appreciate you bringing that to our
23 attention.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. That's very important. So thank you.

1 A. Well, if you want these, you can have these.

2 Q. Okay. We'll probably want those.

3 A. Okay. Well, I'll leave these out.

4 Q. Thank you. So was that an isolated event, where you had
5 to -- where you were asked to tone things down or did it happen
6 previously?

7 A. That was the one that they wanted me to tone it down, and
8 then every DCT after that, I had to check with somebody. I mean,
9 I'm doing the safety report. I'm supposed to know what's going
10 on, and yet you want somebody to watch me do what I'm doing so
11 that I don't see or do anything bad? It's, it's not right.

12 Q. Okay. Who did they have watch you?

13 A. They had the chief inspector, the new one, Ron -- I forgot
14 what his last name was -- so he would come and, you know, we sit
15 and do it. Like I said, it's -- it wasn't fun anymore to be
16 around airplanes.

17 Q. Okay. All right. So I know they had somebody watch you, but
18 did they have -- was there any other time that you worked there
19 that they had you -- I don't want to say change paperwork, but
20 redo paperwork --

21 A. No. That was --

22 Q. That was the one?

23 A. The one.

24 Q. Okay. No problem. And thank you again. So you said you
25 would communicate problems like the maintenance issues that you

1 would observe. Who would you communicate those to?

2 A. I would talk to Valeri, which was my operations SMS manager,
3 and we'd talk, because sometimes he would hear things, and he
4 quite didn't understand it. We would tell Orlando, who was our
5 director of safety, super nice guy, but -- and I don't mean to say
6 it in a bad -- no backbone to go up to management. Couple of
7 times I talked to the chief pilot, David. He was -- and again,
8 another super nice guy, but the job is way too big for him. And
9 he would tell me, "Oh, yeah, I know about that" and "yeah, I know
10 about this." It's like, "Really?" And he would make excuses for
11 the company.

12 Talked to the other inspector, Scott, before he got replaced
13 by Ron. And he was like, "Hey, we got to, we got to move the
14 airplanes," you know, "We got to make money," you know? And like
15 I said, training was a joke. I talked to them a couple times.
16 "Are these guys getting trained?" And as a teacher, I know what's
17 required doing the Part 147 school, and it just wasn't being done.
18 I mean, yeah, you got to make money, but let's do it right.

19 Q. Okay. And by training, are you talking the pilots, the
20 mechanics, everybody?

21 A. The training office that was there. As far as training for
22 the mechanics, I did do a DCT on the trainers. I looked through
23 their records, and I used four sticky notepads. Their records
24 look like a Christmas tree, signatures missing. The same class,
25 supposed to be 40 hours. Some people did it in 4. Some people

1 did it in 20. Some people just no numbers, nothing signed.

2 R double I, according to the regulations, is supposed to be
3 on the chief inspector's computer. Never there. Again, paperwork
4 missing. Just a shambles. In fact, I wanted to go into the
5 training and fix that. And "No, we're going to hire somebody
6 else," you know, "Don't worry about it. We got it covered." So
7 it's just frustrating.

8 Q. Earlier you had said you went to the chief pilot, and you
9 said David?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Is that --

12 A. David Seest.

13 Q. Oh, the director of operations?

14 A. Right.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I'm sorry. Yeah, David. The chief pilot is the Asian guy.
17 I forgot --

18 Q. That's okay.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. I just wanted to make sure I knew --

21 A. Well, I know David was the director of operations, but we
22 started talking one day, because he would come in to heat up his
23 food. And then I found out that he was a maintenance guy, and he
24 was -- he had dispatchers. I wanted to get into dispatching, and
25 you know, all -- you know, it was always a roadblock or an excuse,

1 or whatever. So -- and we would just talk.

2 Q. When you got into your auditing position, was there any
3 training involved that they gave you?

4 A. Pen, signed off, you're good to go.

5 Q. No formal training?

6 A. No formal training. I trained myself. I looked at the
7 regulations, and again, doing different jobs, different areas, and
8 seeing the FAA come in and do what they were doing, self-trained.

9 Q. Okay. Speaking of the FAA, did you interact with them at all
10 or often?

11 A. Yeah, they would come over, three nice guys. Being a former
12 FAA inspector at Fairbanks, I was frustrated sometimes. I was
13 like, "Why don't you guys do something, you know? These guys
14 are -- 709 them," which means retest them. And I told Scott, who
15 was the chief inspector, and somehow it got back to the DOM that I
16 was pushing to get everybody retested, but come on. You can only
17 screw things up so much and then somebody is going to say, "Hey,
18 what's going on here?" Nobody did that.

19 Q. Did you ever go with any of your concerns to the FAA? Well,
20 let me rephrase that. Did you bring it to the FAA's attention?

21 A. I talked to -- when I was being interviewed for a position,
22 during the interview process, they asked me the situation, and I
23 mentioned it, and they're the ones who told me, "Well, you know,
24 you should do a report, an anonymous report, a hotline report."
25 And that's when I -- I mean, I was going to do it once, and then I

1 was like, yes/no, yes/no. Like I say, it was eating at me. I was
2 going through a bottle of Roloids a week. So that's when I made
3 the report, and since I left, no more indigestion.

4 Q. You said in your office, there was an ops investigator, too,
5 or ops --

6 A. Yeah, operations.

7 Q. Operations?

8 A. Right.

9 Q. How did you enjoy working with him?

10 A. How was what?

11 Q. I'm sorry. How did you enjoy -- did you enjoy working with
12 him?

13 A. Larry is -- he's a great guy. I enjoyed him. He's from
14 Russian descent, Russian-trained. But he's like a dog with a
15 bone. He won't let it go sometimes. I get along great, but I
16 guess the communication skills was just trying to explain things,
17 and again, being back on as a teacher, I -- okay, the student is
18 not understanding this. Let me dumb it down, make it simpler.
19 And yeah, but we got along great, and he would understand.

20 Q. In your opinion, just your opinion, did you feel he was -- he
21 knew what he was doing for his job or was it --

22 A. He was, but sometimes his hands were tied, because he would
23 find stuff to put it on the reports, and he was told, "Don't put
24 it on the report. Don't worry about that. We'll take care of it.
25 Take it off the report." And he would do it, you know? You know,

1 that's what he was doing, so --

2 Q. Okay. You said earlier -- please correct me if I'm using the
3 wrong phrase, but working with Orlando, he was a nice guy, but he
4 didn't have a backbone?

5 A. He does have a backbone on maintenance --

6 Q. A backbone, a backbone, did you say back --

7 A. Yeah, I mean, he knew it was wrong, because we would explain
8 it to him. "You have to do it this way" and "here's the regs" and
9 "here's" -- I would pull the maintenance manual, the
10 references -- "here it is." And then he would go, "Okay, let me
11 talk to T-Mor about this."

12 And that was it. I didn't hear anything. No feedback, "Hey,
13 I talked to him," you know, "He wants to talk to us" or "Can you
14 explain more?" or "Can you elaborate?" Only one time did we have
15 a meeting, and I did, like, a spreadsheet. And the director of
16 maintenance was not happy. He was totally pissed off. T-Mor
17 didn't understand the spreadsheet, but again, I was never asked to
18 explain how I did that or how the numbers came about. And it was
19 just dropped.

20 Q. And what was on that spreadsheet, or do you have a copy --

21 A. I believe I do. There were the compressor stalls that were
22 on there. They were write-ups about wiring that was ops-checked
23 "okay" and not followed. The steering, that was not followed. I
24 even had mechanics -- I kind of traced mechanics. Well, this guy,
25 look at this. He did it here, here, here and here, and we still

1 have the same problem.

2 There was one R double I guy who got caught by the FAA for
3 signing stuff off that he worked on, and then he signed them off
4 as an R double I, and then the company wanted to make him the
5 chief inspector, but the FAA shot them down. Just a whole bunch
6 of stuff. And again, it wasn't that I was trying to nail anybody.
7 I was just trying to say, "Hey, look, we got a problem. How we
8 going to fix this?" Nobody wanted to hear it. I'll keep looking
9 through my stuff here.

10 Q. Oh, yeah. No, please.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And while you're looking, if -- you had mentioned, you know,
13 you (indiscernible) was a mechanic that did this, this, this, and
14 this, you know, signed it off (indiscernible) or whatever. Were
15 you seeing a trend with a specific mechanic or --

16 A. No. I mean, they had one -- I remember one incident where
17 the -- they had apprentice mechanics, okay? He signed it off
18 using the wrong ATA chapter and just wrong. And the mechanic who
19 was supposed to oversee him and then look at what he signed just
20 signed off on it, too. So I don't fault the apprentice, because
21 he's learning, but I do fault the mechanic. It's your
22 responsibility to make sure that this guy is doing it right and
23 it's not happening, you know? Stupid little things like that.

24 They would sign off and then forget -- they have a certain
25 amount of space to sign stuff off, and then they would cram it all

1 into two lines. It's like you should have learned this back in
2 school. Arrows, continue on the next block so that the next guy
3 coming in can kind of decipher.

4 There were a bunch of times where I would take a picture of
5 the signoff and then blow it up, put it on the computer just to
6 play Columbo and try to figure out what the hell they're talking
7 about. You know, just inconsistencies.

8 I did mention that once to the director of operations, and I
9 got blown off. "Don't worry about it. You're not a mechanic."
10 It's like, really? You know, just, just little things like that.

11 Q. Okay. I know earlier you had said your chain of command was
12 Orlando and then the vice president, Mr. Reasoner?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. And then the CEO. Did you ever take anything to Mr.
15 Reasoner?

16 A. He was never around, because he lives on the other island,
17 and he'd come in. I tried talking to him once, and it was like
18 talking to the wall. His airline experience, I think he went to
19 Emory Riddler [sic] and got a degree in aviation. He was a
20 Marine -- roadblock there -- but avionics guy. And that was his
21 maintenance experience, from what I talked to him. Just not an
22 approachable guy. Again, super nice guy, personable, but for me
23 to sit down and try to explain to him, not interested.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Oh, I do. I have the -- these -- that's the, the

1 spreadsheet. And I do have them color-coded. The orange or the
2 red is, like, hey, this is not right. The yellow is, kind of, eh,
3 you know, it's 99 percent right, but there's a couple things that
4 it's got to be fixed. And then the green is, like, okay. But
5 I'll divvy these up and give them to you later on.

6 Q. Oh, thank you. I appreciate that.

7 A. Okay. And I did get a list of the mechanics with their
8 numbers so you can kind of see who's who.

9 Q. Oh, thank you. That will save me a lot of --

10 A. Again, it's the teacher in me. And I'm not trying to burn
11 anybody, because that's not my job.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. My job is to educate. I'm still a teacher. In fact, I
14 love -- best babysitting job I ever had. I've taught over 5,000
15 students. Maybe half of them got mechanics, and I still talk to
16 maybe a third of them. They'll call me up. "Hey, Mr. R., we got
17 a problem" or "Can you help me?" or you know, still approachable.
18 I wasn't that bad of a teacher.

19 Q. Okay. So we've heard, you know, the "front five" (ph.) and
20 all that. Did -- let me start really, really -- did Rhoades
21 TransAir, did they have an SMS program?

22 A. They had one on paper. In reality, it didn't exist. We were
23 trying to go from the manuals, which were never revised, to a
24 computer system, because training thought, "Hey, we can go
25 computer, and we'll be good." But it doesn't work like that. I

1 did talk to a couple mechanics. "Well, you know, if you see
2 something, you're supposed to say something. It's Part 5-0."
3 "That doesn't apply to us. We only do Part 43." It's like,
4 "Really?"

5 Q. So did they not feel like they could come and say something
6 to you or was that not what they were taught?

7 A. The -- and I heard the DOM at one time tell the mechanics,
8 "We're getting a new airplane. I will be doing the training, and
9 it's my way or the highway." So that was the attitude for the new
10 400 that we were supposed to be getting, or they were supposed to
11 be getting. A couple mechanics and NDT inspection guys came over
12 to me. "This is not right." In fact, one guy was an ex-Army guy,
13 and we just hit it off good. He's like, "This ain't right, you
14 know? I was supposed to do this job, and I went to lunch, and the
15 other inspector signed it off by the time I came back, and it was
16 supposed to be, like, a four-hour inspection, and it's already
17 signed off." And I'm like, "Okay." I mean, he left the company.

18 One guy did show me a picture of a rag caught in the pulleys
19 of the airplane that came back. And I was like, "I don't want to
20 see this, you know? But I'm here and I'm letting you guys know."
21 That, that was the culture. "Let's get the plane -- we're not
22 making money if it's not flying."

23 Q. So, like, the rag issue, the rag that you just described, did
24 you report that? Did you take it up the chain?

25 A. I didn't report it because, one, I didn't know what airplane,

1 and I don't know if it was staged. So I can't tell you it was on
2 this airplane. Just like somebody took a picture -- I mean, they
3 could have downloaded it from YouTube, or whatever, or set it up.
4 I don't know, but if you have a picture like that, I'm not going
5 to keep it on my phone, you know?

6 I mean, I have pictures of stuff that when I worked at
7 Mokulele, tires that were, like, blown away, and stuff. But I
8 know where that came from. I can't testify and say, "Hey, it was
9 one of their airplanes." I just saw a rag caught in pulleys.
10 "Oh, yeah, you know, this is what happened on our airplane." I
11 was like, you know --

12 Q. You had mentioned earlier about compressor stalls?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. Were there any other engine issues that you were aware of in
15 your position?

16 A. They had a couple problems with the fuel control that was
17 fixed. They did have a couple of problems with split throttles
18 that maintenance was saying it's okay, but the pilot is saying
19 it's not. And I saw some sign-offs, you know, ops check "good."
20 I don't know if they used rigging pins, if they even followed the
21 procedures. I know that when I talked to the FAA, some of the
22 manuals were not up-to-date.

23 And that was another thing. I tried to get the maintenance
24 manuals, and I was banned. I could not get any more log pages or
25 anything that had to do with the airplane. It had to go from me

1 to Orlando, and then Orlando had to ask the DOM so that I can get
2 paperwork. And I was told I had carte blanche, where I can get
3 anything I needed, but I was blocked from that.

4 Q. So you explained it a little bit, and I apologize, but --

5 A. No, no --

6 Q. It kind of, you know, shocked me, so I (indiscernible). How
7 are you supposed to do your job if you were unable to get the log
8 pages?

9 A. Well, from what I was gathering, I was going to be spoon fed
10 the information they wanted me to see.

11 Q. And that's spoon fed through --

12 A. The DOM.

13 Q. Okay. Did you see any engine issues of, like, high temps,
14 or --

15 A. There were a couple issues, high-temp signoffs. I mean, I
16 would have to look through these again. But again, the biggest
17 thing that caught Valeri and my attention were the compressor
18 stalls. A couple of pilots would come into the office nervous,
19 just saying, hey, you know, this happened, this other guy got, you
20 know, yelled at because they followed the checklist or didn't
21 follow the checklist; they wanted to put the airplane back on the
22 ground as soon as possible, and they were read the Riot Act.

23 Couple problems with pressurization. And in fact, one of the
24 FAA guys went on a flight on that airplane, and he filmed it, that
25 the pressurization was fluctuating. And again, the other pilot

1 had reported the same thing. It was never addressed until the FAA
2 took the picture, and then they kind of fixed it, I think, because
3 I looked at after that.

4 Q. I know Rhoades had -- correct me if I'm wrong -- five
5 airplanes? Do you remember?

6 A. They have five 737s. One is on the mainland. One is in for
7 a heavy check, so they had three here.

8 Q. Okay. Do you remember the accident airplane, seeing anything
9 specific --

10 A. 810? Yes.

11 Q. Do you remember seeing anything specific -- coming across --

12 A. I have it.

13 Q. What do you have?

14 A. Oh, I have to look through the stuff. I made too many copies
15 of -- they had a couple -- let's see. They had a writeup with
16 hydraulics and flight control, annunciator lights, main landing
17 gear fuses blown. They only changed one tire. I know you're
18 supposed to change two tires on the same axle. Right rudder not
19 responsive. Again, that was four times they tried to fix that.
20 The no steering. Yeah, those are the only ones that I can see
21 right now.

22 Q. Okay. So 810 wasn't one of those airplanes that you thought,
23 "Well, why is this a problem airplane" -- or was it -- compared to
24 the other four?

25 A. They were all problem airplanes. They had different,

1 different little things on them. Just depended on who was working
2 and what was -- what were they told to fix or sign off.

3 Q. Just a few more questions, and then I'll let -- are you
4 okay --

5 A. No, I'm good. I'm good.

6 Q. Did you ever attend one of the CASS or safety meetings?

7 A. Yeah. In fact, I did the CASS audit. That was my very first
8 one. They were a joke. I mean, Velari would try to explain the
9 safety issues. Different directors were on the cell phone playing
10 games. Candy Crush is one that I kind of recognized. It was
11 unproductive, in my opinion.

12 Q. Was the FAA sitting in on those, too?

13 A. I think they were there maybe once or twice, but I wasn't
14 invited to go to CASS meetings.

15 Q. How about the safety -- and forgive me. I understood they
16 had a CASS meeting and then a safety meeting following?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Were you in the safety meetings at all?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. Who brought up what you guys were seeing at those
21 safety meetings, or do you know?

22 A. Velari was in charge of putting a presentation online. And
23 again, it was -- the language barrier kind of turned a lot of
24 people off, because he tried to explain it one way, and people
25 would just, like, tune him out. But some of the information was

1 like, "Hey, we got, we got to take care of this, but don't worry
2 about it. Can you take it off, you know, the report?" and stuff
3 like that, or, you know, "Don't mention it again." And it was
4 just frustrating.

5 Q. Who would say, "Don't mention it again. Take it off the
6 board"?

7 A. Tracy would come in. David would tell them. And T-Mor came
8 in once or twice and told them. And then, yeah, Orlando told them
9 a few times, you know, "Just take it off. We'll adjust that
10 later."

11 Q. And did they that you're aware of?

12 A. Not that I'm aware of.

13 Q. Okay. Let me digest what you've been telling me so far, and
14 I'll let the other guys, because I'm sure they have questions,
15 too, because you've given us a lot of information.

16 A. No problem.

17 Q. You sure you don't need a restroom break or --

18 A. I got coffee. I'm happy.

19 Q. All righty.

20 MR. ETCHER: Bill?

21 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

22 Q. Yeah, thanks, thanks very much, Mr. Ramirez. I appreciate
23 the information. Which meeting was it that you were in where you
24 said that Velari was making a presentation?

25 A. It was a CASS meeting and maybe one safety meeting that I

1 went to when Orlando was on vacation, or something. I went,
2 invited myself, and --

3 Q. So you weren't normally invited to the CASS meetings or the
4 safety meetings?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. Why was that?

7 A. I felt that I knew too much or would point things out.
8 Again, being a New Yorker, I'm kind of boisterous. But it's, like
9 the old military, "Don't ask. Don't tell." And that's how I took
10 it.

11 Q. But you guys attended that CASS meeting specifically because
12 Velari had a presentation?

13 A. Well, he had presentations every CASS meeting. There was one
14 that -- I probably went to -- I know two definitely, maybe three
15 CASS meetings. Sometimes they were held right outside the door.
16 And when I was in the other hangar, the CASS meeting was going on,
17 and I'm left in the office by myself. And I would kind of listen
18 in, going, well, that's not right or, you know, that's, you know,
19 B.S. meeting going on. But I wasn't in the meeting, but I would
20 kind of hear it.

21 Q. What were Velari's presentations about?

22 A. He was more on the operations, weight and balance problems,
23 runway landing distance problems, aircraft operational things.

24 Q. And was he invited to the safety meetings?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And do you --

2 A. Well, a couple times, he was disinvited, "Oh, don't show up,"
3 you know, "We don't need you." So --

4 Q. But he normally attended?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And did he normally attend the CASS meetings?

7 A. Yes. And again, there were a couple times where we were
8 uninvited.

9 Q. So but you were not -- he was normally invited, but you were
10 not, correct?

11 A. Yeah, yes.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And it didn't hurt my feelings, because I was -- I would
14 probably go in there and get frustrated and say something stupid
15 and get fired.

16 Q. Why did they invite him and not you?

17 A. He was there longer than me. He was the operations guy. I'm
18 just the maintenance guy. "We don't care about maintenance."
19 That was the attitude.

20 Q. Okay. Who was the pilot that was trying to put the airplane
21 on the ground as soon as possible and got yelled at?

22 A. In fact, he was one of the pilots, captain from the accident
23 airplane.

24 Q. Okay. And do you remember why he was trying to put the
25 airplanes on the ground?

1 A. He had some kind of engine problems, and from what I heard,
2 "Hey, there's a runway. Declaring emergency. I'm going on the
3 ground." And then he was yelled at because he didn't follow the
4 checklist.

5 Q. Who showed you the rag picture?

6 A. It's one of the mechanics. He's no longer there. Like I
7 said, at the time, I'm like, "Wow." I think he's working now for
8 Hawaiian.

9 Q. What's his name?

10 A. Again, I don't remember his name. Most of my interaction
11 with the mechanics is, hey, I'm just here as a body. I'm not
12 going to tell you who, what, when and where, or put your name on
13 any reports, because according to the company policy, you're
14 supposed to make anonymous report. And because I followed that,
15 they were more open to me. And they knew that it wasn't going to
16 be, hey, he said this, and then he would be singled out to be
17 terminated.

18 Q. So you began your job as an auditor in February 2021, I think
19 you said?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Did you work for the company before you took that position?

22 A. Yes, I did.

23 Q. What was your role before that?

24 A. I was a mechanic or flight mechanic. I worked the midnight
25 shift, fly with the airplanes. We would fly to Maui, Kona, couple

1 other airports, and if we had problems with the airplane, I was
2 supposed to be their MEL, you know, do whatever to get it back to
3 Honolulu.

4 Q. Okay. What was your date of hire with Rhoades?

5 A. The second time?

6 Q. You had two dates of hire?

7 A. Yeah. I had the first time back in 2015.

8 Q. Oh, right, correct, yeah.

9 A. And then I came back -- well, Scott told the company, "Hey,
10 we need to hire this guy. He knows what he's doing."

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. And --

13 Q. So the second time when you came back and you worked as an
14 SMS auditor --

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. Were you rehired in February 2021?

17 A. Yes. I want to say February 12th, somewhere in there.

18 Q. Okay. So the mechanic role, that was the previous time you
19 worked for them?

20 A. That's correct.

21 Q. What year was that? 2015? 2016?

22 A. 2015.

23 Q. 2015. Okay. All right. So they brought you in specifically
24 to be an auditor?

25 A. That's correct.

1 Q. Okay. Who hired you for that role?

2 A. T-Mor was there, Orlando was there, and Tracy was there.

3 Q. What did they tell you your job was going to be?

4 A. I'm going to be the auditor. "We'll bring you back at the
5 old salary," which was okay with me. I really didn't need a job.
6 I'm just -- was an old retired guy, home, bored. COVID was going
7 strong, and I wanted to see people again, and it was a good excuse
8 to mingle with people. "Hey, I'm working," you know?

9 Q. And did they tell you -- you mentioned that you thought you
10 were going to have carte blanche access to records. And who told
11 you that?

12 A. Well, when I went into the office with Orlando, he said, "You
13 know, any records you have, any company files, just tell him what
14 you need, and you can get them." The first time I was looking at
15 stuff, I went into the records. There were two individuals
16 where -- asking me -- "I need paperwork on 809," or whatever
17 airplane, and they provided me all the log pages.

18 After I did this Excel sheet, if I need anything, I have to
19 go through Orlando, go to the DOM, and then he would give Orlando
20 whatever information I needed or specifically needed, so I
21 couldn't go through all the records and, and see, well, this
22 happened and this happened and this happened, there's a trend. So
23 that's why I said spoon-feed me.

24 Q. When was that, roughly, that you got those records for the
25 first time?

1 A. March/April, someplace in there.

2 Q. Of 2021?

3 A. That's correct.

4 Q. Okay. And then when did you hear back that you weren't going
5 to be allowed to get records anymore?

6 A. That was after the -- I'd say April-ish, May, somewhere in
7 there.

8 Q. Okay. And when did you make the presentation of the
9 spreadsheets?

10 A. Dates on this -- I would say after the series of compressor
11 stalls, sometime in April, mid-April.

12 Q. And how did you present those, and who did you present them
13 to?

14 A. We had a meeting, one of the safety meetings. Everybody was
15 there that normally attends a safety meeting, cargo, ground
16 services, fueling, and I gave them all the spreadsheet and told
17 them we have some problems going on, and this is what I found so
18 far, and there's, you know, there's a trend going on. We have to
19 fix this somehow. And T-Mor shut down because he saw a
20 spreadsheet. He couldn't make heads or tails.

21 The director of maintenance and I got -- well, it wasn't
22 verbal, but he was like, "Well, how did you find this?" and "How
23 did you find out?" I said, "I looked in the record." "Well, who
24 gave you access?" And I said, "I asked and they gave them to me."
25 Well, you didn't come through me." And I says, "Well, I'm

1 supposed to get whatever I need so I can do a report."

2 And he was getting a little heated. And he was like, "Well,
3 never in my maintenance have I ever seen anything like that." And
4 I said, "Well, you know, I got" -- that's when he really got
5 pissed, and I said, "I got my pilot's license. I got
6 dispatcher's, flight engineer. I've been teaching. What do you
7 got? A&P?" Again, the New Yorker in me came out.

8 Q. You're an A&P also?

9 A. Yes. And he got all red-faced, and T-Mor was like, "Okay,
10 let's, let's calm down and take a break," and the meeting was
11 over. And yeah, he didn't like me after that.

12 Q. And then did you have any communications -- what were the
13 next communications you had with management about those issues
14 after that meeting?

15 A. It wasn't.

16 Q. No communications?

17 A. No communications. No feedback.

18 Q. Did you ever speak with T-Mor after that about anything?

19 A. We talked -- again, he's a super nice guy. He'd come in the
20 shop. I think he might have mentioned something. And I said,
21 "Well, if you want to set up a meeting, and you know, I can sit
22 down and discuss it with you," and that was the end of that.
23 Nothing, nothing came through.

24 Q. And you provided them copies of this spreadsheet?

25 A. Oh, yeah.

1 Q. And to summarize what the spreadsheet is, it's discrepancies
2 you noticed in the maintenance records?

3 A. Well, the way I broke it down, I have the aircraft tail
4 number. I have the date of occurrence, what the write-up was in
5 the logbook. I have the logbook page number. I have how it was
6 signed off, who signed it off. And then I further went down to if
7 it was done correctly or incorrectly or what, in my opinion,
8 should be done.

9 Q. And how many problems did you identify approximately?

10 A. Thirty-one.

11 Q. Over what period of time were the logbooks from?

12 A. Okay. We started in -- give me one minute. Find the first
13 one. I have a writeup going as far back as February 22nd, with
14 number 2 EGT at 620, and the pilots were told if it's in the
15 yellow, just go ahead and take it in the air. That's crazy,
16 but -- so that -- February all the way to April the 29th.

17 Q. And how many aircraft did you look at, all of them or just
18 some?

19 A. No, I -- in fact, there were only three airplanes flying at
20 the time, 809, 810, and 326. Oh, oh, four, four -- 306.

21 Q. So you looked at the records for those four airplanes for
22 approximately the period of February 22nd to April 29th?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And you identified 31 issues that piqued your concern?

25 A. I have the copy of my records, yeah.

1 Q. And no one ever followed up with you about it?

2 A. No. I'm just the maintenance guy, according to them.

3 Q. Who did you interact with at the FAA?

4 A. Lesane, Ace, and Mark.

5 Q. Did you ever tell them about this?

6 A. Okay. That's where it gets sticky. I was in a situation
7 where I was working for the company. I wasn't working for the
8 FAA. At one point, I was told, you know, we have to keep it
9 internally, solve problems. It wasn't until Jim's funeral -- I
10 don't know if you know Jim Morley (ph.). Well, he was an FAA
11 inspector in Honolulu up at the CMO. We became good friends.

12 And at his funeral, it already reached such a point that I
13 spoke to Ace, and I spoke to Lesane, and we were waiting for the
14 remains to be brought to the cemetery. And that's when I say,
15 "Hey, off the record, what would happen if blah, blah, blah, blah,
16 blah." And then the reply was, "Well, we know about that. We're
17 looking into it." And I was like (makes sighing sound) at least
18 somebody knows what's going on.

19 Q. When was that?

20 A. Jim Morley's funeral, burial.

21 Q. What month was that?

22 A. Oh, god, I'd have to look. I'm going to say May, June, July,
23 some place in there.

24 Q. Okay. All right. Was there any SMS auditor before you?

25 A. There was, I heard, two other people. He was described --

1 there was another Spanish guy who was very good, and he quit. And
2 then they had another individual -- I forgot his name -- but he
3 was there, but he went back to maintenance.

4 Q. Okay. What did -- you said they had Ron watching you when
5 you would be out looking for things?

6 A. Yeah. While I was in the office, and that's as far as my
7 ventures to go look and snoop and observe. So it was okay. I
8 mean, I knew what was going on, and we go down to DCT and say, "I
9 need to see your training records."

10 I already knew the answer that there weren't no training
11 records. And "Oh, we're working on that," you know? And then,
12 "Okay, how, how are we going to put this down? Is it a problem?
13 No issue? Systemic?" So he was like, "Oh, we're working on it,
14 so it's good." I was like, "Well, no, it's, you know, let's,
15 let's go down. Some records are missing." So it was kind of like
16 an agreement. And again, that's when I, I saw the handwriting on
17 the wall; my days here are numbered.

18 Q. So you had remained in the office, is that right?

19 A. No, I didn't have to remain -- oh, remained in the office
20 when I was with Ron?

21 Q. Well, I mean, after the, after the meeting where you
22 presented the spreadsheets, and then -- and you were no longer
23 allowed to request maintenance records, were you allowed to wonder
24 around the maintenance shop?

25 A. I wasn't in the maintenance -- because we had two hangars.

1 We had hangar 2, where all the heavy maintenance was done. I was
2 there originally. And then we went over to hangar 1, where we had
3 the window, and from inside, I could actually watch what's going
4 on. We would make some issues or some comments about the 135
5 operation, totally different from the 121 operation. The 135
6 operation that I observed some of the mechanics who dropped
7 something, grease oil, and right away, they had their rags and
8 mops and their Speedy Dry, and they'd clean it up.

9 And then the 121 operation is like, eh, nature will take care
10 of this. And T-Mor was complaining once about the engine oil
11 spill, and I was like, "Why don't they use a funnel? The 135 guys
12 use a funnel." And then it wasn't until I did a cost analysis, is
13 that if you drop one quart of oil on three airplanes over X amount
14 of time in a one-year period, you're losing \$78,000. And that's
15 when it kind of dawned on them, "Oh, we're going to get some
16 funnels."

17 Q. But back to my question, were you allowed to leave the office
18 and roam around the maintenance operation after that meeting or
19 no?

20 A. I could leave the office. I wasn't told not to. But I would
21 kind of, like, look and see and take notes for, okay, well, my
22 next DCT comes in on whatever they were doing. At least I had a
23 reference of something to point back to, and that's how I got all
24 my records.

25 Q. Okay. What did Ron do to watch you?

1 A. We'd just sit there. We'd talk in the office. He'd sit.
2 Once he'd say, well, go ask Richie or Ben to get you what you
3 need, and it was just specifically for whatever I needed. One of
4 the -- I needed copies of ferry permits, and there was -- I knew
5 there was only one airplane that had ferry permits, and they
6 provided that.

7 Q. But Ron wasn't -- was Ron constantly watching you?

8 A. No, no, Ron, Ron came in from Aloha Air. In my opinion, he
9 knew the problems. He wanted to fix it, but I guess his hands
10 were kind of tied, so he really didn't want to point me in
11 directions, but he was told to corral me in a way, I guess.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I mean, the best way to get information from the mechanics is
14 just go with a cup of coffee, "Hey, guys, what you up to? Oh,
15 wow, that's cool," you know? Just start talking about little
16 stuff, and we -- mechanics start to talk, you know? "Oh, you know
17 about this thing?" "Yeah, what happened?" You know, and they
18 just blubablubablup (ph.), talk what they had to.

19 Q. All right. What kind of maintenance training would you have
20 accepted to see versus what you did see?

21 A. Okay. Again, my school and Air Force and Northwest
22 experience, I would definitely want to see OJT. Nonexistent. The
23 paperwork that was there, totally wrong, incompetent. There was
24 no accountability. Everything was mixed together. I would like
25 to have seen schools or maybe do CBTs, online computer training.

1 Nonexistent. Have somebody who knew what was going on. Again,
2 nonexistent.

3 I offered the DOM all of my training records from aviation,
4 127 approved. All my records -- because I also taught at Emory
5 Riddle part-time -- I've given them everything. And he's, "Oh,
6 no, no. Don't worry about that. We've got -- I got it covered."
7 And it's like, "Well, let me see your training." "Well, I just
8 teach out of the maintenance manual."

9 And according to the regulations, it's supposed to be
10 approved by the chief inspector. Never done. There was no course
11 outline. Nothing. The test, just a piece of paper with a name.
12 Okay. You got an 80 or you got a 70, or whatever.

13 Q. All right. The mechanic that do the RII properly, was that
14 Mike Jernigan (ph.)?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And the issue in that case, to your understanding, just to
17 make sure I have it right is that you said he did a task, and then
18 he signed it off also?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And normally that's supposed to be signed off by a
21 separate RII?

22 A. Separate mechanic.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Well, some mechanic does it, and he just observes, and then
25 he buys back. And the reason they wanted to make him chief

1 inspector is because his father works for the FAA, and they
2 figured, oh, we got -- we have an ace in the hole.

3 Q. What happened with the chief inspector's job when that fell
4 through and they couldn't make him chief inspector. Who was doing
5 that between then and the time that Ron came in?

6 A. I really don't know. I know Scott was doing the inspector
7 first. Again, I worked with him at Mokulele. And then he had
8 some kind of medical issues, and he stepped down, and Ron came in.

9 Q. Okay. Did you have any interactions with Scott about some of
10 these shortcomings?

11 A. Well, yeah. I mentioned to Scott a couple times. Nothing
12 was done.

13 Q. Did he ever tell you how he felt about how things were going
14 with some of these issues?

15 A. Yeah. He was like, "Oh, you know, we have to make money."
16 Again, I know Scott, he's -- I would trust him with my, my
17 family's life and my life. He was just in the wrong job at the
18 wrong time.

19 Q. Did you feel like he was in a difficult position?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And why do you say that?

22 A. They hired him -- again, he's ex-FAA. He was there. He had
23 his IA. That's authorized inspector. But he -- the job was too
24 big for him.

25 Q. Did you know a captain named David Kronshower (ph.)?

1 A. There are a couple Davids. I don't know. I mean, I can't
2 put the name with the face.

3 Q. Okay. And did you know Henry Okai?

4 A. Again, I can't put the name with the face.

5 Q. How about Greg Ryan?

6 A. That name is familiar, but again, I can't match a name with a
7 face, you know, unless you give me a picture, and I say, "Ohm,
8 yeah, I talked to him," and yeah --

9 Q. Do you recall Greg Ryan working in the office on manuals at
10 the hangar 1?

11 A. Greg, Greg. No. There was -- no, nobody was working on the
12 manuals. I mean, they tried a couple of times, but it wasn't
13 until he finally got the last company to revise the manuals.

14 Q. Okay. Were you aware of recurrent issues with high EGTs on
15 various engines during takeoffs with derated thrust?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. What was your understanding of that problem?

18 A. Well, like I said, there was one here where they had a high
19 engine. And it was -- I'm trying to find it here -- okay.
20 Example, 809 on the 31st of March, number one engine temp goes to
21 620 degrees. The sign-off was swap number one and two gauges, R&R
22 gauge, ops check good. That is a red flag to me. Nothing about
23 we took the engine and ran it. It was like, okay, swap gauges.
24 Any knucklehead can do that. And they signed it off as we took
25 care of the problem.

1 Q. Did you see other instances of that same problem
2 (indiscernible) refer?

3 A. Yeah, they had a couple. Again, let me see through here.
4 Oh, okay. February 22nd on 809. High EGT 620 degrees. What they
5 did do was they moved and then replaced the engine. Okay. That's
6 a good problem -- take care of it. 809 again in March the 8th,
7 number one engine now, EGT gauge stuck. So they replaced the
8 gauge. Okay. I can buy that. But nothing as far as taking it
9 out and running it for X amount of time at such a power setting
10 and documenting. At least you can reference what you have to what
11 the maintenance manual says you should have, you know? All right.
12 We ran the engine. Well, was it in the green or was it more
13 towards the red or -- no indications.

14 Q. Okay. Were there particular issues you heard discussed a lot
15 as a particular point of concern as far as recurring maintenance
16 issues?

17 A. The only one that I remember was that one pilot would come in
18 about -- well, everybody is going to know -- the pressurization.
19 And they were, "Oh, it's in your head. No other pilot says we had
20 that issue. It's, it's all mental." And he was -- how can you
21 put this? Verbally abused into being scared that if I say
22 anything else about this, I'm out the door. And again, it wasn't
23 until the FAA flew on that airplane that they saw, you know, the
24 fluctuation. You could see it on, on Mark Butin. He was the FAA
25 inspector. And here is the problem, guys. Look, you know, this

1 guy has been saying this is going on all along, and you're saying
2 it's in his head. And then they fixed the problem.

3 Q. Do you know what the cause of that was?

4 A. No.

5 Q. If the EGTs were routinely going up into the yellow range
6 during takeoffs with reduced thrusts, would you have been
7 concerned about the health of the engines?

8 A. Oh, yeah, as a pilot and a flight engineer, first thing I
9 want to do is call reject on the, on the takeoff roll. We ain't
10 going nowhere. We're on the ground.

11 Q. And what did you think about what the maintenance department
12 told you about how they were allowed a certain amount of time in
13 the yellow?

14 A. Not in my book. I mean, I know better.

15 Q. Did you hear about any problems with hydraulic fluid, big
16 hydraulic fluid leaks in the vicinity of the wheel -- landing gear
17 of wheel wells?

18 A. Yeah, there were a couple of problems with hydraulic fluid.
19 Let's see. Okay. They did -- they had a problem on 810 back in
20 April 29th, and they replaced the sequence valve. Again, the
21 sign-off was good, because I got it marked as green. Let me see
22 what else. Yeah, that's the only one that I wrote down after
23 that.

24 Q. Okay. What's the sequence valve?

25 A. A sequence valve tells the system, okay, open the door first,

1 suck the gear in, close the door. So it has a sequence of events
2 for the systems to operate properly.

3 Q. Okay. Did things seem to get better or worse over time
4 during your time at the company, in terms of the way that they
5 were handling maintenance-type issues and signoffs?

6 A. That's hard to tell. Some things were okay. Some things
7 were not okay. I mean, I would go into the office, because that's
8 where I used to punch in, and I would see the mechanics, and "Hey,
9 guys, what's going on?" And some would say, "Same B.S., different
10 day." Or I would make a comment, "Hey, you guys are making all
11 this overtime." And, "Oh, we're just here for the paycheck," you
12 know? So it all depended on the mechanic and their attitude on --
13 their pride of being a mechanic.

14 Q. So you didn't see any progress with the company as a whole?

15 A. As a former mechanic, supervisor, manager, no.

16 Q. You mentioned the DOM, I guess, didn't want to hear about
17 these problems. How about the assistant DOM?

18 A. That's Mark Johnson. He's the assistant DOM on paper.
19 Everybody follows what the DOM says. Again, his background is
20 he's an ex-Marine. And I got nothing against Marines. I'm Air
21 Force, so there's a little Air Force/Navy humor there. But it
22 was -- and like I said, I heard him when he had the meeting
23 outside the office, we're getting the (indiscernible) planes. I
24 will be doing the training. And I already had offered that I can
25 get manuals for the 400. He didn't want to hear it. He had his

1 own connections. Well, okay, fine. But he said at that meeting,
2 "I will do the training, and if you don't like it, there's the
3 road."

4 Q. (Indiscernible) say that again?

5 A. All the mechanics that were there during that one mechanic
6 meeting. And this was when the first -- the timeframe was when he
7 first accompanied -- announced that the 400 was coming.
8 Everything was rumor until it was like, "Okay, we got the
9 airplane, and this is it."

10 Q. So why would he say, "I'm doing the training. If you don't
11 like it, you can leave." Like, wouldn't it be normal for him to
12 do the training?

13 A. First of all, is he qualified? I don't know. Does he have
14 the manuals? I don't think he had them, because I know they had
15 problems with the other manuals. Does he have a lesson plan? No.
16 Because the lesson plans that I had asked for previously, he told
17 me that he wanted training to do it, and these two guys had no
18 maintenance experience. They can go online and do a nice
19 presentation. So how are two individuals who have no maintenance
20 experience going to do a training manual when they don't know what
21 they're doing?

22 Q. I guess the thing I'm trying to get at is who did he expect
23 might object that he was saying if they didn't like it, they can
24 leave?

25 A. Me.

- 1 Q. Oh, that was aimed at you?
- 2 A. Well, he wasn't talking to me.
- 3 Q. I see.
- 4 A. But he was just like this is the way it is.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. "I am God. If you don't like it, you can get another job."
- 7 Q. Okay. Did you feel staffing was adequate in the maintenance
8 department before the accident?
- 9 A. It was okay. I mean, again, as a manager and -- yeah, I
10 could, I could run it with what they have. Could we use more
11 people? Always. The only staffing that they were missing, there
12 was no QA, quality control or quality assurance, to overlook what
13 was going on. Some of that was either Scott, who was the chief
14 inspector at the time, or maybe Mike Johnson, who was the
15 assistant, if he had time.
- 16 Q. And how about the pay? Was that -- how did that compare to
17 other operators --
- 18 A. You're in Hawaii. I know what mechanics get on the mainland.
19 Pay is not good for mechanics here. They want to lowball you.
- 20 Q. But that's common here in Hawaii?
- 21 A. Yeah.
- 22 Q. And how would you describe the quality of the maintenance
23 facilities where they perform the work?
- 24 A. They were adequate.
- 25 Q. Okay. And how about the maintenance manuals? Were the

1 instructions clear and comprehensive and adequate to address
2 issues they encountered?

3 A. Well, that's where -- the manuals are never -- last time they
4 were revised, I think, was 2015. The manuals on -- about the
5 Boeing, I know that when I spoke to the FAA on the hotline, they
6 came back to me, and they said that they were not -- some of the
7 airplanes would be -- the effectivity was not on those manuals.
8 And then when I tried to get the new manuals, "No, you're not
9 getting them." And so what I was using were outdated manuals that
10 were on the computer that the mechanics were using. So, yeah, I
11 tried to raise that issue a couple of times, and I was told no.

12 Q. Was this when you were working as a mechanic back in 2015 or
13 was this --

14 A. No, this is as an auditor.

15 Q. Okay. So you suggested that they get new manuals?

16 A. Well, I knew that the manuals were all outdated, so that was
17 one of my first CASS audits. Said, "Hey, these manuals are, like,
18 no good. They're all outdated." And then when I found out that
19 the maintenance manuals for the Boeing -- the effectivity was no
20 good. Or, you know, "Are these the new ones? Can I see the
21 newest and latest?" "Well, we're going to have to order them."
22 "Well, they should be on the computer, you know? They should be
23 available to the guys. So why are they using an old manual when
24 you apparently know that there's a better manual, you know? Is it
25 you don't want to pay the money or, you know, what are you

1 hiding?"

2 Q. How about the GMM? Apparently, that hadn't been revised in a
3 number of years. What was your take on the quality of the GMM?

4 A. Poor.

5 Q. And why were they having such difficulty revising it?

6 A. Again, the FAA -- and they were doing a great job. Mark was
7 excellent. He, he went above and beyond what he was supposed to
8 do. "Hey, this is what I found. Here are all the problems. Here
9 are the pages. Fix this. Add this comma. Take this." They
10 wanted no part of it. And that was the DOM. "No, no, no. They
11 don't know what they're talking about. They're just people who
12 are in the office, and they have no idea what they're doing."
13 That was the attitude.

14 Q. So they weren't interested in revising the manuals, you
15 think?

16 A. They were interested if it was, like, "Let's just change the
17 date, name, I don't have to do anything, and it's good to go.
18 We've been doing it this way for X amount of years. Nothing
19 happened. So we're good to go." They just didn't want changes.

20 Q. Okay. And so the people who were resisting that change were
21 primarily who?

22 A. Primarily, it was the DOM, David Seest, a couple of things on
23 the operations side as far as weight and balance and runway
24 length, and alternate runways, but that was between him and
25 Velari. T-Mor was really counting on his people to tell him,

1 "Hey, we're good to go." But he had the wrong people in the wrong
2 jobs, in my opinion.

3 Q. So, in your opinion, did T-Mor have good intentions with
4 trying to run a safe operation?

5 A. Yeah. I mean, T-Mor is a great guy. He's a people person.
6 If you came to him and you said, "Hey, I got some problems on
7 this," he would go above and beyond to try to fix it. But when
8 he's relying on somebody who tells you what he thinks you want to
9 hear, you know, at that point, his hands are tied.

10 Q. Did they have the equipment and other resources they needed
11 to effectively do their job, their maintenance work?

12 A. Yeah, they had the equipment. Some things were, I guess,
13 missing, but they could get it from some outsource.

14 Q. I understand they didn't have a borescope-qualified
15 technician or the borescope equipment?

16 A. Nope.

17 Q. And was that unusual in your experience?

18 A. Yeah, because -- well, again, I worked for Northwest. I did
19 Polar, Atlas, Evergreen, couple of different airlines. They had
20 the equipment, and all I had to do was say, "Hey, I need this
21 here," and it would be FedEx'd, so the next day I would get it.

22 Q. So you were borescope-qualified?

23 A. I taught it in high school. I'm not qualified. Again, in
24 high school, I did do the entire -- everything about aviation,
25 wood, sheet metal, electrics, NDI, magnaflux. The only thing I

1 never did was X-ray and the nuke, the light that glow in the dark.

2 Q. Where was the Aviation High School?

3 A. Aviation High School in New York City, Queens.

4 Q. Oh, okay. Did you feel like the availability of -- the lack
5 of availability of borescope-qualified technician impacted their
6 ability to maintain the engines properly?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Why do you say that?

9 A. Because if you have a compressor stall, I know as a mechanic,
10 the first thing I'm going to do is look inside the engine and see
11 what's damaged. I can't see what (indiscernible) from the
12 outside. I can't go in the back of the engine and then look like
13 maybe 2, 3 feet and try to see the turbines, if any damage is in
14 there. Unless I actually borescope it, I don't know what happened
15 on the inside.

16 Q. One of the things we've heard is that the JT-8's, when they
17 have a compressor stall, it's not as significant an incident as it
18 is in one of the high-bypass engines. Is that true, in your
19 understanding?

20 A. When you have to write off several compressor stalls, that's
21 like -- maybe once in a while -- maybe one, okay. But when they
22 sign it off we had several compressor stalls on takeoff roll or
23 23,000 feet, that's not normal. Something is going to happen.

24 Q. Do you think that the compressor stalls always got written up
25 when they happened?

1 A. No.

2 Q. What percentage of them do you think got written up?

3 A. I would say maybe three-quarters.

4 Q. All right. I have an idea based on what you've been telling
5 us, but in a nutshell, how confident were you about the quality of
6 maintenance work at Rhoades Aviation?

7 A. I would fly Hawaiian before I flew TransAir. I don't want to
8 be on their airplane. In fact, Velari and I joked about it,
9 because he was supposed to do a DCT on a flight, and I was making
10 fun, "Hey, can I have your desk, you know, if you don't come
11 back?"

12 Q. So not confident, I guess, is --

13 A. No.

14 Q. Were you afraid to fly on the company's airplanes?

15 A. No, I'm not afraid, but I knew that if I saw something on
16 takeoff roll, and again, this is my flight engineer training from
17 the Air Force, I'm going to definitely call a reject before, you
18 know, rotation speed.

19 Q. All right. You know how the maintenance log has F and I
20 codes, or writeups?

21 A. I'd have to look at the --

22 Q. There's a flight crew maintenance (indiscernible)
23 informational item?

24 A. Oh, okay, I see those, yes.

25 Q. Did you detect any instances where you felt like writeups

1 were being sort of soft-pedaled by classifying as I items instead
2 of F's?

3 A. Again, from what I've heard from the pilots, they were told
4 to talk to maintenance first before they put an entry in the
5 logbook. So what happened between maintenance and flight crew at
6 that time, I don't know what kind of negotiations they did. But I
7 do know that one pilot said he told maintenance he put in the
8 logbook. By the time he went to the office and came back -- and
9 I'm saying it's a distance of maybe 2-, 300 feet, the item was
10 (indiscernible) signed off.

11 Q. What was the item about?

12 A. I really don't remember.

13 Q. But it wasn't like inspect reservoir tank level?

14 A. No, no, no, no, no. It probably was maybe a radio was out,
15 or whatever, or like I said, I don't remember what the item was.

16 Q. It was something that you would have expected would take
17 longer than this, a few minutes --

18 A. Yeah. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. Are you aware of instances of crews being asked to
20 delay writeups until they get back from a trip instead of before
21 they leave?

22 A. I wasn't. I know they were told don't write it up, you know,
23 don't anything up that can ground the airplane someplace else.

24 Q. Who told them that?

25 A. Chief pilot was one. And this was pilots talking to me.

1 Well, you know, David said let's not write it up until -- or if
2 you can feel that you can baby it back to Hawaii, you know,
3 Honolulu, you know, do that. Again, I'm guilty, because when I
4 was a flight engineer, we would do stuff like that in the Air
5 Force. We had the log page, and then we had a notebook, and write
6 all these items up, and then on the last leg back to McGuire, we
7 were writing all the items.

8 Q. Were you aware of a safety report discussed at a safety
9 meeting, where an FO said a captain didn't want to write up a
10 maintenance item because he was afraid of being fired?

11 A. I've heard rumors. I mean, I wasn't there, but yeah, you
12 kind of hear a lot of things just walking through the hangar.

13 Q. So you weren't present at that meeting?

14 A. No, I wasn't.

15 Q. Do you remember a memo coming out attached to your paycheck
16 that said employees should be free to report safety issues without
17 fear of retribution?

18 A. That was part of the SMS policy.

19 Q. But did you get a specific memo attached to your paycheck
20 that said, you know --

21 A. I'd have to look through my paychecks. I have the stubs at
22 home.

23 Q. Yeah. It just seems like it'd be memorable. It was a letter
24 from the CEO saying --

25 A. Well, I know it came from the safety office, because, at that

1 time, there was a big push for SMS, and one of the things that we
2 came out was, "Well, why don't we put this out?" And I think
3 somebody suggested, well, you know, the easiest way to get the
4 word out is put it on your paychecks. And then Tim, which was the
5 safety guy, and the other individuals, came up with these nice
6 pretty posters, and we had those posters throughout the company.

7 Q. Okay. How would you describe the interaction between the FAA
8 certificate management team and Rhoades Aviation before the
9 accident? What was that relationship like?

10 A. These guys were trying to help them. I mean, kudos to the
11 FAA. Mark went above and beyond. He even rewrote the MEL and
12 gave it to them. And what did Rhoades Aviation do? They used the
13 old MEL book. They went above and beyond. "Hey, this is wrong.
14 This is wrong. This is wrong. Let's fix it. You know, let's
15 talk about this. Communicate with us." And I know that the FAA
16 would write a letter to Rhoades, and then Rhoades would respond on
17 the very last day of the ten-day, you know, whatever the FAA
18 wrote. They would wait till that tenth day, and then they would
19 send a reply to the FAA at 4:29, just before 4:30, which is
20 quitting time.

21 Q. Why did they do that?

22 A. They responded on time.

23 Q. I mean why did they wait that long?

24 A. Dragging their feet, hemming and hawing, you know, let's do
25 it right, and then there were internal fights between whoever, you

1 know, and then just wait till the last minute, and yes, we're
2 going to look at this and send it off, or we're working on it, and
3 send it off.

4 Q. Okay. If you had a safety-related concern, how would you
5 communicate that to management? I mean, it sounds like you gave a
6 briefing, but did you ever try to file a safety report?

7 A. I never filed a safety report. My job was to give it to
8 Orlando, and Orlando was going to handle it and bring it up.

9 Q. So you just spoke directly to Orlando?

10 A. I spoke to Orlando. A lot of times, I would speak to Velari
11 if it was an operational problem, and I would explain to him --
12 again, I did a lot of research on how an engine works. I mean, a
13 pilot just knows how to get in, push buttons, and takes off, but
14 okay, this is the N1, this is the N2, and this is how this works,
15 and then, you know, baby it, so that, oh, okay, that's, that's why
16 this happens.

17 Q. Did you feel that the safety meetings -- how many safety
18 meetings did you attend?

19 A. I would say maybe two, three tops.

20 Q. Did you feel they were effective at identifying risks and
21 developing mitigation strategies for addressing them?

22 A. No. I mean, the only one that I was there and I felt good,
23 the pilots were making -- well, they were complaining that they
24 couldn't see the lead-in lines at nighttime. And I'm like, "Well,
25 why don't you get that glow-in-the-dark paint and paint the lead-

1 in lines. And somebody, "Oh, it costs too much money." It's
2 like, "Well, you know, you need people to marshal the airplane in
3 or spend whatever money." So they did get the paint, and some
4 pilots were happy. And I was like, "Hey, that was my idea." But
5 you know, that was the only one I felt good about.

6 Q. And did you feel the CASS program was effective at
7 identifying and addressing relevant trends and recurring
8 maintenance issues?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Why?

11 A. Nothing was done, at least in my opinion. I mean, I didn't
12 see anything.

13 Q. Was there any effort to systemically identify recurring
14 maintenance issues?

15 A. Well, the maintenance manuals, they tried to rewrite them so
16 many times, and they'd get -- kept being turned down by the FAA,
17 weight and balance, you know, flight manuals, just nothing was
18 being done.

19 Q. Okay. All right. Did you feel supported by management and
20 able to make safety-related decisions without fear of
21 repercussion?

22 A. Again, I was in a situation where I did not need the job, so
23 I really didn't care if I was fired or not. I just wanted to see
24 people after being locked up for COVID. I do have four or five
25 retirements coming in, so, financially, I'm okay. I didn't really

1 care what the pay was. I mean, yeah, you care, but it was just,
2 like, daddy needs toys to buy, so that's what that money was. As
3 far as support, again, the way it was structured, I would go to
4 Orlando, okay, this is what I found, give it to him, and then he
5 took it from there.

6 Q. But in terms of your overall sense, did you feel supported
7 and empowered as a safety professional within the safety
8 department? Did you feel that from management?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Did you feel like you were pressured by company management to
11 do things that you felt were unsafe?

12 A. The only time was when they wanted me to do that report, and
13 that's when I'm like, you know, I look the other way. I would
14 help the company, you know, let's get the flight moving, but
15 somebody is going to get hurt.

16 Q. And in a nutshell, how would you describe the organizational
17 safety culture at Rhoades?

18 A. Poor.

19 Q. Anything you want to add?

20 A. No.

21 Q. And the relationship between maintenance staff and pilots?

22 A. Adversary maybe.

23 Q. Adversarial?

24 A. Yes. The pilots would talk to maintenance, and maintenance
25 would at them like, "Who the hell are you? You don't know how to

1 fix this thing. Your job is just to push the button and pull up
2 on the stick, and take it up in the air."

3 Q. And do you have pilots tell you they were afraid of being
4 fired for writing up a maintenance issue?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. How many different pilots?

7 A. Offhand right now, two that I can remember.

8 Q. Captains or first officers?

9 A. Both captains.

10 Q. All right. That's it for me.

11 DR. BRAMBLE: I'm going to pass it on to Jacob now.

12 MR. ZEIGER: Thank you.

13 BY MR. ZEIGER:

14 Q. I'd like to also add my thanks for all the documentation you
15 brought with you. I'm kind of curious about one of the examples
16 from your spreadsheet of, like, an orange-red-type of an example.
17 And I know we've talked about compressor stalls a couple of times
18 already. It looked like maybe there was one, at least one
19 compressor stall example in there.

20 A. Oh, there were a couple of them in here.

21 Q. Yeah. I'm curious, like, could you just kind of walk us
22 through -- all the way through? And what I'm -- I know you've
23 done the first part of that a little bit, but the latter part,
24 where you talked about what you would have suggested or what, in
25 your opinion, might have been a more appropriate write-off for

1 some of that?

2 A. Oh, okay. I got one here. They had an issue. They signed
3 it off, and then the same mechanic fixed the same problem that
4 already happened. I mean, put somebody else on it. That's me as
5 a manager or a supervisor.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. The R double I's were wrong references. The right references
8 but -- that they -- put down that they ran the engine. No
9 indication that they did. I mean, put it so that the next guy
10 coming in knows what's going on, the history of -- that's the way
11 I was taught. When I worked for Northwest, I had a great crew
12 chief. He told me how to do it the right way and the wrong way,
13 but give as much information as to what you did so that the next
14 guy has a history.

15 When I used to sign off reference maintenance manual 2813-3,
16 page 15, paragraph 2, item B, figure -- I put all that stuff in
17 there. So the FAA came in. Oh, okay, he looked here, here, and
18 here. Oh, okay. This -- yeah, yeah, it's good. So you give as
19 much information as you can. That's the way I was trained.
20 That's the way I train my people.

21 Q. I see. So in some of these cases, did you maybe identify
22 specific maintenance manual tasks that should have been done
23 instead of the ones that was written --

24 A. Yeah. Yes, I have them --

25 Q. Okay. I see, I see.

1 A. I have them here, yeah.

2 Q. And, and I'm assuming that you would have -- these would have
3 come to your attention not necessarily in your shop walkarounds,
4 but maybe in reviewing the logbooks later, is that right?

5 A. That's correct.

6 Q. Okay. Okay. And so are these the kinds of cases where maybe
7 they would inform future shop walkarounds, and maybe, maybe they'd
8 give you something to specifically talk to mechanics about when
9 you were in the shop talking to them?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. This all happened because I was explaining to the operations,
13 Velari, I was explaining to him how an airplane works. I mean --
14 and don't take it -- he's a nice guy. He knows his flying stuff,
15 but as far as maintenance, he has no idea.

16 Q. I see.

17 A. And then I tried to talk to some of the pilots that when they
18 get the logbook and they see, for example, 28-0000, that's just
19 the mechanic's lazy way of signing it off. So I wanted to go to
20 the training or the indoc and tell the pilots if you see something
21 with 00-00, ask questions. Why just a general chapter, Chapter
22 28? Where? I don't know. What exactly did you do? What page?
23 What item? Give me more information. I'm the one who's going to
24 be flying the airplane. And the DOM and everybody is like, "Don't
25 worry about it."

1 Q. I see. So speaking of that, I know that you talked about
2 also pilots kind of being told to discuss their potential airplane
3 writeups with maintenance prior to actually writing it up in the
4 logbook?

5 A. Right.

6 Q. To your knowledge, were the mechanics given any kind of
7 direction on how to approach those same conversations, right?
8 Were they told maybe to expect pilots to talk about their
9 potential writeups?

10 A. No. Even when I was a mechanic flying the first time, there
11 was no interaction between maintenance department and the pilots
12 because I flew. I was a flying mechanic. Then they would kind of
13 listen to me. But after a while, it's like I'm talking to the
14 wall, you know? Take apart, put it here, take apart, put it here,
15 take apart, put it in, put it back on the same airplane, and sign
16 off the MEL, when you know the parts still are wrong. It's just a
17 vicious circle.

18 Q. So do you think the motivation for a mechanic to swap parts
19 or to, you know (indiscernible) boxes or, you know, ops check
20 "good," something -- okay, a signoff like that, do you think that
21 that would have originated on the floor or do you think that would
22 have originated from somewhere else, the mechanics or --

23 A. It comes from the DOM down.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Because if you're the mechanic and you tell your supervisor,

1 and your supervisor then goes to the DOM, in that chain there,
2 somebody should have enough common sense to, "Hey, let's do it
3 this way." But when the culture is sign it off so that the plane
4 can fly and we'll take care of it later, when does later appear?

5 Q. Understood. Okay. Yeah, thank you very much. That's
6 actually, actually all the additional questions I had. I'll pass
7 it on.

8 BY MR. KANAE:

9 Q. Thank you, Mike, for your time today. Appreciate you coming
10 in.

11 A. No problem.

12 Q. And you have an impressive background, I must say. And --

13 A. Not bad for a kid from the Bronx.

14 Q. So with that in mind, back in 2015, when you were hired as an
15 onboard mechanic, that was strictly for the 737, correct?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You did not do any 135?

18 A. No, no I was -- they have two separate certificates, two
19 separate airplanes.

20 Q. Exactly. Okay. Now, to your current position as an auditor,
21 could you describe the DCTs that you conducted, the subject area
22 called the DCTs?

23 A. Oh, they came in different forms. I had training manuals,
24 maintenance facilities. It all depended on what was in our ops
25 specs or what we were supposed to check. This one here was on the

1 maintenance operations. So, again, I saw stuff. It's like this
2 ain't right. So I would bring it up to Orlando. And I'd say,
3 "Hey, look this is, this is what I found. These are the
4 comments." And where it went from there, I don't know, you know?
5 My job was not to follow up. I just reported, hey, this is what I
6 found. I was assuming he's going to then take it to maintenance
7 or the VP or T-Mor or somebody, and say, "Hey, we got these
8 problems. Let's fix it." But I never heard anything until they
9 wanted me to rewrite this one here. And this was back in April.

10 Q. So those DCTs that you've actually used as your SMS tool --
11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. To conduct your audits. For the same DCTs that an aviation
13 safety inspector would be using, correct?

14 A. That's where I downloaded them from, yes.

15 Q. Has any of the certificate management team, any of the
16 inspectors, asked to see any of your DCTs?

17 A. I don't know. I was never asked. If they had any problems,
18 they would go to Orlando.

19 Q. I see. So they never approached you at all?

20 A. They never did.

21 Q. And when I say they, meaning a CMT (ph.)?

22 A. Yeah, no, no. Mark, Ace, and, and Ray, they never asked me
23 specifically. Now, there was only one time where Ace called me up
24 about something with the aging aircraft and the wiring, and I
25 referred back to -- I spoke to Orlando, and he said, "No, that's

1 not under our jurisdiction. That falls under the chief
2 inspector." And that's when, you know, I told him, "We don't take
3 care of that, because it's not on our sheet. You have to go to
4 Scott."

5 Q. I see. Okay. And back in 2015, as compared to currently,
6 current --

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. What would you say the condition of the airplanes were back
9 then and compared to today?

10 A. They were the same. I mean, would I fly them? Yeah. I
11 mean, can they be improved? Yes. Can they get better
12 performance? Yeah. But they're operational. I mean, at least
13 they meet the, in my opinion, the bare minimum to keep them
14 flying.

15 Q. So they're basically the same from back in 2015 to present
16 day condition pretty much?

17 A. Yeah, pretty much the same.

18 Q. And being that you were also auditing some of the logbooks,
19 did you notice in some of the logbook entries by pilots a status
20 of "I" or a status of "F" on any of the pages?

21 A. I saw it, but it never, you know, raised any flags to me. I
22 just saw the writeup. I wasn't looking for the status "I" or "F,"
23 or nothing like that.

24 Q. Are you aware of that status?

25 A. I'm aware of it now. I did speak to a couple of pilots,

1 where they were having problems with compressor stalls, and I told
2 them a couple times, "Put repeat write-up." "Oh, we can't do
3 that, you know? We'll get in trouble if we were to make the entry
4 to repeat item." Because what I wanted to do was to raise a flag
5 so when the FAA came in, it looks repeat, repeat, repeat, you
6 know, what's going on. But they were, "Don't do that."

7 Q. Okay. And were you aware of an inspection that occurred in
8 pretty much of late 2020 by the FAA? It was a (indiscernible)
9 team and also another FAA inspection team that did a joint
10 inspection?

11 A. I heard it was there, but that was before my time.

12 Q. You came in 2021, yeah.

13 A. Right.

14 Q. I just wondered if you ever --

15 A. I heard that there was the old team and then somebody came in
16 to check on whatever. And from hearing people talk, "The FAA
17 doesn't know what they were looking for. They're just gunning out
18 for us," you know?

19 Q. Did they discuss the status of what the findings were? Were
20 they positive, negative?

21 A. No, nothing like that.

22 Q. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you very much. Appreciate
23 it.

24 A. Okay.

25 MR. KANAE: Back to you, Shawn.

1 MR. ETCHER: Thanks, Clarence.

2 BY MR. ETCHER:

3 Q. We got second round coming up that's usually a lot shorter.
4 You've given us a ton of info. You doing okay for --

5 A. No, I'm good. I just -- look, I like the company. I would
6 still be there had it not been for this, you know, wanting me to
7 rewrite and lie, and it's not going to happen.

8 Q. Okay. No, I just want to make sure you're okay. Second
9 round usually is a lot quicker, because I just have a very few
10 questions from --

11 A. Still have coffee. I'm good.

12 Q. Okay. Long as you still have your coffee. You had said, I
13 think, with Clarence, that management told pilots don't write
14 "repeat writeup"?

15 A. Right.

16 Q. How did management communicate that to pilots, if you know?
17 I'm guessing they didn't put it in a memo?

18 A. No. It was from what I heard the pilots speaking, the chief
19 pilot would be, "Don't do that," blah, blah, blah, blah, you
20 know? The -- David Seest in his office, he would, "Don't be doing
21 that." But in writing and in front of witnesses, no, it wasn't,
22 it wasn't then.

23 Q. Okay. I don't remember who asked, but you had talked about
24 the -- a pressurization issue.

25 A. Right.

1 Q. And that there was a pilot was -- I think you said --
2 verbally abused. Who -- by whom was he chastised by?

3 A. Oh, everybody. David, the chief pilot, I know T-Mor a couple
4 of times, "Ugh, it's Victor again," you know? So they knew who it
5 was. And it's in his head. Mechanics already had it, "Oh, this
6 guy doesn't know what he's talking about." You know, if you feel
7 the pressurization in your ear, if you see it, you know, while
8 it's doing it, me, as a DOM, I would have sent my assistant or
9 somebody with higher power than just a regular mechanic. "Go fly
10 with this airplane and see if it's happening." Did they ever do
11 that? No.

12 I mean, to me -- and I'm just a mechanic -- does it make
13 common sense? Yeah. Let's go fly with it, and if you see it, to,
14 like, mark it, tape it, "Hey, look, we do have a problem. Victor
15 is right." But nothing was ever done about that.

16 Q. Okay. When you say Victor, was that Captain Antonov?

17 A. Yeah, that's, that's --

18 Q. Captain Antonov. And --

19 A. Yeah, yeah.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Because the only reason is because his last name matches with
22 the Russian airplane --

23 Q. The (indiscernible)?

24 A. Right.

25 Q. Okay. Just wanted to make sure I knew the Victor you were

1 addressing, so thank you.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. I think you kind of answered it for Bill, but it didn't sink
4 in my head. How would you classify the work environment here?
5 Was it hostile, open-door, respective (ph.)?

6 A. It was -- it wasn't hostile. Just do what you're told,
7 collect your check, go home.

8 Q. All righty. And you had mentioned that somebody had yelled
9 at Henry Okai for putting the airplane back on the ground?

10 A. Right.

11 Q. Who did that? Do you know? Or is it just hearsay?

12 A. I was talking to one of the secretaries. Again, everybody
13 talks over there, okay? So I was talking to one of the
14 secretaries who was telling me what happened, and she related the
15 story that, you know, when this first happened, he was yelled at,
16 you know, because he brought the airplane back right away. That's
17 why the second time, when he had a problem, he went way out there,
18 and I'm just assuming that when you hear the voice -- I probably
19 followed every check, check, check just so you don't get yelled
20 at.

21 Q. Did they say who did the yelling?

22 A. I heard it was the chief pilot.

23 Q. All right. In your opinion, did you have the tools necessary
24 to do the job you were hired to do?

25 A. As an auditor?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. Yeah, until they told me I can't have access to the
3 paperwork.

4 Q. Okay. My last question. I think it was with Bill you had
5 talked about there were some weight and balance problems?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Can you elaborate on that? What do you mean by weight
8 balance problems?

9 A. The manual wasn't done correctly. That's not in my scope.
10 I'm just hearing Velari and the chief of the -- David Seest talk
11 back and forth. And they had another individual come up with a
12 spreadsheet, and what they wanted to do was make it super simple,
13 which it could have been done better. But again, it wasn't my
14 area of expertise. And they just kept going back and forth. And
15 then David waited until just about the last minute, and dumped,
16 "Here, Velari, it's due at 4:30, and it's 3:30 now, you know, try
17 to get it done." He did the best he could. It's a hurry up and
18 wait situation.

19 Q. But there was no specific, "Oh, this airplane took off
20 overloaded" or was out of CG (ph.) that you're aware of, right?

21 A. That I'm aware of, no. I know that part of my thing was to
22 make sure that the scales were within -- calibrated and stuff like
23 that. They did have a couple of ways that they were doing weight
24 and balance. And I had suggested, well, why don't you take all
25 the dollies on one of your down days or things -- run them by the

1 scale and see how much -- and put stencils. Some did have it.
2 Some didn't. But run all the dollies through there one time and
3 just reverify and make the FAA happy. Hey, look, everything is
4 checked as of this date. Was that done? No. Was there guessing?
5 Probably. Because they would take cargo from FedEx. Okay. FedEx
6 said it's 50 pounds. Is it 50 pounds? I don't know, you know?
7 So that's the kind of situation that was going on.

8 Q. Okay. Excellent. I think you got my questions. So I
9 appreciate it. I'm going to just ask the other gentlemen.

10 MR. ETCHER: Bill?

11 DR. BRAMBLE: I don't have anything else. Thank you.

12 MR. ETCHER: Okay. Jacob?

13 MR. ZEIGER: Nothing else for me. Thank you.

14 BY MR. KANAE:

15 Q. I just have a couple.

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. What was your daily SMS auditor schedule like? Did you spend
18 a full 8-hour a week -- or 40-hour weeks?

19 A. I did 40 hours. I would come in at 7. I liked to be at work
20 early. When I was doing an SMS, the first thing I would do is see
21 what the DCT was. I would get all the regulations, and I would
22 spend the first couple of days just familiarizing myself, okay,
23 what the heck is 121-18 or whatever. And then I'd do my research.
24 And if I didn't know, print it up, and then go a little bit more
25 into that.

1 I would see the ACs, go through it all, and kind of
2 familiarize myself. And then I'd take a little notepad and write
3 some notes. And then I'd go hit the airplane, or whatever I was
4 inspecting. At least I had an idea of what I was looking for.
5 And as far as the Part 5, I had broken it down into, you know,
6 findings, and do you do training and how you fix it. And I would
7 ask some questions. And again, what shocked me was a lot of the
8 mechanics, "Oh, that's Part 5. What's that?" It was like, "Well,
9 that's the new thing that the FAA started. If you see something,
10 say something, basically." "Oh, that doesn't apply to us." It's
11 like, "Really? How about abbreviations, you know?" "No, we, we
12 just use what we use."

13 And some of the words -- and like I said, writings, you know,
14 print neatly. That's one thing I used to ding my students when I
15 was teaching. If you don't print and I can't read it, I'm going
16 to take one point off for every letter that's wrong. And at least
17 it reinforced it that -- you know, be a little bit neat. Because
18 if I write something and he's going to look at it, he should be
19 able to decipher it.

20 Q. Great. Thank you.

21 A. Oh, okay.

22 Q. And my last question: You were a former aviation safety
23 inspector, as well, up in Alaska?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Any reason why -- just curious why you left.

1 A. I was up there. The -- I was terminated the day after I had
2 my interview for a position in Honolulu. Management was like,
3 "Well, we're sick and tired of this being a revolving door." So
4 they terminated me. But I reapplied, and I have a spot waiting
5 for me right now. I have a tentative for Miramar. So I'll go
6 back there, and maybe I can come back here someday.

7 Q. So were you hired, and did you go training -- training --

8 A. Oh, did all the strings. I had 99 percent of my training
9 done. And like I said, it was the day after my interview for
10 Honolulu that management called me up and said, "Well, you know,
11 we can't use you no more. You don't meet our expectations."

12 Q. OJT was completed --

13 A. OJ -- well, like I said, 99 percent of it was done.

14 Q. I see.

15 A. The only thing that I didn't have done was the -- doing an
16 observation, because I didn't have my credentials at the time.

17 Q. And your specialty when you were hired -- for the FAA --

18 A. I was maintenance.

19 Q. Maintenance?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Airworthiness?

22 A. Airworthiness.

23 Q. That's all I have. Thank you.

24 A. Okay.

25 MR. ETCHER: Great. Thanks, Clarence.

1 BY MR. ETCHER:

2 Q. I always like to end it with a question to you. You've given
3 us a lot of information. But I'm always afraid we didn't ask or
4 look at the right areas, and you have another spot, and you're
5 like, "Oh, I wish they would ask about this," and we didn't. Is
6 there something we should have asked that we didn't that would
7 help us? I mean, you've definitely given us a lot.

8 A. Yeah. No, I mean, maybe it's too much, but I'm being honest
9 with you guys. In my opinion, I mean, like, T-Mor is great, but
10 I -- if I was running the company, I would get rid of Tracy, the
11 training, the DOM, you know, get people who -- to do the right
12 job. But that's just me.

13 DR. BRAMBLE: Can I ask one clarification real quick?

14 MR. ETCHER: Sure.

15 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

16 Q. So just to make sure we understand your current status, you
17 have an offer from the FAA as an airworthiness inspector in
18 Miramar?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And you were terminated from being an inspector in
21 Alaska when?

22 A. October 2019.

23 Q. Okay. So between the time you left Rhoades and the time you
24 accepted the officer at Miramar -- or have you accepted the
25 position offer at Miramar?

1 A. I'm tentative. Right now they're doing a background check.
2 He can tell me better.

3 Q. Okay. Have you worked anywhere else between Rhoades and FAA?

4 A. I was doing some freelance. People that were interested in
5 buying an airplane, I'd go out and do their inspections for them.

6 Q. Okay. All right.

7 A. You know, as a favor.

8 Q. Okay. That's all I needed to know.

9 DR. BRAMBLE: Go ahead.

10 MR. ETCHER: Sure. No problem.

11 Anything else you that can think of?

12 MR. RAMIREZ: No.

13 MR. ETCHER: Well, then we will call this interview concluded
14 at 10:07.

15 MR. RAMIREZ: Okay.

16 MR. ETCHER: But we do appreciate the time. I mean, you've
17 given us a lot of information. My hands and fingers are sore from
18 typing and writing so --

19 MR. RAMIREZ: I'm sorry.

20 MR. ETCHER: No, I'd rather have that, because that's what we
21 need to help understand the big picture. It's that big puzzle we
22 put together.

23 MR. RAMIREZ: Okay.

24 MR. ETCHER: But I appreciate it. And you're free to go.

25 Thank you --

1 MR. RAMIREZ: Okay. I'll give you copies of this stuff.

2 MR. ETCHER: We would love to have anything that you are
3 willing to give us.

4 (Whereupon, at 10:07 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: TRANSAIR FLIGHT 810 CRASH
 NEAR HONOLULU, HAWAII
 ON JULY 2, 2021
 Interview of Miguel Ramirez, Jr.

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FA174

PLACE: Honolulu, Hawaii

DATE: September 24, 2021

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.




Danielle S. VanRiper
Transcriber