

DCA23FA428

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

Group Chair's Factual Report - Attachment 3

Interview Transcripts

July 14, 2024

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT *

NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: DCA23LA428

ON AUGUST 29, 2023 *

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Interview of: STEVEN BARRON, Traffic Management Coordinator
Atlanta Air Route Traffic Control Center

Atlanta, Georgia

Wednesday,
September 6, 2023

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D.C. Area 301-261-1902
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I N T E R V I E W

(11:30 a.m. EDT)

MR. SOPER: Test one, two. All right. My name is Brian Soper. I'm an air traffic investigator with the NTSB. And here with me today, I have in the room Mr. Louis Hancock out of Jacksonville TRACON who is currently the ATM there, he's representing the FAA on our group. I have Mr. Seth Myers out of Boston Center representing NATCA on our group. Mr. Brian Swain out of Delta Air Lines representing Delta Air Lines on the group. And Mike Brown, who is with our headquarters office, air traffic investigations. And you have with you today your representative?

MR. TOMICICH: Mark Tomicich, Office of Chief Counsel, FAA.

MR. SOPER: Thank you, Mark. And could you state your first and last name for the record for me?

MR. BARRON: Steven Barron.

MR. SOPER: Thank you. As we talked about earlier, sorry for the repeat, but just to kind of reiterate, the NTSB is an independent federal agency. We're charged with investigating civil aviation accidents and incidents of a serious nature, finding the probable cause, and then hopefully, developing safety recommendations to prevent reoccurrence. That's our whole job in a nutshell. We're nonregulatory, so we don't make rules; we don't enforce rules. We're not part of the DOT or the FAA in any way, and that's by design. As a safety organization, we're only interested in the safety aspect of this. We're not interested in

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1 blame or fault. That's not the area we go down.

2 So, when I say we're not interested in compliance, we're
3 interested in compliance from the standpoint of, did it impact
4 safety, but we're not interested in compliance of, you know,
5 holding people accountable for, you know, not following a rule,
6 perse. You know, we're just trying to figure out what went wrong.
7 And so, everything we're doing here is fact-finding in nature, so
8 that's the phase of the investigation we're in. So, everything is
9 just very factual and matter of fact. So, if you just answer the
10 questions to the best of your ability, that's what we're looking
11 for. Be truthful and forthright. If you don't know something,
12 it's okay to say you don't know, and if you don't recall
13 something, it's okay to say you don't recall.

14 We will try to, our best, not to step on each other. As we
15 are doing a recording, it makes it much easier for the court
16 reporter to do a transcription. So, if everybody can just, you
17 know, monitor, you know, let people finish their questioning, and
18 not interrupt, and try not to overlap each other, we'll be good.

19 As we go through this, I will ask. I'll start out with
20 questioning. I've got some kind of black and white background
21 questions for you. And once we get through those, then I have a
22 couple of questions about the event. And then, I'm going to pass
23 it along. And we'll go around the room, and when I do, I'll pass
24 it along to, let's say, Louis first. When you're done, just say,
25 that's all I have for now. I'll take it back, and then go to

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1 Seth. And if I make those transitions, it makes the court
2 reporter's job a lot easier, and we don't have as many corrections
3 later, so that's why we'll do that.

4 Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

5 MR. BARRON: No, sir.

6 INTERVIEW OF STEVEN BARRON

7 BY MR. SOPER:

8 Q. All right. Awesome. So, what was your age at the time of
9 the event?

10 A. Forty-nine.

11 Q. And your operating initials here?

12 A. CO.

13 Q. And can you say your first and last -- you're Steven Barron,
14 right?

15 A. Steven, S-T-E-V-E-N.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Barron, B-A-R-R-O-N.

18 Q. All right. And you're an STM -- or, TMC here?

19 A. TMC, correct.

20 Q. And how long have you been doing that here?

21 A. TMC, for two years.

22 Q. Two years? Before that, were you a CPC, or --

23 A. I was.

24 Q. Okay. Do you hold any -- I'm sorry. Do you have any prior
25 pre-FAA air traffic work experience: military, DOD, contract, or

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1 any of that stuff?

2 A. No, sir.

3 Q. Okay. And do you hold any collateral duties or have you been
4 on any recent details that would have taken you outside the
5 facility that may have affected currency?

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. And if you could, kind of just give us your 10,000-foot
8 aviation bio. What I mean by that is just a quick bio about
9 yourself, like, yeah, I was always interested in aviation,
10 graduated high school, went to college for this, got my pilot's
11 license, whatever it is you did that brought you to where you're
12 here today.

13 A. Only way I knew about air traffic is my dad was a controller.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I left the military in '01, and went to the MARC school in
16 Minneapolis. I did that and got hired in May of '02. Was in area
17 five as a CPC for about 10 or 11 years. Did a two-year temp sup
18 detail. Went back to the floor, worked traffic for another eight
19 or nine years, then came to TMU in, I guess, 2021.

20 Q. So, when you say area five, is that where you all up and --
21 you just went to school in Minneapolis; you didn't --

22 A. Right.

23 Q. -- work there, right? So --

24 (Crosstalk)

25 Q. -- this has been your only facility air traffic-wise?

1 A. -- MARC school program. Got my years of traffic
2 (indiscernible).

3 Q. Yep. See, I just (indiscernible).

4 A. Sorry.

5 Q. So, that's my fault. So, you didn't go to school -- I mean,
6 you went to school, and you didn't work there at all --

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. -- in Minneapolis? All right. And this is your only air
9 traffic facility?

10 A. This is it.

11 Q. Awesome. Okay. And so, you mentioned that you got out of
12 the military in '01. You were not a controller when you were in
13 the military?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. What branch of service were you in?

16 A. Army.

17 Q. And what did you do --

18 A. I was a --

19 Q. -- out of curiosity?

20 A. -- logistics officer.

21 Q. Okay. And from what year to what year were you in?

22 A. '96 to '01.

23 Q. Okay. All right. Thanks for your service, brother. I'm
24 retired Navy myself, so -- all right. And so, have you ever been
25 fired, terminated, suspended, or asked to resign from a job since

1 you've been with the FAA --

2 A. No.

3 Q. -- as a controller? And how would you describe your overall
4 health in the terms of excellent, good, fair, poor?

5 A. Excellent.

6 Q. Okay. Did you have a medical clearance on the day of the
7 event? Is a TMC required to hold a medical here?

8 A. Yes and yes.

9 Q. Okay. Excellent. And do you have any limitations, waivers,
10 or restrictions to your medical clearance?

11 A. I've got to carry -- I've got to have readers with me.

12 Q. Okay. Just on your person, or wearing when you're
13 controlling?

14 A. I just have to have them with me.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I do wear them.

17 Q. Good deal. And did you have them with you at the time of the
18 event --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- as required? All right. Were you taking any medications
21 on the day of the event, either prescription, over-the-counter,
22 nonprescription, any of that?

23 A. No, sir.

24 Q. Okay. Was drug or alcohol screening performed as a result of
25 this event? For you?

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1 A. No, sir.

2 Q. Okay. And I wouldn't think so. I mean, you weren't there,
3 so -- and any major change in your health over the last year?
4 These are big things, you know, like, yeah, I had a surgery and a
5 pin put in my elbow, or, you know, I lost 50 pounds, or any --

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. -- of that kind of stuff? And similar question: Any major
8 changes in your personal life over the last year: got married, got
9 divorced, adopted a child, had a child?

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. Okay. And last question, but similar, major changes in your
12 financial situation in the last year: filed bankruptcy, won the
13 lotto?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. All right. Okay, this one's a little bit more difficult, but
16 it's not too far back. And you know what? Actually, I'm not even
17 going to do this one with you, because you were not on at all when
18 the event was taking place; is that correct?

19 A. That's correct.

20 Q. Okay. I don't need a 72-hour history from you. Did you file
21 an ATSAP at all as a result of this event?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. Okay. I wouldn't have thought so on that, either. Have you
24 been interviewed about this event prior to now, other than meeting
25 with the FAA --

1 A. No, sir.

2 Q. -- prior to this? How long were you in with the FAA,
3 probably, today, for your prebriefing? Roughly.

4 A. Forty minutes.

5 Q. Okay. And have you had an opportunity to review a replay of
6 this event at all?

7 A. I have not.

8 Q. Did you want to watch a replay of this event? I don't --
9 it's probably not relevant, because we're not going to ask you
10 questions directly related, necessarily, because you weren't part
11 of it.

12 A. All right. Well, then, I don't need one.

13 Q. Okay. If at any time you're like, you know what, I'd like to
14 watch it, we'll play a replay so you can see it. We'll play the
15 FALCON.

16 A. All right.

17 Q. Was a relief briefing conducted when you took the position of
18 TMC there just after the event?

19 A. I was in the process of getting a relief briefing when the
20 phone call was made from A80.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. It never was completed.

23 Q. Okay. So, you were in the middle of doing one was it was.

24 All right. And was that a recorded briefing?

25 A. I'm not sure.

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1 Q. Okay. Do you guys normally record them on the TMC positions,
2 or is that normally just a verbal pass-down?

3 A. We're supposed to. We typically do.

4 Q. I got it. And you don't know if you did one that day or not?

5 A. Not sure.

6 Q. Do you guys utilize a checklist there on the TMC position?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Do you remember if you used one that day?

9 A. I'm not sure.

10 Q. Okay. And so -- I don't need to ask this one for you, so
11 that -- you weren't there during the event. Do you recall, when
12 you came in, what the general weather conditions were in the
13 airspace? I know, as a TMC, you're looking at -- was that -- they
14 were explaining to us how the TMCs were set up in there, so were
15 you taking the Atlanta?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Right?

18 A. I was taking the Atlanta position.

19 Q. So, for the area that impacted you that you're concerned
20 with, or, you know, monitoring, or whatever, your area of
21 responsibility, do you remember what the general weather
22 conditions were? Did you have convective activity in the area?
23 Were there in-flight advisories out, SIGMETs, AIRMETs, CWAs,
24 anything that you can recall? Do you remember, was there a lot of
25 precip in the area, not a lot, some? Anything you can recall?

1 A. There was a lot of precip in the area that was moving
2 through, and we were moving traffic, you know, around, just to get
3 them into the airport.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I don't remember the exact -- Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday of
6 that week were pretty nasty as far as the weather.

7 Q. Okay. And do you remember, on that day, did you receive the
8 pre-duty weather briefing?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And did anything stand out to you in that pre-duty
11 weather briefing that you can recall regarding, you know, weather
12 impacting the area that just --

13 A. I just remember, I knew it was going to impact the area.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. We also receive briefings back and forth from the weather
16 unit.

17 Q. Yeah, they were saying. Now, did they come over and brief
18 you like separately, or are you talking about like the weather
19 briefing sheet that they put out periodically in addition to their
20 normal standups?

21 A. They do that, but typically, as things change, they come talk
22 to the Atlanta position and say, hey, we just saw this, this is
23 happening, this is going to be moving faster than we thought, or
24 this is going to be here for a while, or you know, there's
25 climatic activity, or --

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. -- wind shears, or whatever --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- in that. It's as updated as she sees the updates, or he,
5 depending on who's sitting there.

6 Q. Okay. So, you've been here for a while. How do you -- how
7 is the -- how helpful do you feel the pre-duty weather briefing is
8 in its current state here? What I mean by that is, if you just --
9 like, yeah, it's very helpful, it's somewhat helpful, it's not
10 very helpful, or it's not helpful at all?

11 A. It's somewhat helpful.

12 Q. It's somewhat helpful? Okay. And do you have -- I don't
13 need that information from you. So, kind of step me through, you
14 alluded to it earlier, how did you become aware that an event had
15 occurred? It was through A80 calling; is that right?

16 A. The controller firm had received a phone call, and she turned
17 around, and --

18 Q. The controller, the person you --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- were relieving?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And she turned around and told the supervisor, we're shut
24 off. There's severe turbulence over ANDRE (indiscernible) with
25 injuries --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- we're hoping, or something to that effect.

3 Q. All right, awesome. Okay. So, this is probably kind of easy
4 for you, because you come out, but I'd like you to just expound on
5 that a little bit. If you could kind of step us through, were you
6 working at all previous to this? Had you done a session earlier?

7 A. Prior to the break, I was working that position already, and
8 it's just constantly changing as the weather moves through --

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. -- and changing. So, I was familiar with what was going on,
11 but obviously, in 45 minutes, or 30, 45 minutes' time that I was
12 on break, they could --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- things had progressed, or, you know, occasionally, things
15 just fall apart, you know, while you take a break, and then you
16 come back, and it's all clear again. But --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- it was just one of those nights where it was just
19 continuing to progress. I don't remember exactly what time it
20 was, but --

21 Q. Okay. So, I had a general question for you about the weather
22 coordinator. Do you know who fills the weather coordinator
23 position here? Is it normally staffed by one particular -- is it
24 staffed by the TMC, the team unit? Is it staffed by -- I don't
25 know who staffs it here.

1 A. Weather coordinator --

2 Q. It can vary from center to center.

3 A. -- position in the TMC, not the -- you're not referring to
4 the meteorologist?

5 Q. Not referring to the CWSU, right, but there's actually a
6 weather coordinator --

7 A. I believe --

8 Q. -- position in the center.

9 A. I believe the supervisor takes that role --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- as TMC.

12 Q. Do you have any idea, I mean, as a weather coordinator, what
13 they have to do or what their roles or responsibilities are with
14 regard to anything, or is that -- you don't ever fill that role,
15 so --

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. I'm going to quit asking questions
18 for right now, and I'm going to pass it along to Louis.

19 BY MR. HANCOCK:

20 Q. Hey.

21 A. Hey.

22 Q. Just a couple of questions I've got for you, here. So, I
23 just want to clarify, what position were you taking over, were you
24 assigned to? Was that the Atlanta position again?

25 A. The Atlanta position.

1 Q. Okay. So, how do you typically handle areas due to weather
2 as a TMC? Like, what do you use to depict weather as a TMC, and
3 how do you handle when, say, you have reports of turbulence or a
4 line of dissertation precipitation (ph.) that the aircraft are
5 going through? How do you deal with that as a TMC at Atlanta?

6 A. We're working with the meteorologist, as well as the
7 supervisors, and talking what we think it's going to do, and we're
8 always trying to plan ahead so the traffic is where the weather's
9 not. I mean, our goal is to put as many airplanes in the Atlanta
10 as we can while we can, and we run the fixes typically until we
11 think they're not going to be available anymore, and we start
12 routing traffic around to other fixes, so -- if that's what you're
13 asking.

14 Q. So, what tool do you use when you're assigned to a position
15 as a TMC to observe weather and maybe plan around that weather?
16 Do you use an ERAM scope?

17 A. I'm using the scope --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- as well as, we've got a couple of monitors, and I'm not
20 exactly sure of the acronyms of what they are, but we can see the
21 weather moving in the TSD. I pull up the weather on that, and I
22 can watch it.

23 Q. So, on the ERAM scopes, do you guys have pref sets
24 (indiscernible)? Do you sign in on those scopes when you're on
25 those positions?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Okay. Do you know offhand what altitude limits that you look
3 at for weather on the ERAM scopes?

4 A. I believe I look at everything.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. All my preferences.

7 Q. How do you communicate with the areas on plans with weather
8 aggressively moving? Do you wait for the areas to call you and
9 say something's not working, or do you get reports, or do you
10 receive them from PIREPs and then kind of start looking at things,
11 or do you proactively reach out to the areas?

12 A. We try to be proactive about it --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- let them know what our plan is. And typically, I'm
15 looking for feedback from supervisors. Hey, if you don't like
16 this plan, you know, tell me now, because we're about to start
17 moving airplanes, or this is what we're going to do otherwise.
18 But we try to be proactive with it, but obviously, you know, when
19 stuff happens. We have to react, we react. (Indiscernible).

20 Q. Okay. And how are you notified of PIREPs when you're at TMU?
21 So, if a controller enters a PIREP down in the area, say severe
22 turbulence, how are you notified? Do you get it on EDST, or is it
23 handwritten?

24 A. Often, we have them handed to us by the meteorologist, and we
25 type them in and send them out to the areas, in GIs.

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1 Q. So, as a TMC, you type in a GI to send back out to the
2 controllers?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Okay. You don't put anything into ERIDS?

5 A. I do not.

6 Q. Okay. Okay.

7 A. I remember, as a controller, we put it in ERIDS and --

8 MR. HANCOCK: Okay. That's all I have for now.

9 MR. SOPER: Thanks, Louis. Seth?

10 BY MR. MYERS:

11 Q. Just a couple of question to piggyback on Louis. So, I know
12 you've been a controller here. You've been a TMC here. So,
13 that's good. When you are on the floor, and you put it into
14 ERIDS, the PIREP, you're saying that you get handed those PIREPs,
15 and you put them back into the ERIDS as a TMC to go back to the
16 floor? I just want to make sure I understand that --

17 A. No.

18 Q. -- correctly.

19 A. We'll put them in -- is it ERIDS? Is that what we're --

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. -- calling it now?

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. We send out the GI that goes to the floor after --

24 Q. Okay. You sent out the GI to the affected areas that go out
25 to the floor?

1 A. Correct. We send it to everybody.

2 Q. Got you. And you don't specifically filter out where it's
3 going to go; it just goes to the floor, GI blanket, for all of
4 them?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. And that's for routines, UUAs, everything, or just --

7 A. Far as I know. Every one they hand me, I punch in.

8 Q. Okay. Perfect. So, who walks one of those to you to notify
9 you that it's there?

10 A. Our meteorologist.

11 Q. The CWSU?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. Okay. And you guys don't interact with flight data or them
14 with those; it's just you send those back in, back down to the
15 floor?

16 A. (No audible response.)

17 Q. Okay. We were talking a little bit about the weather
18 coordinator position before that you said is combined up at the
19 STMC position. So, typically, how are you communicating with the
20 areas? Like, as Louis said, if there's some issues that you're
21 seeing, and you want that feedback from the supervisors, what do
22 you guys usually do here? Do you call them up? Do you call the
23 STMC? What do you guys usually do?

24 A. I'm calling the supervisors.

25 Q. You call the supervisors?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. And are you looping in the STMCs, or how is that --

3 A. Right. I mean, so, the STMCs in the Atlanta position are me
4 to you.

5 Q. Yep.

6 A. So, we're talking constantly. Hey, this is what's happening.
7 I'm going to put out a ground stop. Or, this is what's happening.
8 We're going to start moving folks off the ANDRE (indiscernible) to
9 the Chipper.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And, you know, I get feedback back and forth. Hey, let's not
12 do that yet. Let's wait. We've got a little more time. Or --

13 Q. And what triggers you to start that conversation? Is it like
14 MAP values? Is it, you're just looking at the scope, you're
15 listening to the controller? What is the benchmarks for you to
16 start making those phone calls? I know there's a lot of them.

17 A. It's just, I mean, you're watching the weather, and you're
18 trying to predict when the weather's going to be over what fix,
19 and how long can we run this efficiently without any issues. And
20 also, the volume coming in, as well. I mean, there's a whole lot
21 of volume, and there's a whole lot of weather, and there are a lot
22 of deviations. We start moving earlier for the sole fact that you
23 only have so much room.

24 Q. Do you guys look at MAP values at all when you're in those
25 positions, or is that --

1 A. I don't.

2 Q. -- a factor in --

3 A. I don't, necessarily. The supervisor's looking at it more
4 often than I am. As far as each sector and how busy they are?

5 Q. Yeah, like the red, green, yellow ones.

6 A. I only look at arrivals when I'm on the Atlanta position.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. That's the only thing I'm looking at. And all that other
9 stuff is not in my purview, my scope, at that particular position.

10 Q. Got you. Perfect. How would you consider the workload on
11 the ships that you normally work, you know, last six months,
12 eight months, nine months? Like, when you guys come in to work
13 your shifts, are you -- and I'm trying to get at, like your
14 workload, like do you guys have problems splitting positions off?
15 Do you have issues where there's -- you know, you want to -- I
16 don't know if you guy have a NAS monitor position. I know that
17 every facility's a little different, you know.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. Weather Coordinator, STMC, NAS Monitor, you have an Atlanta,
20 (indiscernible) you have DSPing, you have metering, like. And all
21 these positions can be combined, or decombined, or stand-alone.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. Like, how long have you been at TMU? You said, two years?

24 A. Right at two years.

25 Q. Yeah. So, it's probably all the same for the last two years,

1 but you find a lot of facilities that used to have 14 STMCs; and
2 now, they have eight. And so --

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. -- where DSPing used to be its own position, it's not
5 anymore. Now, it's combined up with Atlanta (indiscernible). And
6 I did notice that you guys --

7 A. We had three sectors (indiscernible). Well, the typical
8 configuration, if it's busy enroute-wise, we'll have the
9 Charlotte, the Atlanta, and the en route open. If there's not a
10 lot of en route, Charlotte and en route will combine up.
11 NAS/weather/-departure coordinator typically falls under the
12 purview of the STMC, and they're doing pretty much all that.

13 Q. But you guys are also using -- I saw you guys had IDAC there,
14 and you had TBFM.

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. You guys are doing that while you're monitoring everything
17 else. So, when you're sitting at that Atlanta position, walk me
18 through all the things you're doing there. Like, you're doing --

19 A. Well --

20 Q. -- TBFM, you're doing DSPing, you're doing --

21 A. The TBFM is pretty much the focus on everything, because it
22 handles the scheduling, the everything, right up until the weather
23 shows up. And then, once the weather comes -- so, if the weather
24 gets bad enough, and they're not able to stay on the routes, TBFM
25 doesn't work very well.

1 Q. Yep.

2 A. So, we'll go to miles-in-trail. And once that miles-in-trail
3 goes into effect, TBFM's kind of out the window.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. We still use it, or I still use it, to schedule, but just
6 because it's a better -- the computer does a better job than me
7 eyeballing it.

8 Q. Yep.

9 A. But -- so, for the most part, we're just managing the TBFM,
10 and again, which is easy, and the weather's where it gets more
11 difficult, obviously.

12 MR. MYERS: Awesome. Thanks. I don't have any other
13 questions right now.

14 MR. SOPER: Thanks. Brian?

15 MR. SWAIN: Yeah.

16 MR. SOPER: Swain.

17 BY MR. SWAIN:

18 Q. Thanks for answering those questions. A lot of what Louis
19 asked was kind of where some of mine were, but I will ask, so,
20 when you got the notification that they were shutting off the
21 arrival, what were your actions then?

22 A. Mine were basically just taking the position. Everything was
23 pretty much done. Everybody was shut off. I did have
24 conversations with supervisors letting them know this is what's
25 going on, this is why we're shut off, you know, this is how long

1 we can expect to be in holding, this is our plan. And I don't
2 remember the details of all that, but typically, I get on the line
3 and start letting the supervisors know so they can plan.

4 Q. Okay. And so, from that point, you would start -- you talked
5 about, with weather, you're constantly evaluating the weather with
6 some of the tools you mentioned and some of the screens that
7 you're looking at. So, you would start to develop a new plan as
8 far as how you were going to run the aircraft into --

9 A. Right.

10 Q. -- Atlanta at that point. So, with each individual like
11 supervisor, would you ask them to solicit pilot input as to
12 weather and what the weather's doing, what the rides are like?
13 How would that be formulated into your decision-making from that
14 point?

15 A. I didn't, or don't, typically ask for them to give us PIREPs.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I hear them in standup. And when the supervisor's saying,
18 hey, we need PIREPs, get PIREPs. But as a TMC, I don't typically
19 ask the supervisor to get PIREPs.

20 Q. Terminal input. So, with weather, not necessarily around
21 this event, but if there's weather in the terminal environment
22 which crews may see downrange on the radar or looking at that app
23 that we have, do you proactively call the terminal and ask them
24 what's going on just to kind of get an idea of what deviations are
25 going to be needed or what crews might be asking?

1 A. We do. I mean, you typically are -- I mean, I talk to the
2 guys at A80, and, hey, there's weather. It looks like it's
3 approaching the field. How does it look from there? You know,
4 what is your plan? Do you think you're going to be able to
5 continue to operate? You know, do we need to lower the rate? Do
6 we need to do this, that, or the other? And a lot of times, we'll
7 go ahead and lower the rate whether they ask us to or not, because
8 we're thinking, once they're in the air, and I've got 132
9 airplanes for that hour, I can't do it on the 80 without
10 significant delays, and holding, and that sort of thing.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So, we do communicate back and forth.

13 Q. Okay. Any of that information that you would get from the
14 terminal, would you relay that to any of the supervisors to share
15 with the controllers on the scope?

16 A. I do.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. All right.

20 A. I don't want to be the last person to know anything.

21 MR. SWAIN: No, I agree. All right. That's it for me.

22 MR. SOPER: Thanks, Brian. Mike?

23 MR. BROWN: Just maybe six. We've covered a lot of it.

24 BY MR. BROWN:

25 Q. So, if they're getting ready to shut down one of the arrival

1 gates, whether you make the call, or if it's the TRACON or the
2 sector, is there any procedures, hey, we're going to dump these on
3 headings, take them off the arrivals? You're going to get them
4 fed at this heading at this altitude? Will they accept them like
5 that at the TRACON, or do you want to tie them back into the
6 arrivals?

7 A. They will accept that occasionally, and I don't know about
8 that particular day, but I know those few days last week when this
9 was going on, we were running folks through the north gate,
10 departure gate, and we would shut departures off. We were running
11 through the east gate and shut departures off over there at times.
12 Just depending, as the weather moves through.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. So, yeah.

15 Q. Are they making that call, though, in TMC, or is the floor
16 calling you and saying, hey, this is how we need these guys fed?

17 A. We are not necessarily making the call, but we're getting A80
18 and -- I mean, my job is, I'm trying to get them to buy off on,
19 hey, if we shut off this gate, this east gate, can you take them
20 over whatever fix --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- you know, they're there.

23 Q. And you're coordinating with A80's TMC?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Right. So, I mean, they're the ones that, if they don't take
2 it, they don't take it, I mean, and for the most part, they're
3 pretty cooperative.

4 MR. BROWN: Okay. That's all I had.

5 BY MR. SOPER:

6 Q. Okay. So, I'm staying on that vein a little bit. I wanted
7 to ask you, what is the working relationship you have with the
8 A80 TMC? Is it good? Is it strained? Is it difficult? I
9 mean --

10 A. Yeah, they're, yes, they're very good.

11 Q. That's good. All right. And how about with the sups on the
12 floor? How's that relationship?

13 A. They're not bad. I mean, it's just a matter of --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- newer sups. You know, everybody's --

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. -- everybody's got one. You know, everybody --

18 Q. Sure.

19 A. Somebody that knows everything, and -- you know, they're not
20 bad. We get along, and we --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- cooperate, but --

23 Q. All right.

24 A. -- some are easier to work with than others, obviously.

25 Q. Okay. Shifting lanes just a little bit, step me through a

1 little bit the tools that you have and that you have available to
2 you that you utilize the most in assisting you with regard to
3 weather. Obviously, weather's a big portion of your job, right?
4 So, I mean, what do you have access to that allows you -- are you
5 getting fed primarily from the CWSU with information? Is that
6 what you reach out to the most? Do you have other tools available
7 to you? How much do you use the other things, like ITWS and CIWS
8 (indiscernible), and do you use the National Weather Service
9 nowcast for turbulence prediction and forecast?

10 A. My --

11 Q. Is there anything?

12 A. -- number one go-to is, I just call right over the desk to
13 the CWSU and say, I'm looking at this weather. What is it going
14 to do? I mean, what do you think it's going to do? How long is
15 it --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- before it hits the airport?

18 Q. All right.

19 A. And --

20 Q. So, you're --

21 A. -- most of those folks can predict it way better than I can,
22 even with the other tools. But --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- I do watch the scope, the weather on the scope, as well as
25 the TSD, where you can kind of future-cast it, and move it

1 through, and try to figure out what's going to happen when, and --

2 Q. Okay. Is the CWSU here generally proactive in reaching out
3 to you guys often, as well, before you guys might have been
4 saying, hey, this is going to change, this is going to be
5 whatever? Do you guys have that kind of relationship? Or is it
6 mostly like, if you inquire, they respond; otherwise, they just do
7 their normal thing?

8 A. They're more and more proactive --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- recently. We have a big turnover of CWSU folks.

11 Q. Yeah. We spoke to that MIC. She said she's new.

12 A. Yeah --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- for the most part, except for Brett and --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- the lady in charge. I keep forgetting her name.

17 Q. Yeah. I forgot her name, too.

18 A. She's been here before.

19 Q. Tish.

20 A. Tish, correct.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. And they're all forthcoming with information, but the more
23 they do it, the more you see them standing behind you when you
24 turn around. When you need information, they're standing behind
25 you already.

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. The longer they've been there.
- 3 Q. That's good.
- 4 A. So --
- 5 Q. Yeah, because you guys have no shortage of weather down here,
- 6 so -- so, let me ask you, if you had to put your thumb on
- 7 something that you feel that you're lacking in the STMC world, or
- 8 the TMC world, TMU world, where you work, there, what is it that
- 9 you either wish you had or was better, or do you think you've got
- 10 all the tools right now to be able to do what you need to do, and
- 11 it's all working well? I mean, it could be anything. It could be
- 12 equipment, it could be a program, it could be staffing. I mean,
- 13 what is it that's hurting you the most or making it the most
- 14 challenging?
- 15 A. I mean, occasionally, its bodies, (indiscernible) staffing
- 16 would be the only thing. I feel like we have all the other tools
- 17 we need. But for the most part, we're pretty good in staffing.
- 18 Q. How many do you guys got, do you know, working TMC now?
- 19 A. I'm not sure. The goal was always to have six on a shift
- 20 during the summertime, and --
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. -- sometimes, they will do that; sometimes, we're not.
- 23 Q. Twenty-four hours for you guys?
- 24 A. No, sir. We only -- our latest shift's normally 3:30 to
- 25 11:30.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And stay late until -- I mean, and knowing that the late
3 person is going to stay until the operation is --

4 Q. Right.

5 A. -- sustaining, so --

6 MR. SOPER: Okay. All right. That's all I have for right
7 now. Nothing else? Seth?

8 BY MR. MYERS:

9 Q. When you're working a position, do you guys get any
10 notifications about HIWAS, or convective SIGMETs, or anything
11 coming through, like --

12 A. We get GIs.

13 Q. You get the GIs, so you just acknowledge them in the GI --

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. -- and that's it? Do you guys have -- I know it doesn't come
16 up on the scope, but like CIWS (indiscernible), like that'll come
17 up with the box drawn on it, and do you guys -- so you can
18 correlate where the HIWAS or the convective SIGMET is for that
19 spot, or do you guys not really have access to that in your --

20 A. It's there. I --

21 Q. It's there?

22 A. -- can't tell you that I use it.

23 Q. Got you. Typically, UuAs will come through the GI for you,
24 too, like --

25 A. Right.

1 Q. -- an urgent PIREP? Is there any SOP thing for what you're
2 supposed to do with that or how you're supposed to handle that as
3 a TMC, or is that, yes, TMC's supposed to do something with that?
4 Is there any facility thing with what's supposed to happen with
5 that?

6 A. I'm not aware of anything that I'm required to do with the
7 UUAs as a TMC or STMC. I know, as a controller --

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. -- you broadcasted them.

10 Q. Yep.

11 A. And, I mean, I look at them, and see where it is, and see if
12 it affects me or anything in particular.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. But --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- I haven't talked to an airplane in two years, so --

17 MR. MYERS: I hear you, man. Every piece is important.

18 That's all I have, thanks.

19 MR. SOPER: Thanks, Seth. Brian?

20 MR. SWAIN: Nothing additional.

21 MR. SOPER: Nothing? Mike, do you have any additional?

22 MR. BROWN: Nope.

23 MR. SOPER: All right. Do you have any questions for us?

24 MR. BARRON: No, sir.

25 MR. SOPER: All right. Well, this was relatively painless.

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I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording now, and I show the
time at 12:04.

(Whereupon, at 12:04 p.m. EDT, 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: DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT
NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA ON
AUGUST 29, 2023
Interview of Steven Barron

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA428

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: September 6, 2023

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.



Lisa D. Sevarino
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT *

NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: DCA23LA428

ON AUGUST 29, 2023 *

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Interview of: SCOTT GAUCHER, Operations Supervisor
Atlanta Air Route Traffic Control Center

Atlanta, Georgia

Thursday,
September 7, 2023

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D.C. Area 301-261-1902
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APPEARANCES:

BRIAN SOPER, Investigator-In-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL BROWN, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LOUIS HANCOCK, ATC Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

SETH MYERS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

BRIAN SWAIN, Senior Air Traffic Manager
Delta Air Lines

MARK TOMICICH, Representative
(On behalf of Scott Gaucher)

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:45 a.m. EDT)

1
2
3 MR. SOPER: Test 1, 2. All right. My name is Brian Soper,
4 Lead Air Traffic Investigator at the NTSB. I have here with us
5 today Mr. Louis Hancock representing the FAA on our Air Traffic
6 Control Group; Mr. Seth Myers, out of Boston Center, representing
7 NATCA on our Air Traffic Control Group; Mr. Brian Swain, out of
8 Delta Airlines, representing Delta on group; and Mike Brown with
9 us from our home office on my team back there, Air Traffic
10 Investigator. And you have with you today -- this is your chosen
11 representative, correct?

12 MR. GAUCHER: Yes.

13 MR. SOPER: And could you state your name for the record,
14 sir?

15 MR. TOMICICH: Mark Tomicich.

16 MR. SOPER: Thank you. And your name for the record?

17 MR. GAUCHER: Scott Gaucher.

18 MR. SOPER: Awesome. And could you spell your last name for
19 me?

20 MR. GAUCHER: G-A-U-C-H-E-R.

21 MR. SOPER: Awesome, thank you. Well, as I mentioned
22 earlier, I know some of this is a little bit of repeat. However,
23 the NTSB is an independent Federal Agency charged with
24 investigating civil aviation accidents and incidents of a serious
25 nature, developing probable cause, and hopefully safety

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1 recommendations to prevent reoccurrence.

2 We're not affiliated with DOT or the FAA in any way. We're
3 non-regulatory. We don't make rules. We don't enforce rules.
4 We're interested in strictly the safety aspect. What we're here
5 to do today is all fact-finding. This is what the -- we're in the
6 fact-finding phase of our investigation.

7 So everything is very matter of fact. We're just going to
8 have some questions for you. We'll go around the room in kind of
9 a round robin fashion, as we talked about. If you have any
10 questions for us along the way, please feel free to ask.

11 And we'll try to make it as painless as possible. If there's
12 any, at any point, if we ask you a question that makes you feel
13 uncomfortable, or you'd like to confer with your rep before
14 answering, just say so. You can step outside, and come back in,
15 and answer after you've spoken with him.

16 I don't think we'll have anything like that. There's nothing
17 highly contentious about this one, so. But know that that ability
18 is there.

19 MR. GAUCHER: Okay.

20 MR. SOPER: Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

21 MR. GAUCHER: No.

22 MR. SOPER: Awesome. All right, so.

23 INTERVIEW OF SCOTT GAUCHER

24 BY MR. SOPER:

25 Q. Do you, have you had any? Well, first of all, let me get --

1 What was your age at the time of the event?

2 A. Forty-five.

3 Q. Forty-five. All right. And what are your operating initials
4 here?

5 A. Sierra Yankee, S-Y.

6 Q. Okay. And do you have any pre-FAA air traffic control work
7 experience? DOD? Contract? Tower? Military?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. Do you hold any collateral duties here? Or have you
10 been on any recent details that have taken outside of the facility
11 that might affect currency?

12 A. I've had no, nothing that would affect my currency, I
13 maintain concurrency every month, at least for the past seven
14 years.

15 Q. That's good.

16 A. I've only missed currency one month, and that was just
17 because a clerical error. I thought I gotten it. And I was 15
18 minutes short. And that's my entire supervisor career. I do have
19 collateral duties. I'm a member of the local safety council. And
20 currently I'm also a member of the recurrent training cadre, as a
21 management SME.

22 Q. Cool. Are you the management side lead of the local safety
23 council? Or are you just a member of the --

24 A. I'm just a member of this.

25 Q. Okay. And could you just give us kind of the 10,000-foot

1 version of your aviation background, kind of a short bio. Right?
2 Like, so what I mean by that is I was always interested in
3 aviation, I graduated high school, I went to college for this, or
4 I got my pilot's license. And you know, step through to what led
5 you to where you're at today.

6 A. So, I was, graduated from Georgia Tech --

7 Q. Bulldogs.

8 A. -- soon after September 11th. Ended up not getting an
9 engineering job, was working in the mortgage business, didn't like
10 where that was going, was looking for other opportunities. Had a
11 family friend that recommended air traffic control, looked into
12 it.

13 Applied and was hired in 2008. Started at the Academy,
14 December 2008. And then got to Atlanta Center, I believe in,
15 around April 2009. Certified in Area 4, I think, January 2013.
16 And then, became a supervisor in November 2015.

17 Q. So you've been -- this is your only facility?

18 A. Only facility.

19 Q. Nice, all right. Have you ever been fired, terminated,
20 suspended, or asked to resign from a position such as an aircraft
21 controller?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. And how would you describe your health in the terms of
24 excellent, good, fair, poor?

25 A. I would say excellent.

1 Q. All right. And you had medical clearance on the day of the
2 event?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. A valid medical clearance. And do you have any limitations,
5 restrictions, or waivers to your medical clearance?

6 A. I have corrective lenses.

7 Q. Okay. Is it to, is it a requirement to carry or to wear?

8 A. To wear.

9 Q. Okay. And were you wearing them on the day of the incident?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Contacts or glasses?

12 A. Contacts.

13 Q. Okay. Were you taking any medications on the day of the
14 event? Over the counter, prescription, maintenance medications,
15 anything?

16 A. To refer back to your previous question, I do have a special
17 medical waiver and I take a medication for that.

18 Q. Okay. And it's all documented in the record?

19 A. It's all documented.

20 Q. And you were taking your medication as directed on the day of
21 the event?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Okay. How long has that been a part of your medical record,
24 that restriction, or limitation, or whatever?

25 A. When I got hired.

1 Q. Okay. So, it's been your entire career?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And was drug or alcohol screening performed following
4 the event?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Have there been any major changes in your health over the
7 last year? These are big things good, bad, or indifferent. Lost
8 50 pounds? Had a surgery and a pin put in my arm? Any major
9 stuff like that?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. And similar question. Any major changes in your
12 personal life over the last year? Got married? Got divorced?
13 Had a child? Adopted a child?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. And last question, but similar. Major changes in your
16 financial situation over the last year? Like filed bankruptcy?
17 Won the Lotto? Came into a lot of money?

18 A. No.

19 Q. All right. And this one is a little bit harder because I
20 know it's been a little bit. It's been a little over a week since
21 the event. I know the event happened on a Tuesday, but we like to
22 capture your 72-hour history, those 72 hours leading up to the
23 time of the event. All right?

24 And so, to step you back, it's usually easier to step people
25 backwards from the event and to work backwards. So that's what

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1 I'll try to do with you. So, the event happened at about 1832 on
2 that day. Was that your normal shift that day? Were you in your
3 normal shift rotation? Or was this an overtime shift? Or --

4 A. Normal shift.

5 Q. Normal shift. And you -- what shift were you working?

6 A. I was working a 1430, so 2:30 to 10:30.

7 Q. Okay. And do you remember on that day -- so you came in at
8 1430. Do you remember what time you got up that day, roughly?

9 A. 6:20.

10 Q. Roughly, 6:20? That's -- all right.

11 A. It was a school day, so.

12 Q. Ah, there you go. All right. And the activities that you
13 were doing that day before you went to work, normal daily routine?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Nothing out of the ordinary was occurring or happening? Is
16 that the time you normally get up probably on a day like that
17 where you have the --

18 A. Yes, yes, during the school year, that is normal.

19 Q. Okay. And what time do you think you went to bed the night
20 before? So that would have been Monday night.

21 A. 11 o'clock-ish.

22 Q. Okay. And what was Monday for you as far as a workday? Was
23 it a workday, or was it an off day?

24 A. No, it was an off day.

25 Q. Okay. And regular RDO?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Do you remember what time you woke up on Monday, probably?

3 A. Don't recall.

4 Q. Okay. I know that was a holiday. That was Labor Day. So do
5 you recall, did you do anything that day? That was, I mean, it
6 was Labor Day. So you did you guys have an outing that you went
7 to? Or did you have your own outing? Or did you guys go
8 somewhere? Or do anything? Or was it normal daily routine that
9 day, too? Or do you remembered all what that day might have
10 consisted of?

11 A. Took my son to Little League practice with the other son. We
12 all did that in the afternoon. And then, just came back, had some
13 dinner. Nothing out of the ordinary.

14 Q. Okay. So, working still backwards. So, Sunday night, what
15 time -- what was your workday on Sunday, if any?

16 A. That was an RDO, as well.

17 Q. That was RDO, as well, all right. And do you remember how
18 that day went? Time you got up, time you went to bed, probably?

19 A. I don't recall.

20 Q. Or anything that occurred on that day that was out of the
21 ordinary? Friend's car accident? Having to go pick somebody up?
22 Fix something? Children sick?

23 A. Yes, none of that. Just a normal day with the kids.

24 Q. Okay. And do you feel like you -- not knowing exactly what
25 time you went to bed or anything, do you feel like you got normal

1 sleep? That you received normal sleep like you would any other
2 night --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- as far as you can recall? You weren't feeling bad or
5 sick, or getting up at night or anything like that?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. All right, so over that 72 hours, was there anything
8 that you can recall happening outside of your normal daily routine
9 that was kind of a wrench in the spokes of life so to speak, you
10 know? That, like I said, this can be anything. You know, family
11 member called, and what up with them? You know, they're going
12 through some issues. Or we had a child that was sick, and you
13 know, we were having some issues with that. Or we had to go to
14 the hospital to visit someone. Anything that took you out of your
15 normal daily routine, and sleep patterns, and eating patterns, and
16 stuff like that?

17 A. I don't recall anything.

18 Q. Okay, all right. Did you file a ATSAP as a result of this
19 event?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. And have you been interviewed about this event prior
22 to now, outside of being in your pre-briefing with the FAA there?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. And how long do you think you were in the pre-brief
25 with the FAA today, roughly?

1 A. Twenty minutes, maybe, roughly? I'm not, I don't recall
2 looking at the time we got out.

3 Q. No worries. And have you had an opportunity to review
4 replays of this event?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. When was the last time?

7 A. What's today, Thursday? Tuesday night.

8 Q. Okay. And audio and video, like a Falcon? Or a SATORI or
9 something like that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay, good. And was -- on the day of the event when you were
12 working OS, do you recall, was a relief brief up when you took the
13 OS position prior to this event happening?

14 A. I don't specifically recall.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. It is standard operating procedure that we give relief
17 briefings. But I don't specifically recall that particular relief
18 briefing.

19 Q. Okay. And normally, when you did -- not, not be able to
20 recall that exact one, do you guys normally record the OS
21 briefings, or are those unrecorded?

22 A. They are recorded, normally.

23 Q. And do you normally use a checklist?

24 A. There's a checklist under the, on the desk that we normally
25 follow.

1 Q. Okay. But on that day, you recall?

2 A. I don't recall the specifics of the briefing.

3 Q. Okay. On a scale of one to five, five being the heaviest,
4 how would you rate the traffic volume in that area at the time of
5 the event? And the related position?

6 A. You said -- can you repeat the question?

7 Q. Yes, sure.

8 A. I'm sorry.

9 Q. No, no worries at all. Yes, so on scale of one to five, five
10 being the heaviest --

11 A. Yes?

12 Q. How would you rate the traffic volume only at the time of the
13 event for the related position on the R49?

14 A. The position -- so, I just want to ask a clarifying question.
15 At the time of the event, they were, the aircraft was talking to
16 Atlanta Approach?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. Do you want, like when we were actually talking to --

19 Q. Yes, talking to the aircraft. Thank you. Yes, that's
20 actually a good question. You make and bring up a good point.
21 Yes, what we're talking about here, and if I said that, at the
22 time of the event, that's probably a bad wording, because at the
23 time of the event, you weren't talking to them. So, yes, at the
24 time leading up to the handoff there --

25 A. Yes?

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1 Q. -- right during that last little bit of thing, when the
2 controller was working that aircraft, just prior to hand off, what
3 was that traffic volume like for them? I mean, in your opinion,
4 from that position?

5 A. A two to three.

6 Q. Okay. And now, a similar question. On a scale -- well,
7 first of all, do you feel that's normal, or above average, or
8 below average for that the time of day or shift at that time?

9 A. I would say that's probably below average.

10 Q. Okay. And on a scale of one to five, five being most
11 complex, how would you rate the traffic complexity during that
12 same timeframe leading up to the event? And in this, you can
13 think of anything that may have been, you know, communication
14 problems, equipment issues, somebody was you know, he, they had or
15 didn't have a D-side or whatever. Anything that could have played
16 into the complexity of the event, weather, all that stuff. So how
17 was the complexity?

18 A. I'd say on a scale of one to five, three and increasing.

19 Q. Okay. And do you feel that was normal for that time? Or is
20 that getting above average for that? For what you would expect at
21 that time and that traffic?

22 A. I would say a three is normal but growing to above average.

23 Q. Okay, all right. And do you recall any distractions at, or
24 leading up to the time, during that timeframe prior to handoff
25 that may have been occurring in the area? And this could be

1 anything.

2 This could be noises from tech's doing it, the volume in the
3 room was getting loud from people talking, coordinating, whatever.
4 There were equipment issues. There were comm issues. There was
5 an emergency in progress somewhere in the area that was detracting
6 from something. Anything that could have been a distraction at
7 all during that timeframe?

8 A. I don't recall the specifics of exactly what was happening at
9 the timeframe.

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. There was a lot of coordination going on between myself, the
12 controller at East departure, and the controller that was working
13 in the position, and also with the supervisor in Area 4 and some
14 of the controllers in Area 4. We were beginning to take arrivals
15 from that area coming up into that sector and we're working out
16 the specifics of the routings and the altitudes.

17 Q. Okay. What was the catalyst for that? Why? Why were you
18 guys having to take that on?

19 A. There was weather to the Southeast of Atlanta, and they had
20 been shut off from sending their arrivals in.

21 Q. Okay. And so, when you say they had been shut off, by like,
22 tower, by Atlanta tower?

23 A. Atlanta approach.

24 Q. Yes, okay, that's what I meant to say actually, A80. All
25 right. Do you recall the general weather conditions that existed

1 within your airspace or right immediately surrounding it at or
2 leading up to that same timeframe?

3 So you said there was weather Southeast of Atlanta that was
4 causing some changes. What about within your airspace there? And
5 in this area was, do you remember, was there precipitation
6 present? Were there any in-flight advisories out that you can
7 recall? Sigmet, CWAs, Air Mets, anything like that?

8 A. I don't recall specifics of any CWAs or Air Mets at the time.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And my recollection, at the actual time of the event, I don't
11 recall exactly what was on the scope. But after reviewing the
12 replays, I do know that there was some weather around the Atlanta
13 airport to the Northeast of it, and there was also some weather
14 surrounding our boundaries around Asheville Approach and Knoxville
15 Approach, I think one small cell --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- East of Harris.

18 Q. Okay. And yes, we've noticed too, we were watching the ERAM
19 replay. And we kind of noted in there that during this sequence
20 of events when Delta was, prior to Delta being handed off, but
21 close to when they were being handed off, and they were getting
22 them all lined up there, there was some weather that seemed to be
23 building along that was actually outside of your airspace but
24 projected ahead.

25 As a supervisor, is that something you would expect your

1 controllers to call that weather? Or do you feel like it would
2 have been normal to let them, let Atlanta TRACON call that
3 weather, like when you're shipping them or is it -- you know, is
4 that just in your thought, is that something that you --

5 A. I expect them to call in weather they think is pertinent.
6 And at the time, you know, at the time, I don't recall, you know,
7 seeing that weather there. But I expect them to call anything
8 they think is pertinent.

9 Q. Fair enough. Okay. And did you receive the pre-duty weather
10 briefing on that day?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. To the best of my recollection.

14 Q. Okay. So, and based on that response, I'm guessing nothing
15 stood out to you as like, that you can recall?

16 A. Not to my -- no.

17 Q. Okay. And so, in your opinion, how does the pre-duty weather
18 briefing serving you and the controllers here in its current
19 state? And what I mean by that is, is it providing you great
20 value, some value, little value, or no value?

21 A. I would say provides some value. It just, it's one piece of
22 the puzzle for the day. It gives us that initial, okay, this is
23 the things we need to start thinking about. But weather is
24 dynamic, so it changes throughout the shift. So it just gives us
25 that initial, these are the things we need to start thinking about

1 for the day.

2 Q. Okay. And along those lines, we were talking to the CWSU
3 folks over there. And she was mentioning that here in Atlanta,
4 you guys use a weather briefing sheet that they put out
5 periodically, separate from the pre-duty weather briefing that
6 kind of gives you guys updates on weather information that might
7 apply. Do you utilize those much here? Do you see, do you recall
8 seeing them a lot? Or --

9 A. Yes, they typically they'll bring one down in the morning and
10 in the afternoon. And they'll give us a -- the CWSU, or the
11 person will give us a briefing on that. Like these are the
12 hazards to look out for today. Or it's going to be a good weather
13 day, no hazards. Or you can expect icing. Whatever it might be,
14 though, they'll give us a briefing on things to expect.

15 Q. They actually come down to the Areas on the floor and talk to
16 the sups.?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Oh, good, excellent. So you would say that you probably see,
19 during weather timeframes, you probably see the the CWSU folks
20 routinely through the watch? They make it to the floor at least a
21 couple of times a day when they put out weather briefing sheets or
22 something.

23 A. Yes, they'll come down to put out the weather briefing
24 sheets.

25 Q. Okay. Do you remember, did you have a cell phone or PED on

1 you at the time of the event?

2 A. I don't recall. But I assume I had it in my pocket.

3 Q. Okay. And when did you actually become aware of the event?
4 And how did you become aware that an event had occurred? Because
5 I know what happened once it left Atlanta Center's airspace.

6 A. I was, I don't remember exactly who I was talking to. But I
7 was over by the Area 4 supervisor desk. So I assume I was
8 coordinating something with the arrivals. And the radar associate
9 took the call from Atlanta approach and advised me that they had
10 got severe turbulence.

11 And I believe he said there was injuries. But I don't recall
12 specifically. I just know after the fact that. So that's when I
13 became aware of it. And then, I think he also let us know that we
14 were going to holding at that time.

15 Q. Okay. And did you, were you involved in any upward reporting
16 on that? Did you notify the OM? Or did you notify the ATM, or
17 anybody? Was that part of your purview?

18 A. I did not report it upwards. I know that -- I don't know how
19 I became aware, but I know that the watch desk was aware of it,
20 and they were working on the the MOR and gathering data. But I do
21 not recall how it got to them, or how I found that they had it,
22 but within minutes.

23 Q. Okay, all right. So I guess the last thing for right now for
24 me is if you could just step us through, try to tell us the story
25 of what was occurring there in that area and pick us up about the

1 time that I guess you got, that the area got the notification, you
2 are going to be taken four arrivals. They were shut down.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And you guys were adjusting there. R49 was having to take on
5 new people and set up new routing, or whatever it was. Kind of
6 step us through how you recall things transpiring from your point
7 of view as a supervisor.

8 And take us all the way through to the point of where we just
9 were where the watch desk was aware there was a report of
10 turbulence. And there was, you know, the MOR was being worked on.
11 And that, just kind of --

12 A. So, to the best of my recollection, and these may not be in
13 the exact chronological order.

14 Q. Of course.

15 A. I remember overall, the shift was probably better than I
16 expected. Because the hurricane was starting to push in from the
17 southwest. However, it wasn't supposed to get here until I think
18 the next day. But, so we had adequate staffing.

19 And I had a training team working at sector 50. And I had
20 another training team that was working East departure that was on
21 break. And I believe I had been looking for additional duties for
22 people who is looking for, you know, ELMs, or briefings people
23 needed to try to --

24 I had time to do this with the good staffing. I had gone
25 over, at some point time, and told the controller at East

1 departure that he had an ELMs due, he's going to be attending over
2 at the OJTI school, and he had an ELMs that he needed to complete
3 this prerequisite.

4 So I let him know when the train team was returning in a few
5 minutes. Not to -- he won't be running the break board. That I
6 was going to send him go do that. And somewhere soon after that
7 is when we found out about the -- it might have been before or
8 after because like I said, I'm not 100 percent sure on the exact
9 sequence of events.

10 We knew we're getting the offloads from Area 4, coordinating
11 those, the routings, how we were going to get them around.
12 There's weather between Area 4, and where we're going to be taking
13 them. So, we're trying to figure out the best routing, checking
14 the TSD to see where they're going to fit in our sequence.

15 It seemed like the, I think they were initially sending four
16 aircraft. That they were going to kind of fall right in line with
17 a gap we had in the arrivals coming from the Northeast. And we
18 were still running dual streams into Atlanta.

19 And there hadn't really been any deviations at the time. Or
20 at least any that I was aware of. And soon after that, I noticed
21 it was starting to get busier at the position. The training team
22 had come back. I told the controller that he wasn't going to go
23 do ELMs anymore. I sent him to the D-side at sector 49.

24 And then, continued doing coordinations just looking to see
25 how many more arrivals are we going to get? How's that going to

1 look with every, you know, what we're getting. Kind of plan, you
2 know, whether we need to increase the internal spacing, or make
3 any other use restrictions as we got one of these streams in.

4 And that's when the radar associate that took the call soon
5 after that. And advises me. And then, we went to holding. I
6 think the next person came back inside. And instead of having the
7 training team, the trainer decided it was a little much for him
8 to, his training, to handle the holding.

9 The trainee pushed back. And I wanted a CPC to work that d-
10 side. So, the trainee is a limited R controller. And fully
11 certified on the d-sides. So, I could have used him anywhere, but
12 I felt like I'd rather have a CPC working with the no notice
13 holding. And then, I had him available if I needed to put him in
14 a different position. But I just had him monitor, so that he
15 could learn how to get in and out of holding.

16 Q. Yes, okay. So, let's talk just a tad bit before I handed out
17 to others here about the PIREP stuff, while it's in my mind. So,
18 do you recall during this timeframe, would your area, would they
19 have been required to be soliciting PIREPs? Was your area
20 required to be soliciting during that time?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. And do you know, were they being solicited, as you
23 would expect? Can you recall that?

24 A. I don't recall from memory from the time exactly what was
25 being said. I know that from listening to the replay that sector,

1 the sector was asking about ride reports and disseminating those.
2 I don't know if any of those ever made it into the entries in
3 their ERIDS.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. But I know they were asking about rides and sending those. I
6 don't recall the, which sectors were required to get PIREPs at the
7 time.

8 Q. What's your -- as a supervisor there, what's your practice,
9 or experience, your kind of own technique, I guess, so to speak,
10 to ensure when you are required to be soliciting PIREPs in your
11 area to ensure that controllers are getting them?

12 Is it strictly through monitoring on the headset? And if
13 you're not hearing it for a while, you bring it up? Or is it
14 something that they let you know when they get a PIREP? How does
15 it really transpire in your area? Do they always put them in the
16 ERIDS? Or --

17 A. It depends. Typically, the standard operating procedure is
18 to, if we get PIREPs, is to put them into ERIDS, so that can all
19 be disseminated. I typically will try to make sure we have a
20 screen that shows us what PIREPs are needed at what positions.

21 So I typically will try to go look at that screen. And say,
22 hey, you know, I need you to make sure. You know, if we have
23 PIREP, let's get a PIREP up right now at this position. And I'll
24 put it in myself.

25 Or sometimes they'll put it in, depending how busy we are,

1 you know. I'll say, you know if you get PIREP, I'll enter it for
2 you. Or if there's d-side there, I might say, hey, help your R-
3 side and get PIREP up, you know, enter it in for them.

4 It just depends on you know, the day, the controller, how
5 busy they are. I try to not, if they're extremely busy, I try not
6 to, you know, interrupt them to ask them to get a PIREP because
7 that can be distracting. But still, we try to get those completed
8 as a required.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Are we perfect? No, nobody is.

11 Q. Nobody is with PIREPs.

12 A. We do our best.

13 Q. It's kind of messy system, unfortunately. So that being
14 said, do you know what the lifecycle of a PIREP is here in this
15 facility? So where does it go when you guys type it into ERIDS?
16 Who? How does it make its way to the system? Are you aware of
17 that? Or is that on somebody else's?

18 A. To the best of my knowledge, it goes to our flight data, and
19 then they enter that into system so that can get disseminated.

20 Q. And you see those come back to the to the Area?

21 A. We in our ERIDS machine, you can see which PIREPs are put
22 out. And if there's an urgent PIREPs, it'll show up. I forget
23 what's the name of the --

24 Q. EDST?

25 A. Yes, thank you.

1 MR. SOPER: All right, very good. That's all I got for now.
2 I'm going to go ahead and pass along the Louis.

3 BY MR. HANCOCK:

4 Q. All right. On the subject of PIREPs, here. So besides the
5 weather briefing sheets that are at the desk that the weather
6 service passes out --

7 A. Yes?

8 Q. You said that you use the monitor, and you have them in the
9 areas that show what sectors need them, right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. So, and that's what you routinely do? Do you have like a
12 checklist or anything to make sure that you get a requirement or
13 kind of keep track of them? Or how do, you besides just
14 remembering that you got a PIREP, you know recently or something
15 like that, or this sector got one, is there anything that you kind
16 of keep track of when you're on shift to make sure that you
17 routinely get that?

18 A. Yes, we have the, what we call is a daily spreader that has a
19 checklist of just things that we should try to make sure we
20 accomplish. And the PIREPs has a checkbox for each hour. I think
21 it starts around 6:00 a.m. and goes to 2200.

22 Q. So when you get, when you go right, this sector?

23 A. Check it or put your initials in.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. To say, okay, we made sure. You know, we've got PIREP for

1 this hour period.

2 Q. It doesn't necessarily say a sector or anything? It's
3 just --

4 A. No, it's just that we did it for all the sectors. You know
5 that --

6 Q. That you're required to/

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. So, you've been a supervisor you said since 2015?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. So I'll make the assumption you're certified on the OMIC
11 desk, correct, from the position?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Do you ever work mids? Or do you ever work that position
14 when TMU is not open?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. So when you're working that position and TMU is not
17 open, do you ever receive any PIREP information, urgent PIREPs,
18 regular PIREPs? Do you ever receive anything from the
19 controllers? Or from, whether from flight data, from anybody?
20 And how do you handle those? Do you disseminate? What do you do
21 with PIREPs when you're on the OMIC desk during the mid, or during
22 the time when TMU is not open?

23 A. I don't recall ever getting anything, PIREPs specifically.
24 If, I'd say if, if we were to get a PIREP then we'd put in the
25 system. And it would get -- flight data is on mid, so it would be

1 disseminated out that way.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But I don't recall any specific examples of that.

4 Q. So, do you ever recall anytime that flight data came to you
5 and said I just got, received an urgent PIREP?

6 A. I don't recall any specific on that.

7 Q. Okay. So when there's weather going on, or there's impacts
8 in the sector, just volume or something like, does TMU ever come
9 down to the areas and discuss with you or any of the controllers
10 working in the sectors what's going on with the sectors?

11 The plan with the weather? The flow? What they're
12 planning to do in it? Or do they call on the line and discuss
13 that? Or is there anybody ever actually down in the area
14 discussing with you what's going on?

15 A. Yes, it just it depends. Sometimes there may be phone calls.
16 Sometimes we may go walk up to TMU. Sometimes they'll come down.
17 We just, it really just depends on the person who's working. I
18 like to walk up there and just talk to the TMU person face to
19 face, take a look and see what they're looking at.

20 You know, they have a lot more tools and big picture of
21 what's gone on the NAS versus just -- and then, maybe talk to
22 them. I'm like, well, this is what I'm seeing. This is what
23 you're seeing? So, we can work, work together to come up with a
24 good plan.

25 Q. When you go up to TMU, who do you normally talk to about what

1 is an overall plan for your area? Do you talk to the STMC? Do
2 you talk to the Atlanta position? The Charlotte position? Or the
3 enroute position?

4 A. Normally the STMC. But, however, it may be more pertinent to
5 talk to the actual person working, I would say Atlanta, because we
6 don't deal with Charlotte very often. But it could be enroute.
7 Whatever the situation dictates, then --

8 Usually the STMC, but however, you know. Sometimes it'll
9 just be a better plan to talk to who's actually working the
10 position. If I'm trying to gather information, they may have a,
11 you know, better picture of, hey, do we think the airport's going
12 to open up? Or do you think we're going to be able to go back to
13 dual streams? And they may make those coordinations.

14 Q. Okay, all right. Shifting gears just a little bit. You said
15 you were on the local safety council?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So how do you guys normally determine the topics that you're
18 going to discuss? And can you give me an example of like some of
19 the things that you brief, and how you brief the workforce on
20 those topics, those items?

21 A. So typically, we'll meet, and we'll talk about things that
22 are going on in the Center within our body control. They are in
23 the meeting, so we get an idea of what are kind of some issues
24 that have come up for the Center.

25 And we'll talk about those. What can we do to improve on

1 this? You know, can we put a briefing together that just helps
2 educate people, or you know, re-educate them on certain things.
3 Or if there's, you know, people on the local safety council, they
4 are controllers, and they may bring up things that, you know,
5 they've talked about with their peers in the areas.

6 And hey, we'd love to, you know, get some more information on
7 this, or get some clarity on this. And so, they'll develop
8 briefings based on that. And then, members of local safety
9 council can go to the team training and give those briefings, or
10 they can brief supervisors. And then, the supervisors can brief
11 as well.

12 Q. So when you say briefing the supervisors, so the supervisors,
13 do you brief local safety council items, like as a pre-duty in the
14 area? Or is that in like a crew briefing or something like that?

15 A. More like a crew. Yes, team training, crew briefing.

16 Q. Okay, all right. So, the local safety council never has any,
17 like, they won't take the conference room for a day or two and
18 say, hey, we're doing briefings at this time, this time, this
19 time, and the same group stuff? They don't ever do a big, the
20 actual local safety council doing briefings to the workforce?

21 A. Not to my recollection.

22 MR. HANCOCK: Okay, all right. That's all I've got for now.
23 Thank you.

24 MR. SOPER: Thanks. Seth?

25 BY MR. MYERS:

1 Q. So just to kind of stay on that topic for a few minutes. How
2 often do you guys? How many members are on your LSC?

3 A. I'd say at least 15. Typically, there's one management and
4 one NATCA per area. We have seven areas. And I should add TMU,
5 as well. So at least 15, sometimes that's influx if people, you
6 know, resign and they're looking for a new member. But typically
7 around there. That's the quality control.

8 Q. Yes. So, and you said that QC normally sits in on those
9 meetings with you? Is that just a staff support specialist?
10 Or --

11 A. Sometime the QC manager, as well. It just depends on
12 schedules, and who is was available at the time. But usually
13 staff support specialists.

14 Q. How many? And how long have you been a member on that
15 committee?

16 A. I don't recall when, exactly when I became a member. It's
17 been a couple of years.

18 Q. Okay, that's good. So, in general, over your couple of
19 years, are you guys supposed to meet twice a month? Once a month?
20 What's your charter say for that?

21 A. Typically once a month.

22 Q. Okay. And over the last couple of years that you've been a
23 member, how many months out of the year do you get to do that? Is
24 it 12? Is it ten? Is it eight?

25 A. I would say, I don't recall how many meetings I've been

1 doing. It depends on when the meetings are scheduled. If they're
2 on my regular day off, which the last couple have been, it's just
3 a matter of can, do I have other stuff going on outside of here,
4 or can I come in on my time?

5 Q. Yes, not just you, in general. Like I'm talking like the LSC
6 at Atlanta. Does it --

7 A. Oh, they typically, I would say at least for the best year,
8 we've particularly met every month.

9 Q. Every month, they get you guys together. Okay. And, in
10 general, out of those 15 members, how many members are there at
11 those meetings, on average?

12 A. I would really just be speculating. I, I would say --

13 Q. Would you say 15?

14 A. I would say, we typically don't have every single member
15 there. I would say there's, I'd speculate around ten people.

16 Q. Okay. And then, so you have, that's your monthly meeting
17 that you meet for, and then you were saying that, like Louis had
18 said, you don't ever take the conference room and do the LSC
19 discussions as like a group? Your kind of technique here is to
20 brief the supervisors, and then they are the ones who give the the
21 safe discussions?

22 A. No, I think I may have misspoken or misconstrued. But
23 typically, they have a list of all the members local safety
24 council they keep at the watch desk. If a supervisor is doing
25 team training, then they can ask a member of local safety council

1 to come in and give those briefings.

2 In rare cases, we may brief a supervisor, so, because they
3 may not be able to line up. And then, we may have to brief them
4 so they can at least pass that briefing on. But typically, it's
5 the local safety council will brief the in-team training, brief
6 those presentations that they put out.

7 Q. Awesome. Do you guys have, like does your LSC help out with
8 any like system service reviews, or traffic manager reviews? Or
9 do you know how that process works here?

10 A. Yes. So typically, they'll ask one, I believe they'll ask
11 one NATCA member of the safety council and one management member
12 to review them.

13 Q. To review or to actually work on the --

14 A. Review, contribute. The Quality Control kind of drives that
15 process. And then, they'll ask for our input/recommendations.

16 Q. Have you been on one of those?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And how long do you guys spend doing those? Like just walk
19 me through. Was it necessary TMR? And walk me through. How long
20 it took you guys to kind of do that?

21 A. Typically, they're SSRs. It depends on the particular event.
22 Some of them take longer to review all the information. Some of
23 them are a little bit more straightforward. So you know, it can
24 be several hours of reading, and back and forth discussion. Or it
25 can be, you know, maybe an hour or so of just reading through

1 everything and say, I think this was pretty straightforward, this
2 is what happened. You know, it's good to go. Or it could be you
3 know, well let's -- why did this happen? Let's dive into this a
4 little bit. And can we get some more information? It's just that
5 the process depends on each one.

6 Q. Yes, I totally understand that. As far as like feedback
7 mechanisms, getting those SSRs, TMRs, back to the workforce, how
8 do you guys do that here?

9 A. Typically, we'll send them our recommendations to the Quality
10 Control, and they submitted to the ATM. I'm not sure how they
11 come back after that.

12 Q. You guys know that, like, they don't go into like a CAP, like
13 a Corrective Action Plan, or anything like that? You just send
14 your recommendations, those to the QC?

15 A. So the Corrective Action Plans can be developed from SSRs.
16 But not every time. It just depends on, you know, what the
17 findings are. So there's been times where we've had to develop
18 Corrective Action Plans. But it just, those recommendations, you
19 know, come as they add each individual one.

20 Q. Yes. So, I'm specifically trying to ask, like when you get
21 to that, so your collaborative team that does that SSR or that
22 TMR, get to your issues that you've identified and your
23 recommendations, you send that to the QC office. You don't really
24 know --

25 At that point, you guys are done with that? It goes to the

1 QC manager? Or do you know where that goes from there to figure
2 out? Because you guys have validated those issues through that
3 process. You don't know where it goes after that, or what comes
4 out of that?

5 A. I'm not 100 percent sure on the process. I know, I've had
6 discussions about recommendations for things we could do in a
7 Corrective Action Plan. But the specifics of how that's 100
8 percent implemented I think that's a collaboration for -- the
9 Quality Control handles that. But I'm not 100 percent sure.

10 Q. Okay. Just switching gears away from the LSC again. I don't
11 mean to just piggyback on what these guys were talking about. You
12 were talking about you were at the OMIC desk, and you've, you
13 know, that you worked there when TMU was closed. Are you familiar
14 with a position called the weather coordinator?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And you've obviously, you know, you assume that when you're
17 at the OMIC desk if TMU is closed?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Do you remember any specific training that you got on that?
20 When you were trained on the OMIC desk? And what that might have
21 been? I know that was a while ago, probably. But --

22 A. I don't remember a specific training. I recall getting
23 training from CWSU manager at some point in time. I don't
24 remember exactly the specifics. I remember the specifics of what
25 to do during a weather event if you know, there's a tornado or

1 something, and were to access all that. But the specifics of the
2 weather coordinator position, I don't recall exactly what all that
3 training was.

4 Q. Okay. During the day when you're like an OS down there, have
5 you ever heard that term thrown around, our weather coordinator,
6 or have you seen it open in TMU? Or when you go up there to talk
7 about swaps or reroutes, or anybody, is it usually just the STMC
8 sitting up there? Atlanta, Charlotte and enroute, like, you know,
9 is there ever a weather coordinator actually is --

10 A. I think I may have misunderstood your previous question. I
11 bet you're talking about the CWSU, not the TMU weather
12 coordinator.

13 Q. Yes, I'm talking about the TMU weather coordinator.

14 A. Okay. I don't recall any training on the TMU whether
15 coordinator. I may have gotten it, but I do not recall any of
16 that.

17 Q. Okay. But yes, it's position in TMU.

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. And I was just, you know, as an OS, I know you go with the
20 STMC a lot, you deal with Atlanta, you know, Charlotte's up there
21 in our group. Is there any? Do you ever remember hearing Atlanta
22 working with with a somebody that's a standalone weather
23 coordinator?

24 A. I don't recall.

25 Q. PIREPs or spearheading any of the UAs, or weather reroutes,

1 or anything like that?

2 A. I don't recall any, anytime ever working with a specific
3 weather coordinator. I may, I may have, but I don't remember, you
4 know. It may have just been, oh, go talk to this person. They
5 may have been assigned that, but. And I just didn't realize it.
6 But I don't recall any specifics on that.

7 MR. HANCOCK: Awesome. Thanks, Scott.

8 MR. SOPER: Brian?

9 MR. SWAIN: Yes.

10 BY MR. SWAIN:

11 Q. Some of my stuff kind of touches on what you've already had.
12 So going back, you mentioned you did not file an ATSAP? So, can
13 you talk to me about, what is, when is an ATSAP typically required
14 for supervisors if something happens to, during a controller's
15 actual, an event occurs to controller's time?

16 A. We're not required to file a ATSAP on anything.

17 Q. Okay, all right. Are there times where you might actually do
18 a ATSAP just to help the process to supply extra information as
19 far as you know, maybe what what you learned from the event or
20 maybe some recommendations that you feel could have helped out
21 with if there was an event?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. Are there other other mechanisms other than an ATSAP
24 where you can maybe file? We have things called like FCRs that
25 are not necessarily rise to the level of like ASAPs. But that

1 information, also highlights deficiencies, tools that we might
2 need. You know, it's kind of a perspective from that day, events
3 that might have happened.

4 A. Not to my knowledge.

5 Q. Let's see, I circled back on that one. That day, you talk
6 about the hurricane coming up. So, meteorology in general,
7 typically, is there any kind of recurrent training that involves
8 weather training in general? So specifically, do you take a like
9 a 30-minute meteorology training session during recurrent?
10 Anything like that supervisor or controllers?

11 A. I don't recall specifically when these trainings occurred, or
12 exactly. But typically, there's an electronic learning course,
13 whether it be through what they call our computer-based
14 instruction, or the ELMs on summer and winter weather.

15 That'll kind of give some explanations of what to expect,
16 which is kind of the changes in the air densities and things like.
17 Our recurrent training, some of those modules may cover weather,
18 different forms of weather.

19 I know recently, we had one on icing and emergencies. In our
20 refresher training there may be, I don't recall what's been in
21 those. But there may be some weather scenarios in that as well.

22 Q. Yes, very similar. And we do that, just like you noted,
23 seasonally, we usually, during each, each quarter, get specific
24 weather for that timeframe, winter, or spring, or summer events,
25 as you know, because the weather is different from season to

1 season.

2 So with that being said, specifically with the hurricane
3 pushing up that day, would you say that most of the controllers
4 would recognize, or that, or feel like they need to be very ready
5 to be reactive, more so than proactive, because of the way the
6 weather was probably going to build and not be a 100 percent
7 forecast as far as the turbulence where those areas may be?

8 A. Can you repeat?

9 Q. Yes, I know.

10 A. I just want to make sure I answer correctly.

11 Q. The weather was going to be unpredictable that day. And I
12 think we would all agree with that with a tornado pushing up from
13 the south. So, not necessarily knowing where, toward turbulence
14 would be, and just having your general SIGMETS and forecasted
15 areas, it would be a reactive nature to any PIREPs or any reports
16 of turbulence that day?

17 A. I would, I would agree.

18 Q. Yes, okay. Once you get a report of turbulence, maybe from
19 the controller on duty, your d-side, what would you do with that
20 as a supervisor?

21 A. It depends on the level of the turbulence. That an
22 occasional light chop, just that's normal.

23 Q. That's the standard?

24 A. Yes, moderate to, you know, severe, that's, that's a whole
25 different, you know, whole different equation.

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1 Q. Right. So when you get that, would it be something that you
2 would go to the TMU? Or would you pass that information along so
3 they could help start making plans as far as what their actions or
4 recommendations may be looking at the weather and the bigger
5 picture?

6 A. It just depends on where the aircraft was. What the bottom
7 would be through that corridor? If we had any additional reports?
8 If there's one particular altitude? Then we would just, you know,
9 disseminate that information out to the best, best we can. And
10 you know, work the aircraft around it.

11 Q. So, and then, kind of going back to that other question. I
12 know, talking about being proactive and reactive, would -- you
13 touched on, you had d-side. It was kind of, sounded like maybe
14 you were keeping kind of as a floater that day, recognizing it
15 might get busy? And you could punch him in where you need? Is
16 that kind of how that was working?

17 A. I had a -- well, I had a trainee that I could use as a d-side
18 at any point in time. So, it's when you have an R-side trainee,
19 they're certified on all the d-sides typically. So, if you need
20 help somewhere, you can always quickly move them into that
21 position.

22 And I don't recall if I had to d-side any other positions at
23 the time. Like, I can remember the training team being at the
24 sector next to the affected sector. And a training team that was
25 coming into the, the other one.

1 But as it started to get busy, this one, I kind of had to
2 pull the plug on. Send the other controller to go do ELMS. And
3 as I was getting busy, I didn't want to bring up the training
4 team. I had him available. So, plugged him in right there.

5 MR. SWAIN: And then, let's see. I think that's it for me
6 right now.

7 MR. SOPER: Thanks. And Mike?

8 MR. BROWN: Good morning, again.

9 MR. GAUCHER: Good morning again.

10 BY MR. BROWN:

11 Q. So when did you make the call to put the d-side in? Like
12 walk me through. Because you guys throw d-sides in and out, all
13 the time. Like, what was the thought process? You were like, oh,
14 I should probably get him some help?

15 A. I just, I could hear him talking more. It just, you know,
16 the complexity. Like, I moved back and forth several times
17 between -- I don't know if guys walked out down to the control and
18 saw the setup?

19 But East departures all the way against the the wall. And
20 that's where they were coming through, through Area 4, or from
21 Area 4. So, I was back and forth talking to him, and to Area 4
22 and to Sector 49.

23 At some point in time, I can just, I remember him just, it
24 was just, it got more complex. I think he may have already
25 switched Delta 175. I don't recall exactly when I put him in.

1 But I remember when the training team got back, you're going right
2 here. I don't know if those were my exact words, but.

3 And it was just, I could tell the complexity was increasing.
4 I don't recall exactly if there were -- what he was saying. You
5 could see, it was starting to get a little bit busier. And from
6 reviewing the replays, about that time, it would seem like it was
7 you know, fairly slow, moderate. And then, all of a sudden, it
8 really started to ramp up. And somewhere around that time is, you
9 know, about the time I put the d-side in.

10 Q. Okay. How do you typically monitor the operation? Like when
11 you said, hey, I got over them East, I got to go over the other
12 area. So, you're physically walking away from, to go coordinate
13 with the adjacent areas, right?

14 A Right. So, that's Area 4 and Area 3 are right across from
15 each other.

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. So, calling over there just seems a little. And then, so I
18 walked over there, because I could see what's on their scope.
19 Gets an idea of like, can they actually accomplish this? Are we
20 asking too much.

21 But typically monitoring the area, you know, we'll walk
22 around with, you know. Depending on what's going on, maybe walk
23 around behind different sectors. You may sit there. We have a
24 headset. I was supposed to be wearing the headset. I was at some
25 point time during the shift. I take it off while I was doing some

1 of this talking, coordinating. I don't recall which position I
2 was monitoring. But we do listen in to what's going on to see if
3 they're

4 Q. So the cordless headsets? Is that right?

5 A. The cordless headsets, yes. But typically, you know. And if
6 there's no weather, no PIREPs that need to be, we don't typically
7 have to wear the headset. That's, you know, by choice then. So,
8 we'll just you know, monitor the area, watch.

9 You know, you can their ESDs. See how, how that's building,
10 how much traffic's there. And just get an idea of generally
11 what's, you know, how people are acting. You can get an idea of
12 just, you know, how busy they're getting, or to get an idea of
13 what's going on. You know, just by looking, using your eyes, look
14 at their scopes.

15 Q. Hey, and when you go over in the other area, to Area 3,
16 you're talking to the sup. there?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So it's all right conversation. Hey, this what I've got?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. There's so many planes?

21 A. Well --

22 Q. You route them here, we'll take these?

23 A. Yes, we've got these monitored, we may be looking.

24 MR. SOPER: You're stepping over each other. Let Mike finish
25 the question.

1 MR. GAUCHER: My apologies.

2 MR. BROWN: No, it's okay.

3 BY MR. BROWN:

4 Q. So, but you're coordinating face-to-face?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. So back to, circle back to the LSC thing. Do you know
7 when the last time you went to an LSC?

8 A. I don't recall.

9 Q. Okay. Has it been a month? Two months?

10 A. It's been at least two months. I know they, they moved them
11 from the meetings typically from Thursdays to Mondays, which is my
12 regular day off. And so, and I don't recall the last one I've
13 been to.

14 Q. And you would come in on credit or something if you did
15 attend those?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. For you as a supervisor, is there anything that you,
18 look back on that day, you're saying like, I really wish I would
19 have had this? I really wish I would have done this. Whether
20 it's situational awareness. Whether it's staffing, equipment.

21 Is there anything that you see? Is it TMU handling these
22 reroutes? Is it hey, you know, because I know A80 shut the gate
23 on you with, I think there was three or four more arrivals behind
24 it they weren't going to take. Is there anything that you -- I
25 don't want to say did different? But like, hey, I wish we would

1 have done that sooner. I wish this would have happened instead?

2 A. That's a good question. You know, looking back on the event,
3 you know, I wish that, I wish I had assigned the d-side sooner.
4 You know, I would have rather had him there before it got busier.
5 And I don't necessarily know if I don't know if I do anything
6 different besides put the d-side in earlier. I don't know how
7 that would have changed things. But you know, at least it'd be
8 something different. And that might give a different result.

9 MR. BROWN: Okay. That's all I've got, Brian. Thanks,
10 Scott.

11 MR. SOPER: Thanks. All right, now my questions will bounce
12 around a little bit because you know, I've got some, like add-ons
13 from different ones.

14 BY MR. SOPER:

15 Q. So first of all, do you attend as a sup. here, do you guys
16 have any regular or recurrent management meetings? Whether it's
17 just the sups.? Or whether it's OS and OMs? Or whether it's the
18 management team, like the XO, or the ATM, or the QC manager, or
19 somebody gets together with the sups.? Do you guys have anything
20 regular like that?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And what does that look like? What? Like, give me an
23 example.

24 A. Typically, once a year, we'll have like a general supervisor
25 meeting. They'll bring us either up to a conference room or

1 possibly offsite. And we'll meet as supervisors, and they may
2 bring in people from different offices. And go over just
3 different factors that are, or facets of the job, things that we
4 need to do. Maybe some things that, you know, we may not have as
5 much in-depth knowledge on.

6 And they'll let us Departments briefed us a little bit.
7 Whether it be the -- I think one time they brought in the medical
8 office, and the Flight Surgeon talked about, you know, some of the
9 things that can affect how they do their job and reporting-wise.
10 They've had us talk to the Labor Department about CA1, CA7s,
11 things like that.

12 So, they'll brief on, you know, just things that don't come
13 up every day. And then, we'll just talk about some just general,
14 hey, what's going on at the facility? How do we want to, you
15 know, handle some of, the you know, some the issues that
16 management implies that we need to address.

17 Q. Okay. And you say that's, that's more of an annual meeting?

18 A. That is annual to semi-annual.

19 Q. Okay. And is there any other type of periodic meetings that
20 occur maybe even at a lower level than maybe just the sups., or
21 anything like that?

22 A. We'll have periodic meetings with either just the individual
23 area or the pod supervisor meetings with our Operations Manager,
24 or Managers, depending on how they're split with the pod?

25 Q. What's the general content of those? What are those usually

1 surrounding, the information surrounding there?

2 A. We'll review, you know, just general stats of the area.
3 How's the, you know, how's the basic watch schedule working? Do
4 we have enough staffing? How are things, you know what can we
5 being doing differently?

6 Is one supervisor doing something that's, you know, affecting
7 another supervisor that we need to adjust, you know, staffing-
8 wise? You know, are you, is somebody changing a shift or doing
9 you know, doing something else? Or do we need to adjust our
10 shifts?

11 We'll talk about the trainees, their development. Just any
12 general changes in the facility, or changes in SOPs, or things
13 like that, that might come up throughout the year. How are we
14 going to just general operate, how we're going to do business, and
15 what we want to focus on moving forward.

16 Q. Okay. That's good lead into another question I have. So
17 staffing, you mentioned on the day of the event, you were staffed
18 well in the area. And that was good. You were able to accomplish
19 some other training and stuff until there was, you know, kind of a
20 shift in operation there.

21 You had to use people operationally. But how is the staffing
22 overall from your perspective? How is it affecting you? You're
23 just Area 3, correct? I mean, that's where you work, that's your
24 deal?

25 A. I'm also rated Area 4. That's Area 3, 4, 5. So --

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. -- I can work the watch supervisor in Area 4.

3 Q. Okay. So, you guys bounce back and forth a little bit?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You do both, okay, good. How was your staffing in Area 3,
6 and 4? Because that's what you can speak to the best.

7 A. I would say Area 3 on a daily if, if we're staffed fully,
8 it's good.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Typically, Area 3 has five positions, radar positions that we
11 can open. Our staffing numbers are usually 10 people per shift
12 with a little bit of overlap. So if everybody's available in
13 there that day, then we have, you know, the staffing to
14 accomplish, you know, staffing positions, and also possibly
15 accomplish some initial, you know, outside training, whether it's
16 ELMS or CPIs. If we have everything else done, you know, I mean,
17 possibly team trainings, things of that nature.

18 Q. Do you know how many trainings you got in there right now?

19 A. That's a good question. At least six.

20 Q. That's a lot from an area, I would think. Is that? So you,
21 were you -- you were not counting training trainees when you're
22 talking about the ten, right? Or were you talking about --

23 A. No, I was not counting trainees.

24 Q. And that's your CPCs that are available to work. So, are you
25 guys, are you guys able to accomplish training pretty well with

1 them? You know, like, keep in accordance with NTI and stuff like
2 that? I mean, you're to get their time --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- and everything, so that's going well. All right, good.
5 So, shift modes, just a tad again, your involvement with CAPS.
6 Okay? So, first of all, how do you as a supervisor, how do you
7 become aware of CAPS? If there's a CAP in the facility?

8 A. And I will be briefed by the QC Manager. We may also get
9 something in a memo put out. Before it would be Cedar (ph.) and
10 now we've move to Teams. So it puts it to Team to let us know.

11 Q. Do you have a responsibility, or is there an expectation from
12 you with regard to CAPs?

13 A. That we understand them and work to, you know, accomplish the
14 goals that are set out.

15 Q. Okay. So, I know right now, at least one. I know you have
16 an outstanding CAP for PIREP and weather dissemination, right?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So is there any emphasized focus that is placed upon the
19 workforce by the sups.? Like, since you have a CAP, are you
20 making an emphasized or a focused effort to increase PIREP
21 dissemination or solicitation? Or --

22 Well, first of all, let me ask you this. How do you brief
23 controllers coming in? Because they'll come in at different
24 times? Do you have any discussion with them normally, before they
25 take a position, or they do their sign-in and whatever briefing

1 items they have to do? Pre-duty weather brief? They come in, and
2 say, hey, sup., ready to work? Whatever? Yes. And you say, yes,
3 go here. I mean, or do you have any sort of dialogue with them,
4 normally?

5 A. Typically, they'll come in, they'll get their pre-duty
6 weather. They'll get there, pre-duty briefings. And then,
7 they'll ask me for a duty assignment. I may try to verify. Did
8 you get your weather?

9 Q. Did you check your Teams? Okay? If there's something out of
10 ordinary going on, I might say, hey, we got this going on. This
11 is outage, whatever that might be. And then give them their duty
12 assignment.

13 Q. Okay. And during that portion -- so, go back to where I was
14 a little bit with the CAPs. Do you ever take that as an
15 opportunity to emphasize things, since you have open CAPs, to
16 emphasize things like, hey, don't forget, you know, we got a CAP
17 going on right now?

18 Or just, hey, PIREPs, PIREPs, PIREPs? Weather, hey there's
19 weather in the area, you know. Make sure we're calling it. Make
20 sure, you know, whatever. I mean, do you generally use that as an
21 opportunity to emphasize those items with them at all?

22 A. I have taken that time to do that and pass it. Do it every
23 time? No. But I definitely, we have to get PIREPs, you know,
24 I'll remind them PIREPs. Recently I've taken to letting them
25 specifically what sectors need PIREPs, and which PIREPs are. And

1 that was in reference to the CAP.

2 Just to be more specific, so they know. You know, not to
3 say, hey, we got to get PIREPs. We need PIREPs. We need PIREPs
4 at this position for these things. And reminders to, you know,
5 reminders to call weather. Reminders to just any, anything that
6 might come up as, you know.

7 Quality Control may come up with things that say, hey,
8 we need to work on this. We try to have those reminders in.

9 Q. Good.

10 A. You know, is it 100 percent of the time? Absolutely not
11 because we're not perfect. But we do our best to try to
12 continuously bring those things up, so it seeps into people's
13 minds.

14 Q. So, for you, with regard to PIREP and weather dissemination,
15 you've been here a long time. So, that's good. You're a good
16 person to ask this question. So, knowing that you're in a CAP for
17 PIREP and weather dissemination, let's face it, that's been a,
18 that's not an Atlanta problem.

19 That's a NAS wide problem, right? We know this. It's been
20 talked about a lot over the, over, especially over the last
21 several years it's been a focal point. What? What do you see as
22 the biggest challenge that you know, with regard to PIREP and
23 weather dissemination really being good?

24 What? Do you identify with anything in your own area or
25 experience that's like, well, you know what? This is one of the

1 reasons this is so challenging for us, or why we're not hitting
2 the mark.

3 A. I would say, in my opinion, it goes back to training and
4 understanding. I think people still tend to disseminate PIREPs
5 more than they realize. I think before it was a requirement to go
6 through and put them into ERIDS and make sure that we're just
7 listening to them every hour.

8 I think people were, they asked pods about the riser, they
9 get a pilot report, and they'll let pilots know. I think that the
10 weather report, PIREPs, have consistently been pretty good. You
11 know, I can remember when I was training, that was one of the
12 things I struggled on, you know, making sure I was disseminating
13 that.

14 And I can recall my trainers telling me, you got to let the
15 pilots know. But putting those in, you know, 50, or, you know,
16 ten to 15 years ago, putting those all in ERIDS, it wasn't even an
17 option then. I think we had to do paper forms, right back then.
18 Now, it's very easy to put it in.

19 But some of the additional PIREPs, the ceiling visibility,
20 you may have areas that, for instance, Area 4 during the day, they
21 have one airport. They were work all the way to the ground.
22 Getting ceiling visibility, we pilot it from there. You may get
23 one or two flights a day.

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. You know? So it's out of practice, or they, you know, may go

1 months before you even see that aircraft just out of the rotation,
2 you're in. And so, it's something that -- well, now they don't do
3 it very often.

4 And we've had to get back into that, you know, training
5 people to make sure you're asking for what PIREPs we need, when we
6 need them, and getting that focus in there. And I think as we've
7 transitioned over the past a couple of years, I think the younger
8 controllers that are more used to, you know, this bush are a lot,
9 they're a lot better at just getting the PIREPs and putting them
10 in because they hadn't developed these techniques over ten or 15
11 years where they weren't entering PIREPs in, and it wasn't a
12 focus.

13 Q. Right. Okay, shift modes again. But in, along same vein,
14 the weather tools, and programs like stuff that you have available
15 to you there. What do you find yourself utilizing a lot or
16 wishing you had either one with regard to weather-related tools,
17 predictive tools, displays, access to programs? What do you find
18 yourself using a lot in the course of your work through a day when
19 you have weather issues? And is there anything that you identify
20 with, wishing you had access to?

21 A. I don't know what I would wish I had access to. I don't have
22 really the knowledge of --

23 Q. Don't know what you don't know?

24 A. Yes, I don't know what the I don't know what I don't know. I
25 would say what we use the most is what's on the scope. What do we

1 see? How is it, you know, directly affecting the aircraft?

2 What's in their surrounding areas?

3 What's, you know, what's coming? How fast is it moving?

4 You know? We may call TMU, thinking of the idea of, hey, what's

5 you know? They work directly with the Center weather person. So,

6 we may talk to them about hey, what's? How fast is this moving?

7 Do we think the airport's getting shut down?

8 You know, I think it's just a combination of gathering

9 information from TMU, and what they're, you know, big like picture

10 for the weather for the NAS is, versus what our small picture for

11 the area is. And how that affects us.

12 I mean, we have numerous screens, we can see large swaths of

13 weather and where they are. But knowing dynamically like, okay,

14 where really are the holes? What can people fly through? And

15 what do people want to go around? And that's, that can change.

16 Q. You bring up something really good right there. And that's,

17 I'm glad you said it that way. So when it comes to holes, and an

18 understanding of what this weather is doing, how rapidly it's

19 going to develop, or, you know, go away, either one, dissipate, do

20 you ever contact the CWSU at all for tactical support with regard

21 to weather?

22 Or is your contact usually the TMU because, you know, they're

23 in contact with the CWSU, with regard to that? So, maybe you're

24 looking at stuff, and you're like, hey, is this going to keep

25 developing? Or are -- what are we looking at here?

1 Or is this going to, you know? Do you ever reach out to them
2 at all like that?

3 A So typically, that's TMU.

4 MR. SOPER: Typically it's TMU, okay. All right, good. All
5 right, that's all I have for right now. Louis?

6 MR. HANCOCK: I believe nothing else. We've covered
7 everything.

8 MR. SOPER: Okay. Seth?

9 MR. MYERS: I have just one question. Like, you have great
10 answers by the way. And you are a great candidate for this
11 because you've been here a long time, so you've seen it. So, you
12 know, we've talked about CAPs. We've talked about some issues,
13 you know.

14 And as we know, throughout the NAS facilities, they have a
15 real hard time where the rubber meets the road to get the change
16 and to control the workforce level. And you see, a lot of
17 facilities have problems with that feedback loop.

18 And you talked about it here where, you know, CAPs, and
19 coming out, and issues from SSRs and TMRs. What do you say that
20 the biggest vehicle is here for that feedback? Is it through
21 ELMS? Is it through memos? Is it through MBIs? Is it through
22 the LSC? Face-to-face discussions? What is the main driver here
23 at Atlanta?

24 A. Current? I don't know necessarily what the main driver is.
25 I mean, they use all these methods. In my opinion, the best

1 driver is just collaboration. You know, if we can, if we can just
2 get it out to the workforce. If we can get it out through NATCA,
3 as well.

4 And they can, the supervisors are giving a message. And
5 NATCA and the local safety council, you know, give a message.
6 That's coming, you know, everybody's giving the same message
7 because we're all doing the same job. That's, you know, that's
8 what works the best.

9 Q. Do you? How are you guys effective at doing that here? Or
10 is that an area where -- and how effective are you here? It
11 sounds like you think the LSC is a great conduit to give that
12 feedback, and those outcomes, and those issues? How? What
13 percentage or how good do you think you do that here, as a
14 facility?

15 A. I can't speculate on a percentage. I mean, I think there's
16 400, something controllers or more here.

17 Q. It's a lot easier on a ten-person tower.

18 A. Yes. And you know, you know, getting the message out, and
19 who takes the message it's, that's all speculative. I think the
20 best thing we can do is just try to keep pushing our message.

21 MR. MYERS: Awesome. Thanks, Scott. I don't have anything
22 else.

23 MR. SOPER: Brian, anything?

24 MR. SWAIN: I don't have anything.

25 MR. SOPER: Mike, do you have anything?

1 MR. BROWN: No, thank you.

2 MR. SOPER: All right, awesome.

3 BY MR. SOPER:

4 Q. And so, the terminology for that unified messaging, that's,
5 that's a big deal.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q That's an important thing. I would agree with that 100
8 percent. If you can get to a strong, unified messaging between
9 management and bargaining unit, you'd be surprised what you can
10 accomplish. So that's good.

11 All right, I don't have any additional. Except, I would
12 like to ask, just to wrap this up. When you look back on this
13 now, hindsight is always 20/20. It's always easier to look back
14 on the bet, and pick out things that may have been like, you know,
15 if this would have been different, if we would have done that, or,
16 or whatever.

17 And similar to what he asked, but just in general, do you see
18 anything here that you identify with as failures, successes, and
19 areas of lessons learned? You know, so, you know, do you see
20 anything that was a failure here? Whether it's system, equipment,
21 procedure, something, whatever?

22 And do you see any successes that occurred through this?
23 Whether it's through recovery, or whether it's through whatever?
24 And is there any lessons learned on the backside of this? That
25 you're, like, you know, I've kind of changed the way I think about

1 this? Or I'm going to be keeping my eye on this? Any of those?

2 A. Lessons learned? I mean, if we all learned a lesson from
3 this, that's, you know, it's kind of there's, there's always a
4 lesson to learn. And I think, knowing that you really, you can't
5 predict what's going to happen next. Whether it's with mother
6 nature or something mechanical, you never know what's going to
7 happen.

8 And to just, you know, we have to be prepared for that. And
9 taking those, all the factors and being prepared ahead of time
10 instead of just in time. And I think that's a, that's really the
11 biggest takeaway.

12 Q. All right. Do you identify with any failures or successes
13 here? And not that you have to have one, I just meant do you,
14 does something stand out to you as either or both?

15 A. I don't know exactly. Do you mean, I guess --

16 Q. So, I mean, okay --

17 A. So, I've got to be exact about what you're looking for before
18 I just --

19 Q. Okay, all right. No problem, and don't, and I don't want you
20 to get too hung up on it. But sometimes things stand out to
21 somebody is they look at an event afterwards, and you've had time
22 to go through stuff and you look at stuff.

23 And you go, well, you know what? Hey, I know this happened,
24 but we did a really good job with recovery here. Like this, this,
25 I was really impressed with the way this controller handled this,

1 or the way this communication happened, or coordination was such
2 and such.

3 Or the alternate, right? Which was, you know, this was a
4 fail, here. Whether it's equipment fail, procedure fail, that's
5 something we should probably take a look at. That's something we
6 should probably at least, you know, review and see if there's a
7 way to do that makes it better.

8 And if you don't have any of these, that's perfectly okay.
9 You know that's just, sometimes some stands out in somebody's
10 mind. I like them to share because it helps us understand stuff.
11 Because you're the expert here, not us.

12 A. So, I would say, make sure everybody understands what the
13 calm weather requirements are, whether it's you know, along the
14 route of fly, in your area, you know, you're working or if it's
15 adjacent. And what's pertinent and what's not. And just make
16 sure we're, everyone understands that, hey, we need to be
17 disseminating all this information so the pods can make the best
18 decision.

19 And successes, I mean, I feel like we did do a pretty good
20 job recovering. We had the door got shut quick. We had multiple,
21 you know, streams. Went to holding and kept everybody safe in
22 that holding pattern. And then, eventually had to run guys
23 through East departure some. And you know, did some complex, I
24 guess, routing around weather in order to get these guys around
25 where that turbulence was.

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1 Q. Okay, very good. Do you have questions for us?

2 A. No.

3 MR. SOPER: All right. I'm going to go ahead and wrap up the
4 recording now at the actual time, at 10:04.

5 (Whereupon, at 10:04 a.m. EDT, 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: DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT
NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA ON
AUGUST 29, 2023
Interview of Scott Gaucher

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA428

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: September 7, 2023

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.



Margaret C. Boardman
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT *

NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: DCA23LA428

ON AUGUST 29, 2023 *

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Interview of: CHUCK LEVISTER, Quality Control Manager
Atlanta Air Route Traffic Control Center

Atlanta, Georgia

Thursday,
September 7, 2023

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APPEARANCES:

BRIAN SOPER, Investigator-In-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL BROWN, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LOUIS HANCOCK, ATC Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

SETH MYERS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

BRIAN SWAIN, Senior Air Traffic Manager
Delta Air Lines

MARK TOMICICH, Representative
(On behalf of Chuck Levister)

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:30 p.m. EDT)

1
2
3 MR. SOPER: Test one, two. All right. Name is Brian Soper,
4 air traffic investigator with the NTSB, and I have here with us
5 today Mr. Louis Hancock out of Jacksonville TRACON representing
6 the FAA on our group. We have Mr. Seth Myers out of Boston Center
7 representing NATCA on our group, Mr. Brian Swain representing
8 Delta Air Lines on the group, and Mike Brown from our team back at
9 headquarters, air traffic investigator there. And you have with
10 you today your representative?

11 MR. TOMICICH: Mark Tomicich.

12 MR. SOPER: Thank you, Mark. And can you state your name for
13 the record, sir?

14 MR. LEVISTER: Chuck Levister.

15 MR. SOPER: Thank you. All right. As I mentioned earlier,
16 the NTSB is an independent federal agency charged by Congress to
17 investigate civil aviation accidents and incidents of a serious
18 nature, find the probable cause, and hopefully develop safety
19 recommendations to prevent reoccurrence. We're not concerned with
20 blame or who's at fault. We're interested in piecing together all
21 the facts of the event as it exists. We're not affiliated with
22 the DOT or FAA in any way. We're independent by design, and all
23 of our power's in our recommendations. We don't make rules; we
24 don't enforce rules.

25 So, as we go through this, we just ask you to answer honestly

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1 and forthright. If you don't know something, it's okay to say you
2 don't know. If you don't remember, it's okay to say you don't
3 recall. But we do ask that you do your very best to come up with
4 what you can.

5 INTERVIEW OF CHUCK LEVISTER

6 BY MR. SOPER:

7 Q. So, just to refresh my memory, in some of the other things we
8 had here -- oh, I'm looking at the wrong one. All right. How old
9 were you on the day of this incident?

10 A. Fifty-six.

11 Q. Okay, that's right. And you are the QC manager here. I
12 can't remember, last year, were you -- or, I mean, several months
13 ago. You are the actual --

14 A. Now, I'm actually the QC manager.

15 Q. Now, you are.

16 A. Last time, I think, was December. I --

17 Q. You had just got handed it, or something, almost, right?

18 A. I was acting, because the other person had left, and I got a
19 temporary position on January 1, which has since been made
20 permanent.

21 Q. Excellent. That's good news. Glad to hear that. All right.
22 And your background, did you have military or pre-FAA work
23 experience air traffic-wise?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Yes, all right, so, and I have the background on the other

1 one. I don't need to make you relive that. You're not required
2 to have medical. Health screening. Don't need any of the 72-
3 hour. Apologize. Just going through and making sure I capture
4 everything as it was. So, did you -- in the process of either the
5 SSR or after-event stuff, I assume you've had an opportunity to
6 review the event --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- that we're talking about here. Okay, good. And do you
9 remember when the last time you reviewed that was, probably?

10 A. So, I actually reviewed it the night of.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I was at the hospital with my granddaughter, and I reviewed
13 it in the hospital room. But I don't -- I reviewed it when I got
14 back to work this week. Monday or Tuesday.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Well, Tuesday. Monday was a holiday.

17 Q. All right. All right. So, let me just, I'll just skip right
18 over to this, then. So, how were you made aware of the event?

19 A. So, initially, I was aware of the event because ZTL has a
20 thing, slack, management slack, it went out on management slack.
21 Yeah, so, I saw it on slack. I don't remember if I called the
22 watch desk or the watch desk called me and started asking me some
23 questions, and that's why I reviewed the event where I was at.
24 Then, I would start answering questions. My team member,
25 Steven Chandler, actually ended up coming back to work and

1 reviewing the ERAM, and playback, and whatnot.

2 Q. Is he a support specialist here?

3 A. He's a support specialist, yes. Sorry.

4 Q. All right. And, okay, so did you end up -- were you part of
5 the SSR, or was that your support manager and --

6 A. That was Torrence.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Are we talking the SRT or the SSR?

9 Q. The SSR. If I said SRT, I apologize.

10 A. No, you said -- no, I am part of the SSR.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. It's ongoing. We're working it out.

13 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. So, how long again were you filling
14 the QC manager role as temporary, or fill-in, or detail, or acting
15 before you became --

16 A. I don't remember exactly how long it was.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Approximately five or six months, I was acting.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I've been permanent for probably two or three months.

21 Q. All right.

22 A. It's only been eight months, I guess.

23 MR. SOPER: Okay. All right. I'm actually going to hold off
24 on questioning for now, and I'm going to pass it along right off
25 the bat. So, Mike?

1 MR. BROWN: Thanks.

2 BY MR. BROWN:

3 Q. So, before you were QC, your temp?

4 A. Operations manager.

5 Q. You were what in this building? Okay. Reference to CAP, for
6 the -- it's current one that's old, and the weather directive
7 compliance safety monitoring watch list?

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. Can you explain your role? Did you help develop that? Did
10 you implement it? I know this is before. Just familiarize me
11 with how this came about.

12 A. How the CAP came about, or my role is helping --

13 Q. Your role in this CAP.

14 A. Okay. So, yeah, I kind of spearheaded the team, like
15 (indiscernible).

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. My support specialists, Steven Chandler, Christopher Jackson,
18 and Brian Tomkinson, we all kind of worked on it together. And we
19 identified a need for the corrective action plan, and we tried to
20 -- so, we have a corrective action plan from a previous time that
21 you guys were here that we devised, and I have a bunch of things
22 in there, and a lot of it has been accomplished, but there are a
23 couple of things in there that we are still working on, right?
24 So, we tried to devise a CAP that would be effective, get the job
25 done, and have measurable milestones that we can measure and see

1 how effective they are for going back and auditing them. So, we
2 developed the CAP; came up with a few things that we felt like
3 would help move the needle. And we're just -- it's been
4 implemented for about a month, and we're starting to get briefings
5 and stuff like that put together. One of the major things in this
6 particular corrective action plan was going to be the all-hands
7 meeting with the ATM and the union president to speak about
8 safety.

9 Q. Okay. So, you said your guys -- you're going to audit it.
10 Is that --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. -- OSAs, sup feedback, or OM feedback?

13 A. So, yes, we audit it in several different ways, actually.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. We do the OSAs, right? Which we get. Our supervisors do
16 OSAs every month, and we alternate the direct versus indirect odd
17 months, or direct monitors even months, or indirect monitors. My
18 MPA, Julie, will send them a period of time for the end review and
19 to rate. Also, we actually physically go to the floor and
20 monitor, spot-check people to see if they're complying. We also
21 do some indirect monitoring. We have a couple of people who are
22 air traffic specialists who are incapacitated, so we teach them
23 how to write an OSA and what to look for, and we send them to the
24 floor that was monitored, that type of thing. And then, we go
25 back and go with data that we have, a daily spreader that was

1 actually developed because of the last time you all were here,
2 that we go and audit and ensure that people are complying with
3 what they're supposed to do, i.e., getting PIREPs, disseminating
4 HIWAS products, that type of thing.

5 Q. Okay. I put down a lot more. There was one more question I
6 had on this. Your group, though -- so, the CAP is in place now.
7 QC in this building, you're in CEDAR and compiling these CAPS,
8 correct?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. Okay. Because I see there's the target completion dates.
11 You know, there's different steps, like you said. There's
12 milestones, and you put that in there. So, the first one, though,
13 is -- what was it? October 31 is the completion date. That's
14 just the CIC refresher and all that stuff, huh?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Is that something that, it's never been done in this building
17 before, and because of this, it's starting now, or --

18 A. No, it's been done before.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But we wanted to ensure that we had a place in the seminars
21 and refresher, plus we have things that we feel like that we need
22 to brief. You know, the CICs and the OSs that are on the
23 frontline where the rubber meets the road. We want to make sure
24 they were doing a good job of messaging to everyone so they can be
25 all on the same page when it comes to safety.

1 MR. BROWN: Okay. I'm all set.

2 MR. SOPER: Thanks. Brian?

3 MR. SWAIN: Yeah, I've just got one for right now.

4 BY MR. SWAIN:

5 Q. So, from a quality control perspective, I'm just curious,
6 like with this event and even just weather events in general, do
7 you go back, and do an internal review, and like have self-
8 critique? You know, as far as the controllers, go back and rate,
9 you know, what went well, what went wrong, and then share that in
10 any form or fashion back as like lessons learned?

11 A. We do that via the SSR process.

12 MR. SWAIN: Okay. That's all I have for right now.

13 MR. SOPER: Thanks. Seth?

14 BY MR. MYERS:

15 Q. As long as you're on that, Chuck, could you talk me through
16 the SSR process here: how one's generated, what you guys do to do
17 it, how many manhours go into it, just some general stuff on that?

18 A. You know, each SSR is different, it's own beast, but many
19 manhours go into it. So, typically, we start with the FALCON of
20 the scenario. If we're going to do an SSR, we'll go ahead and
21 pull the ERAM replay, also; and we'll probably build a SATORI;
22 then we'll take a look at the ARTViewer report and see what the
23 staffing was, right? And then, after we've done all of that, and
24 we try and get them down in a transcript and move on through all
25 of the different items I just mentioned, then we'll start

1 interviews. We'll go with questions for the controllers and the
2 supervisors involved. And then, we will bring them up and have --
3 and just a fact-finding, no names are associated with it. Ask
4 them about the scenario and what they're thinking, and what led up
5 to whatever incident or thing that we're reviewing.

6 Then, we will go through the orders and see what applicable
7 orders are applied. And put that all in, then we get a weather
8 report from the Weather Bureau, or what the weather was, and all
9 that stuff. So, we will pile all of that into a document and load
10 it onto CEDAR that has like the weather displays, what AIRMETS
11 were available, what SIGMETS were available, you know, what was
12 the ARTViewer or what was the staffing available, what were people
13 doing when this was happening. And ultimately, that results in
14 what we call QC findings, and we document what our findings were
15 and any recommendations that we have. And perhaps, if we find
16 something systemic, we'll do a SYSIR, well, if we haven't done
17 one, or we will come of a briefing that we need to brief people
18 on. You know, we found this in this SYSIR, and this was a
19 deficiency, and we recommend that we do X, Y, and Z, you know.

20 Q. Yep. And I noticed you said that, you know, CISR may be
21 generated, which generates a CAP. Do you ever -- does a CAP get
22 generated without being a SYSIR?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Yeah. So, you guys --

25 A. These two particular CAPS were generated without a SYSIR.

1 Q. Okay. And then, who is on that SSR team here for you guys?
2 Is it varied? Is it always the same people?

3 A. So, typically, yeah, it's the QC specialists,
4 Christopher Jackson, Brian Tomkinson, and Steven Chandler, are on
5 an SSR team. Prior to us actually finishing the SSR and filing
6 it, we had let the local safety counsel, both a NATCA member and a
7 management member, review the CAP, offer any suggestions, or
8 improvements, or recommendations to go back and redo any of the
9 work. And then, after they had blessed it, per se, then we sent
10 it to the ATM for its approval; and then, we submit it.

11 Q. Great. So, that process sounds very robust. That's good.
12 Do you know how many open CAPS you have right now?

13 A. Just the two.

14 Q. Just two?

15 A. Well, three.

16 Q. You've got --

17 A. We've got three.

18 Q. -- three open CAPS?

19 A. We've got three open CAPS. Like I mentioned from the time
20 that you guys were here before, that CAP was still -- we were
21 having issues with safety alerts, so full disclosure.

22 Q. Can you -- you have a unique situation, because you were an
23 OM prior to becoming the -- I love people like that spend some
24 time in the facility and understand it. I just want to touch on
25 the ICV process that you have here, since you came from the OM

1 side, and now from the big chair side. Does that stay internal to
2 your QC office? Do you reach out to the LSC to do some of those
3 ICV items? Can you talk me through some of that?

4 A. Sure, because we've just recently changed the ICV process
5 since I've been in --

6 Q. Oh.

7 A. -- the big chair, as you say.

8 Q. There you go. Moving.

9 A. So, one of the things that we did prior to this, we rate
10 25 percent of our ICV per quarter, right?

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. And we would have monthly local safety council meetings, and
13 in the meetings, we would happily allow time for people to go and
14 do ICV monitoring. What we found, after the meeting, most people
15 were not interested in going back into the control room and doing
16 ICV monitoring, so we had very little -- not as much ICV
17 monitoring as we wanted. So, what my team and I came up with was
18 to kind of do a hybrid from the old way we used to do, the way we
19 did ICV, we could, you know, put people off the floor for a week,
20 and everybody was on a monitor for that week, and then do all the
21 ICV items at one time. We can do once a quarter so we could make
22 it a little bit more manageable.

23 So, what we're doing now, we do two days per quarter when
24 we'll get with the safety counsel, collaborate with them on the
25 days we can do it in private or with management, and actually get

1 people off the floor to go do ICV monitoring. One thing I'm proud
2 to say, this is the first quarter that we've done it that way.
3 Prior to this quarter, for the whole year, we had 28 hours of ICV
4 monitoring. In those two days, we got 50 plus hours of ICV
5 monitoring. So, I feel like the process is more robust now.

6 Q. Awesome. Talking about utilizing the LSC a lot, which is
7 great. That helps in, you know, having continuity in a conduit
8 back to the floor. Do you use them for any other processes around
9 there? I know you just said SSRs, for ICVs. What other things do
10 you use them for?

11 A. So, CAP generation, that's one of those things we cover with
12 them, also. And then, the previous CAP had a lot of LSC
13 functions. LSC developed memory aids for phraseology for safety
14 alerts were in the last CAP. Also, we worked with them to revamp
15 our refresher training, which, I'm proud to say we ramped that for
16 Atlanta Center. We had 44 items that we had to review within an
17 hour period, and I felt like 44 items in an hour was a lot for
18 anybody. So, we went through the order, and we identified the
19 things that had to be there, then we added back in the things that
20 we felt were germane to us, and obviously, safety alert being
21 germane is one of those things we had to get back in. We added in
22 calling weather, you know, a couple of other things, right, that
23 we felt like the Atlanta Center needed to highlight as our issues.
24 And then, we changed the way that they conduct safety refresher
25 training, where they do it in 15-minute chunks; and then, they

1 stop, and they discuss that 15 minutes, those five or six things
2 they saw in that 15 minutes; and go into the next
3 15 minutes; and then, stop and discuss. Instead of doing an hour
4 and discussing 27 things, now we're going 15 minutes discussing
5 seven things.

6 Q. Great. Switching gears just a little bit, ATSAP ERC requests
7 that come back in with issues from the ERC, do those go to you
8 here, or who do those go to?

9 A. No, they go to the OM, which used to be me, in charge of ERC
10 stuff for Atlanta Center. Now, it's going to OM Maurice Nelson,
11 who's now in charge of it. But I handed it off to
12 Richard Pena, and Richard Pena just recently handed it off to
13 Maurice.

14 Q. Oh, Richie was just in here. We could have asked him about
15 it.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Do you know who he works with, Maurice works with, on that?

18 A. So, typically, when I was that person, I would reach out to
19 Matt Gordon, who was the union vice president; and then, him and I
20 would come up with a plan to work it; and then, we would send it
21 off to whatever office needed to provide information, or go to the
22 floor with the OMs, or whatever, and get the data, gather the
23 necessary data. I'm not sure what their process is. I'm pretty
24 sure it's probably similar.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. I know for a fact that Matt is still working on those things
2 with everybody.

3 MR. MYERS: Awesome, Chuck. Thanks very much. I'm all set,
4 Brian.

5 MR. SOPER: Thanks, Seth. Louis?

6 BY MR. HANCOCK:

7 Q. All right, Chuck. Just a couple of questions. Going through
8 the CAP here, some of the things that were identified in the CRs,
9 there were the -- from specific events, CICs were stating they
10 weren't receiving a return-from-break briefing. I'm sorry, the
11 controllers were not receiving a return-from-break briefing from
12 the CIC. And then, also, the CIC was not monitoring the positions
13 with a headset in the areas with that.

14 A. That is correct.

15 Q. We're looking under your monitoring items here. It was to
16 develop, or to just add to your FLMIC or CIC checklist, is to
17 monitor with a cordless headset PIREP solicitation and conducts a
18 pre-duty return-from-break briefing, and you're going to be doing
19 OSAs on those to monitor compliance. My question is, since then,
20 have you been able to observe your compliance levels with that?

21 A. So, anecdotally, yes, I think we've improved some with that
22 because not only did we do that; we actually had an individual go
23 in, and sit with each OS, and go through the whole process with
24 recording briefings, and we did mock recordings of position relief
25 briefings with every OS, right? As well as the CICs. However, as

1 we stated previously, we have a supervisor seminar and a CIC
2 refresher coming up, so we want to go over it with those with
3 CICs. Then, we had met with the union, again, Matt Olen and Chad
4 Mitchell about it, and they wanted the CIC refresher to be the
5 moment that we introduced it to them, and started adding
6 additional duties for the CICs.

7 Q. Okay. So, you guys are considering that an additional duty
8 for the CIC?

9 A. Not an additional duty, but something that we have not been
10 doing of late. And then, we have identified a deficiency, so we
11 want to again, I mentioned, I think, before, that we want to make
12 sure we have consistent messaging and that we get everybody on the
13 same page so that we're using the supervisor seminar and the CIC
14 refresher as our opportunity to message and get everybody on the
15 same page and hopefully meeting the expectations.

16 Q. And you said that was collaborated on, and NATCA was on
17 board, in agreement with --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- doing that, correct? Okay. All right.

20 A. Yes.

21 MR. HANCOCK: I think that's all I have for right now.

22 BY MR. SOPER:

23 Q. You've been a long time here, obviously, because I recall you
24 were a CPC here, as well, right? I mean, you've been --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- CPC, you've been -- did you do OS time, as well?

2 A. Yeah, I was an OS here.

3 Q. Yes. You did OS, you did OM, you're QCM now. And so, you've
4 worn a lot of hats; you've done a lot of stuff. Did you work in
5 TMU, by chance?

6 A. I did not work --

7 Q. Oh.

8 A. -- in TMU.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: Oh, man.

10 BY BRIAN SOPER:

11 Q. (Indiscernible).

12 A. When I was at headquarters, I was a TMU specialist while out
13 there.

14 Q. Okay. Well, let me ask you on this. Because of your years
15 of experience here, what has been your experience with how the
16 weather coordinator position in this facility is managed, run,
17 staffed, not staffed, you know?

18 A. Great question. So, typically, you know, the weather
19 coordinator position is done by the STMC or someone in TMC, and we
20 have a CWSU here, you know, who -- excuse me. Who keeps us
21 abreast of anything that we really need to see. Only at night
22 does the weather coordinator position get combined up on the watch
23 desk and the evening supervisor is in charge of that. It had been
24 identified, I believe, in ECV last year that there was an issue,
25 and the previous QC manager put some mitigations under it. They

1 drew up some processes to make sure everybody got trained. In all
2 of that, they completed those mitigations, and I believe everyone
3 is now trained on the weather coordinator position. I've not
4 heard of any other issues with it.

5 Q. Okay. Shifting gears just little bit, the -- I lost track of
6 what I was going to say. I had it in my head, and I was trying to
7 remember.

8 A. And I'm probably the oldest person in the room. I'm just
9 saying.

10 Q. It's all good, it's all good.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #2: Brian's pretty old.

12 MR. SOPER: Gosh dang it. I am pretty old. As a matter of
13 fact, I'm going to pass it along for a moment, and I'll have to
14 come back. Mike, do you have anything?

15 BY MR. BROWN:

16 Q. Just off the top, not an exact number if you don't know, how
17 many ICV items does Atlanta Center have?

18 A. I think, 108.

19 Q. That's it? I'm just saying that because I know smaller
20 TRACONS has like 130.

21 A. Yeah, 108, I believe --

22 Q. Hundred and eight?

23 A. -- is our current list.

24 Q. And so, well, we're almost done. It's September, so
25 you're --

1 A. Right.

2 Q. -- in quarter four now, and none of those from the beginning
3 of the first quarter until now, you've generated no CAPS on the
4 ICV?

5 A. Not from the ICV. We have had some noncompliant items, and
6 we've developed mitigation plans, but not a mitigation that's
7 associated with a CAP. However, I'm thinking about adding some
8 the CAP has generated to some of our mitigations.

9 MR. BROWN: Okay. That's all I have.

10 MR. SOPER: Thank you. Brian?

11 BY MR. SWAIN:

12 Q. Yeah. You just kind of talked about some of the mitigations
13 the previous quality control manager put in for training related
14 to the weather piece. Is there a plan in place, or do you know
15 how much training any of the current STMCs or TMCs get on weather?

16 A. On the weather coordinator, or just weather in general?

17 Q. As a weather coordinator, or any kind of meteorology course,
18 or anything like that?

19 A. Unfortunately, I can't speak to how much training anyone
20 gets. That would be a good question for David Germain, who's our
21 training manager.

22 MR. SWAIN: That's it for me.

23 MR. SOPER: Thank you. Seth?

24 MR. MYERS: No, I'm all set, thanks.

25 MR. SOPER: Louis?

1 MR. HANCOCK: No.

2 MR. SOPER: It came back to me too quick. I couldn't
3 think --

4 MR. LEVISTER: Still can't remember.

5 MR. SOPER: So, it must not have been that important, if I
6 can't remember it, so -- oh, I know what it was.

7 BY MR. SOPER:

8 Q. So, the CAP involving PIREP weather dissemination has been
9 there for a bit, I think, if I'm not mistaken.

10 A. Yeah, about a month.

11 Q. -- an open one. Oh, only about a month?

12 A. About a month.

13 Q. August 7. Okay. I was thinking we had that, that that was
14 an open CAP when we were here before. So, okay. So, that's
15 relatively new. Well, just anecdotally, or what you've noticed,
16 or from your experience here, what do you think the biggest
17 challenge is with the particular CAP, getting that -- I mean,
18 because, let's face it, we've been talking about PIREP and weather
19 dissemination for a minute in air traffic control, right? I mean,
20 it's been a focal item, it's been on training, and refresher, and
21 recurring, and there's been groups out, and the NTSB has yacked at
22 length about it. I mean, just everybody, right? And we still
23 seem to struggle with it. Do you identify here at ZTL of the
24 things that you think are some of the biggest challenges on why
25 that's a hard one to nip in the bud?

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1 A. Good question. If I'm being transparent, I believe a lot of
2 it stems from what I call a COVID hangover. I mean, while, yes,
3 we've struggled with it for a long time, it appears to have gotten
4 worse since we've come out of COVID, right? And unfortunately,
5 with a lot of people, when we went back to training during COVID,
6 a lot of people got certified, and COVID traffic numbers were out
7 the complexity that typically Atlanta Center presents, and I think
8 that a lot of our younger controllers are not as proficient on
9 some of those items as they could have been had they been
10 certified prior to COVID. And I think some of our older
11 controllers are kind of, I don't know, just resting on their
12 laurels.

13 MR. SOPER: Okay. All right, very good. I didn't have
14 anything else. Does anybody else have anything?

15 BY MR. MEYERS:

16 Q. I have one thing, just a quick question. This is, again,
17 because you've sat in a lot of seats here other than the very
18 tippy-top one. What do you feel, being OS and OM, or quality
19 control manager now, a controller on the floor where, you know,
20 you're at the bottom of the teepee, so to speak, all of these
21 processes now that you run and that you are a part of, SSRs, TMRs,
22 LSC discussions, ERC stuff, you know, all this stuff, what is the
23 best avenue that you guys have here at Atlanta currently to get
24 the feedback back to the workforce, and is that enough, and do you
25 see a better way to do it?

1 A. So, honestly, this is why we put the all-hands briefing in
2 both of our CAPS. I feel like that we need to have joint
3 messaging from management and the union on how important it is.
4 If the union doesn't buy up on it, it's never going to change.

5 MR. MEYERS: Great. Thank you.

6 MR. SOPER: All right. Anything else? All right. Do you
7 have any questions for us?

8 MR. LEVISTER: (No audible response.)

9 MR. SOPER: All right. I'm going to go ahead and stop the
10 recording right now. I show the time at 15:58.

11 (Whereupon, at 3:58 p.m. EDT, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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

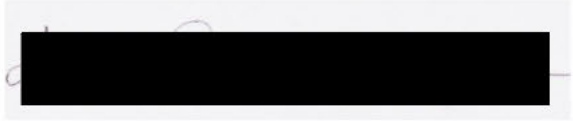
IN THE MATTER OF: DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT
NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA ON
AUGUST 29, 2023
Interview of Chuck Levister

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA428

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: September 7, 2023

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.



Lisa D. Sevarino
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT *

NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: DCA23LA428

ON AUGUST 29, 2023 *

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Interview of: RICHIE PENA, Operations Manager
Atlanta Air Route Traffic Control Center

Atlanta, Georgia

Thursday,
September 7, 2023

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APPEARANCES:

BRIAN SOPER, Investigator-In-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL BROWN, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LOUIS HANCOCK, ATC Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

SETH MYERS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

BRIAN SWAIN, Senior Air Traffic Manager
Delta Air Lines

MARK TOMICICH, Representative
(On behalf of Richie Pena)

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I N T E R V I E W

(12:05 p.m. EDT)

MR. SOPER: All right. My name is Brian Soper, Lead Air Traffic Investigator at the NTSB. And I have with us today Mr. Louis Hancock out of -- say it for me brother.

MR. HANCOCK: Jacksonville Approach Control.

MR. SOPER: All right, there you go, Jacksonville Approach. He's with us representing the FAA on our NTSB Group today. Mr. Seth Myers, out of Boston Center representing NATCA on our group today. Mr. Brian Swain of Delta Air Line representing Delta on our group today. And Mike Brown from our headquarters, Air Traffic Investigator with my team back there. And you have with you today your representative?

MR. TOMICICH: Mark Tomicich.

MR. SOPER: Thank you, Mark. And can you state your name for the record, for me?

MR. PENA: Richie Pena.

MR. SOPER: And can you spell your last name for me?

MR. PENA: P-E-N-A.

MR. SOPER: All right. Okay, as we had talked about earlier, just to kind of repeat here. The NTSB is an independent Federal Agency charged with investigating civil aviation accidents and incidents of a serious nature, finding probable cause, and hopefully developing safety recommendations to industry or some segment of industry to prevent reoccurrence.

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1 We're not regulatory. We're not affiliated with the DOT or
2 the FAA in any way. We're independent by design. And our power
3 is all in our recommendations. All right? As we go through the
4 room here, we'll do this in kind of a round robin fashion, all of
5 us having different questions for you.

6 And until we've all asked everything we need, and then we'll
7 be able to get you on your way, just answer everything to the best
8 of your ability. And it's okay to say you don't know if you don't
9 know something, or that you don't recall if you don't recall
10 something. Just do your very best. We're going to take a little
11 different order. This time, I am going to start out -- I do have
12 some background questions. Do you have any questions before we
13 begin?

14 MR. PENA: I do not.

15 MR. SOPER: All right, awesome, so Richie Pena.

16 INTERVIEW OF RICHIE PENA

17 BY MR. SOPER:

18 Q. How old were you on the day of the event, Richie?

19 A. Thirty-nine.

20 Q. Okay. And you're operating initials here?

21 A. Romeo, Papa.

22 Q. And you were the operations manager at the time? Is that
23 correct?

24 A. Right.

25 Q. Okay. How long have you been an operations manager here?

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1 A. Approximately two and a half years?

2 Q. Okay. And were you here prior to that? Or did you come in
3 from somewhere else?

4 A. I've always been at Atlanta Center.

5 Q. Always been at Atlanta, all right. That seems to be a common
6 theme here. You guys kind of stay? All right. I don't know if
7 it's because you want to stay here, or you can't get out. Which
8 is it?

9 A. That's great.

10 Q. All right. So do you have any pre-FAA air traffic control
11 work experience? Military? DOD? Contract? Tower? Anything
12 like that?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. And do you hold any collateral duties? Or have you
15 been in any recent details that have taken you outside the
16 facility that might have affected currency?

17 A. Negative.

18 Q. And if you would for us, just kind of give us your 10,000-
19 foot bio as it relates to aviation. And what I mean by that is,
20 you know, like, yes, I was always interested in aviation. I
21 graduated high school, I went to college for this, or I got my
22 pilot's license. And just take us through what led you to here
23 today.

24 A. Yes, I've always been interested in aviation. Really,
25 there's nothing spectacular in the story. I went to Embry Riddle.

1 I did aviation safety, traffic management. And I got placed in
2 Atlanta. And it's really that straightforward.

3 Q. All right, very good. Have you, have you ever been fired,
4 terminated, suspended, or asked to resign from a position in air
5 traffic since you've been an air traffic control?

6 A. Negative.

7 Q. Okay. And how would you describe your overall health in the
8 terms of excellent, good, fair, or poor?

9 A. Pretty excellent.

10 Q. All right. And do you, did you have a -- are you required to
11 hold medical? And an OM, you're not, right?

12 A. (No audible response.)

13 Q. Very good. Were you taking any medications on the day of the
14 event? Over-the-counter? Regular prescription? Anything like
15 that?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. And was drug or alcohol screening performed as a
18 result of this event?

19 A. No.

20 Q. And any major changes in your, in your health during the last
21 year? Like major stuff? Had surgeries? You know, were down for
22 a long period of time for some reason, or out I should say?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. And how about a similar question, any major changes in
25 your personal life over the last year? Good, better, and

1 different? Got married, got divorced, had a child anything like?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. And last question along those lines, any major changes
4 in your financial situation over the last year? Good, bad, or
5 indifferent? Big stuff, won the Lotto -

6 A. I wish.

7 Q. -- filed bankruptcy? We always, I know. Now, be here,
8 there's been some big jackpots over the last year or two with
9 that. All right. And so this one, little bit harder, because
10 it's hard to think back to this stuff.

11 But just do the best you can try to try to put yourself back
12 in that. I'm looking to get your, capture your 72-hour history
13 leading up to the time of the event. All right? So, that final
14 72 hours before the event occurred. And so try to -- it's usually
15 easier if we talk you back from the time of the event and go work
16 backwards. So that's what we're going to do.

17 A. Okay.

18 Q. So on the day of the event, which happened about 1830 or
19 1832, wherever it was, on an evening on a Tuesday, what shift were
20 you working that day for you?

21 A. That was an evening shift.

22 Q. You were on the evening -

23 A. 1430 is when the OM evening shift starts.

24 Q. Okay. And was that a normal shift for you? Were you picking
25 it up for somebody else? Were you in your normal rotation? Was

1 it an over-time shift?

2 A. It alternates.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. It depends on our rotation, sometimes I have that evening

5 shifts, sometimes I have the 10:00, the 10:00 to 6:00.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So on that day, I had the evening shift because the old OM

8 was in collaboration training.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. But it alternates. It's not unusual.

11 Q. So you were scheduled for that, so to speak?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. I mean, you knew, you're coming for that?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. All right. Very good. And so on that day you came into

16 work. What time do you think you got into work that day?

17 A. Probably 2:00.

18 Q. About 2:00?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And so, what time do you think you got up that morning?

21 A. I get up every morning around 5:30.

22 Q. All right. And did you do anything that day that was outside

23 of your normal daily routine? Did you have to, you know, go

24 rescue somebody from a car accident or anything like that? Or --

25 A. No.

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1 Q. So it was just normal, daily routine? All right. And so,
2 the night before, what time do you feel you went to bed Monday
3 night?

4 A. I can't remember.

5 Q. Okay. But Monday night, it was the Labor Day. So it was a
6 holiday. I don't know if you did anything that day? But --

7 A. I think it was like around 11:00.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Between 11:00 and 11:30. It wasn't later than that.

10 Q. Okay. And so, that was Labor Day. Was that a day off for
11 you? Or you were working that day?

12 A. No, because I worked it. But I did come in a little early
13 that day.

14 Q. Okay. And what shift did you work that day?

15 A. 1:00 to 9:00.

16 Q. Okay. And was that your regular shift? Or was a normal --

17 A. No, I would normally work at 2:30.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. But Labor Day was slow. I came in, was able to do it.

20 Q. All right. And so that morning, Monday, do you feel like --
21 you said you get up every day at 5:30. You probably get up around
22 that same time, then? That was it?

23 A. (No audible response.)

24 Q. All right. And so then Sunday night, what time do you think
25 you went to bed at night?

- 1 A. Around 9:00.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. Or 9:30.
- 4 Q. And even on the weekends you get up at that time, 5:30?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. It's like clockwork?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. I feel you. I'm there. I'm with you on that. I'm kind of
- 9 the same way. All right. And so, over the over the 72 hours
- 10 leading up to, was it normal, daily routine for you? I mean,
- 11 there wasn't anything that happened during that time that was a
- 12 wrench in the spokes of life so to speak? You didn't have -
- 13 A. No, man. I have the same routine --
- 14 Q. All right.
- 15 A -- every weekend.
- 16 Q. Good. How many hours do you need of sleep to feel rested?
- 17 For you personally?
- 18 A. Five and six.
- 19 Q. And you feel you were getting that? Over those 72 hours, you
- 20 got your normal sleep?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. And you were eating normally, and all that stuff?
- 23 A. Very routine.
- 24 Q. Okay. All right, very.
- 25 A. It's boring, I know.

1 Q. Well, there's something to be said for routine. All right,
2 good. So did you file an ATSAP as a result of this event at all?

3 A. I did not.

4 Q. Okay. And have you ever been interviewed about this event,
5 prior to now, outside of meeting earlier with FAA?

6 A. No, as an interview, I said, no.

7 Q. And do you know how long you ran with the FAA, probably? Not
8 the attorney, but the FAA group before you came in here.
9 Pre-brief? Did they pre-briefed?

10 A. Oh, just here? Yes, around 30 minutes.

11 Q. Okay, cool.

12 A. Sorry, I didn't understand.

13 Q. Did you have an opportunity to review the replay of this
14 event?

15 A. I did.

16 Q. Okay. When was the last time you did that, probably?

17 A. I guess, it would be, maybe Friday? Thursday or Friday?

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Because the event was on Wednesday. So yes, Thursday and
20 Friday.

21 Q. It was a like a falcon replay?

22 A. Exactly. Yes, the falcon. I saw the ERAM playback, so I
23 think that was it.

24 Q. Okay. And when you were working, you said you came in for a
25 1430 shift that day. When you took the OM position, did you --

1 was a pass down relief briefing conducted?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Do you guys record your OM briefings? Or are they
4 unrecorded?

5 A. They're recorded and the same as controller in VSCS.

6 Q. Okay. And so, you, you believe it was recorded on that day.
7 Do you utilize a checklist?

8 A. Yes, we have -- it's you been down to the OM desk?

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. So right when you come into it, right on the right-hand side,
11 there's a VSCS. The checklist is actually right there.

12 Q. Okay, good. So, to the best of your ability, and if you
13 can't answer these, it's okay. But I don't know exactly where you
14 were during time of the event or what you looked at or as you as
15 you take a look at things. Were you ever qualified in this area?

16 A. In Area 3, no.

17 Q. Okay. But you were a CPC here?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. And you see traffic as an OM. You see what goes on
20 here on a regular basis daily. In your point of view, thinking
21 about the event, looking at the replay, knowing what was going on,
22 on a scale of one to five, five being the heaviest, how would you
23 rate the traffic volume at the time of the event?

24 A. If you're talking about the replay, it goes from maybe a one
25 to busier towards the end, maybe close to three and half, four.

1 Q. Okay. And do you, from your experience -- I'm not asking you
2 speak for the controller or anybody else. From your experience,
3 do you feel that was above average for that time of day, shift,
4 traffic? Or was it below average? We're just talking about the
5 volume now, to the number of airplanes.

6 A. it was a complex day because of the weather. So --

7 Q. That's my next question. So, not, not out of complexity.
8 But just from volume itself, the number of airplanes being worked?

9 A. It's not unusual for that sector. It's an arrival sector.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So it's not unusual. It just depends on the day and on the
12 push.

13 Q. Okay. And so, on a scale of one to five, five being the most
14 complex, how would you read the traffic complexity at that time?

15 A. It wasn't. I would rate maybe a two.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Because, yes, maybe a two.

18 Q. All right. And that would have been normal for that traffic
19 and what was going on at the time, what you would expect. So
20 where there, to your recollection, was there any distractions in
21 the control room going out at the time that you were aware of that
22 may have that that may have been a distraction to anybody?

23 Meaning techs working on something, equipment being out,
24 having an emergency somewhere in another, in an area nearby,
25 anything like that, that would have pulled away supervisors or, or

1 just been a general distraction in the Op.?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Do you recall the general weather conditions around the time
4 of the event? And what I mean by that is, was there a lot of
5 precip. in the area, in the airspace here for Atlanta? Was there
6 in-flight advisories in effect, like cygnets, airmets, CWAs that
7 you can recall? You know, restrictions, airspace problems, TFR,
8 anything that could have been that way? Do you remember the
9 general weather though?

10 A. Yes, sure. It was a heavy weather day, a lot of convection,
11 mainly on the southwest. And pretty much if you draw a line where
12 Atlanta is, south had all the convection. The northwest side was
13 single stream, deviating southbound. They had weather. The
14 Northeast was clearest of the arrivals.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Not tons of weather in their sector. Most of the weather in
17 A80. A lot of convection, a lot of moisture northbound because of
18 Idalia and it was hot here. So between the heat and the humidity.

19 Q. Okay. Did you receive the pre-duty weather briefing on that
20 day?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And did anything stand out to you on that one? Do you recall
23 anything standing out as like, oh, that's, that's going to be an
24 issue? Or that's going to be something we need to pay attention
25 to?

1 A. Not from the pre-duty weather briefing. We knew it was going
2 to be a complex day from the day before weatherwise if that's what
3 we're talking about.

4 Q. Okay. Out of curiosity, from your standpoint, how much value
5 does the pre-duty weather briefing provide you in preparing
6 yourself for the watch weatherwise when you come on? And is it
7 highly valuable, valuable, somewhat valuable, or not valuable at
8 all?

9 A. That's a great question.

10 Q. I mean, it's just, it's for you. I mean, you know, do you
11 find it really providing you help? Or do you get most of your
12 resource information for weather from somewhere else? So it's
13 your feeling. How does it help you or not help you? Or --

14 A. That's a bit of a loaded question. Depends when you come in
15 the day. Do I find value in it? No. Our shifts don't match up
16 to necessarily with how the pre-duty weather briefing goes.
17 Unless you come in early enough. I find the most, we have a
18 fantastic weather unit.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. They are across the hall. I find the most value, asking them
21 what is going on.

22 Q. Okay. So that being said, I know we spoke with the CWSU
23 folks who were here. And they said that here in Atlanta, you
24 guys, they put out a, a weather briefing sheet that's periodic
25 through the day, aside from the pre-duty weather brief.

1 A. Correct.

2 Q They kind of are interim in there. Do you utilize those a
3 lot? Or do you find value in those? Do they provide you
4 information?

5 A. Yes, they're great. Especially them coming up. But they are
6 great. It's a great product.

7 Q. Do you interact directly with a CWSU very often?

8 A. All the time, especially when they're -- I was an STMC.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. My workflow is, it's -- except I can only speak for myself.

11 Q. Sure.

12 A. Being at the STMC desk, I'm just used to continuously asking
13 them for things, what's happening. It's just something I didn't
14 lose from being across the hall.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So I do it all the time. It's my habit.

17 Q. Okay, good. Do you recall, did you have a cellular phone or
18 PED on you at the time the event?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. And when did you become aware that an event had
21 happened? Because I know what happened after it left you guys'
22 airspace, but the actual occurrence. When did you become aware
23 and how?

24 A. I was in TMU, actually.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So A80 called TMAC1, which is Atlanta position, and let us
2 know, we were holding on the northeast side. And the controller
3 said TMC says it's severe turbulence. I turned over to the STMC,
4 asked them if they call A80 to see if they had a call sign. They
5 didn't. So then, I called their watch desk later on, gave them a
6 minute to sort themselves out.

7 Q. Okay. Did you do any upward reporting from there? Or did
8 you like have any requirement to notify an ATM or anybody else?
9 Or did you do the MOR? Or --

10 A. No. I needed the call sign first.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So, I didn't report it, right, because I didn't know who even
13 was.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So once I was able to get a hold of the A80-watch desk, they
16 gave me the call sign. And I asked them if they were going to do
17 MOR, and how they were going to do it. They were already working
18 on it. Severe turbulence, potentially significant event. Through
19 my channels, once I reviewed it falcon, it was glitchy.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So, once I was able to review it and see what we were working
22 with, then I told our XO and our ATM what we were looking at.

23 Q. Okay, all right. So, if you would for me, I'd like you to
24 take a minute here and try to step us through as if you had to
25 tell the story to somebody about the way things transpired. And I

1 don't know what you were doing, or what you were engaged with,
2 leading up to this time.

3 So I know you mentioned just there, you were at the, you were
4 in TMU when you got the word about it occurring. So leading up to
5 that time, as I understand in speaking with the OS, just
6 previously, they had shut down something, or inbounds wherever
7 they were. And they were -- what was it they were doing?
8 Everything was getting moved over to --

9 A. East departures.

10 Q. Yes. Were you aware of that? Or --

11 A. Yes, there was a lot going on.

12 Q. -- what was going on with that?

13 A. That day was real blended because it was weather all day. I
14 think they were taking some of -- they may have been running
15 through East. I can't confirm that. So I just know they were
16 taking some of the Southeast arrivals on the Northeast arrival.

17 I'm not sure where exactly they were going in. My
18 recollection, I don't think they were going in through East. They
19 had departure restrictions. We had departure restrictions out of
20 every single gate, except for North. The South streams were not
21 running. There was weather there. The Northwest stream was
22 single stream. They were running through West departure, yes.

23 Q. Okay, I'm going to take a little different track with you,
24 because the position you are working is a little bit different.
25 So, you were in a TMU at the time that you learned an event had

1 occurred with A80. And so, that started taking up your time with
2 looking to see what was up for that event. And you ended up
3 calling watches. So you were in the TMU at that time? What
4 brought, what had brought you to the TMU during that time? Do you
5 recall why you were down there?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. What was that?

8 A. So we were in a first tier, well modified first-tier ground
9 stop. They were talking about extending the internal ground stop.
10 I asked Krista, the weather person, what the weather was going to
11 be doing.

12 I was asking her about the North to West departure. I told
13 the STMC that if that shuts off, we need to go into a second tier.
14 Then I also had questions about Charlotte because we were about to
15 go into first-tier ground stop there.

16 So, I needed to know about staffing. It was the time of day
17 where I needed to hold people over, and maybe needed to call the
18 midders, have people call the midders in. So, I was doing kind of
19 a dual role seeing who we needed, and what we needed there. And
20 also what our status was.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Because we were in a second tier. The watch desk was going
23 to start getting some calls as to what was going on.

24 Q. Can you? For my sake, can you explain a little bit what's
25 first tier second tier? What does that mean here?

1 A. Right. So a first-tier ground stop is just, just our
2 immediate adjacent facilities.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. If we're in the first-tier ground stop, we're already in an
5 internal ground stop.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. If we go into a second-tier, for us here, it matters a lot
8 because that grabs New York, everybody has a thing for New York,
9 and it just branches all out. So when you go westbound, you
10 really are talking Kansas City. You're going out there. So
11 you're grabbing a lot of aircraft because those centers are so
12 big.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. You have questions from Delta, American, and everything. So
15 anytime you start talking about that, you need to get the users
16 involved. We're going to get calls at the watch desk. And we are
17 going to run late.

18 So we need to know about potentially holding people over,
19 calling people in, and seeing what our staffing challenges are
20 going to be.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Because our departure push is going to last until 1:00 a.m.,
23 2:00 a.m., easily.

24 Q. Okay. So I have a question for you regarding the weather
25 coordinator position. How is that staffed here?

1 A. It depends what you mean by what the weather coordinator
2 position should be doing.

3 Q. Okay, let's start with that. What should they be doing?

4 A. What do you think they should be doing?

5 Q. What do I think they should be doing?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Well, I think they should be doing that whole list that in
8 the 7210.3, right? And straight from that point, meaning, I think
9 there's any time you got weather present and stuff, I would expect
10 that the weather coordinator is coordinating with the CWSU and the
11 STMC, if they are not the STMC. They might be combined, right? I
12 mean, you know, or whatever.

13 And coordinating with the sups on the floor. And I would
14 assume yourself, as well, with anything that's going to impact the
15 weather or PIREPs whether dissemination, or some incoming weather,
16 all that stuff, right? Anything that's going to be weather
17 related.

18 A. Right. So as far as the dissemination of PIREPs, like data
19 sends those out.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Urgent PIREPs are sent out by TMU. We have the weather unit
22 right there. So the weather unit is literally in like, usually,
23 usually they're standing, usually the meteorologist doesn't sit
24 there.

25 They are standing where the STMC is and where the positions

1 are. So there is a real time, this is what. This is happening.
2 This is what's going on here. Would they get on the command
3 center? They are actually also on the line talking about weather
4 if they need to, if the command center doesn't bring their weather
5 person in.

6 Q. So, do you feel the weather coordinator, the duties of the
7 weather coordinator are actually covered a lot by the CWSU folks
8 that are on board?

9 A. I think they, it's a blended thing. Our, I think we
10 generally have one of the best TMU units in the NAS easily.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I think it's across the NAS you can hear how Atlanta center
13 as far as our team unit and our thought process works. And I
14 think that is a testament to what the STMC does. And because NAS
15 is opened whenever, it may be complex. Where they need to do
16 that, they'll open NASS. They'll do departure. And they'll
17 coordinate. So, it's a blended duty.

18 The benefit of a weather alone coordinator position person
19 staff there, from a previous STMC, would be a hindrance more so
20 than an actual of how the workflow goes because they are in the
21 unit. I think if the CWSU wasn't in the unit, wasn't accessible
22 as in some facilities have them completely somewhere else, we
23 would need more of an in between --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- there.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. If that answers --

3 Q. All right, sure. And so you mentioned PIREPs. So, let's go
4 down that road just a little bit. Let me tug on that string. So,
5 in this facility, you kind of alluded to it, what is the lifecycle
6 of a PIREP. Controller receives a PIREP. How does it make it
7 through the system and make it out to the NAS?

8 A. The controller receives a PIREP. They put it in ERIDS. It
9 goes to flight data. Flight data sends it back out.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. They should disseminate.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Into you know, back out. They should be telling the pilots
14 about it. If it's an urgent PIREP, TMU sends it out into a GI.
15 That should also be disseminated.

16 Q. Okay. And so, you see those come back. So, you know --

17 A. At the watches we have, again, if you go in the watch desk,
18 straight across there's an ERIDS right there.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. We are, we check them periodically.

21 Q. All right. Okay. That's all I got for right now. I'm going
22 to go ahead and pass along. I'm going to change it up a little
23 bit. Mike, you can go first.

24 BY MR. BROWN:

25 Q. Hey, good afternoon again. So walk me through, I guess, so

1 OM, you come in that day. Everybody -- I don't want to say
2 everybody. There was a weather event, hurricane. Do you guys do
3 pre-duty stand ups before that day?

4 Like, hey, we're coming in. You know talking about staffing.
5 Hey, we might be hold over because we're going on to tier twos.
6 It's going to push us back, our arrivals, pushes us into the
7 night. Is there any pre-coordination you guys do in house prior
8 to that? Or is that, hey, it's the day of, it's here.

9 A. Well we have our stand ups. We have two stand ups a day. We
10 have our morning stand up at 9:00. And then, our afternoon stand
11 up at 4:15 p.m. So, we talk about it there.

12 But if, for events like that, we have already been planning
13 as let's look at hold over. Let's look at everything as in a
14 continuous, in a continuous. Especially before because we have a
15 better idea of what it was going to do.

16 The weather that was happening here, it was because of the
17 hurricane. But it wasn't the hurricane itself. It was a
18 combination of the humidity, the heat, and just all that moisture
19 being pushed up. So it was kind of -- but yes, we had talked
20 about it.

21 Q. Okay. So, back to the PIREP thing. So, how involved at OM,
22 or the -- I'm going to try to stay away from the STMC side. So,
23 we're talking about OM.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. How? When you're getting these PIREPs in, are you just

1 trusting the sups? Like, hey, I trust my sups. Everybody's
2 disseminating that in their sectors? Do you do check on those?
3 Do you have any --

4 A. Disseminating, as in? You mean? Because you mentioned sup.
5 Do you mean the controllers on the frequency? Or --

6 Q. Correct. Are you relying on the supervisors in the areas to
7 make sure the controllers are disseminating those? Or do you
8 follow up with your sups at all?

9 A. We follow up -- it depends. Those are two questions, right?
10 First, we do follow up. If there's two of us at the desk, we're
11 always checking the PIREP, the PIREP board, to make sure. And if
12 we don't see them, we are physically going down the aisle to them,
13 to get PIREPs. This is what is alerting, et cetera.

14 As far as listening in, it depends on how complex it is. If
15 there are two of us at the desk, it's easier. We'll put it up.
16 We'll listen to it. That monitor there, we can actually key in
17 and listen to it.

18 If it's one of us, on a complex day it becomes difficult.
19 The bandwidth isn't there, too, especially on a day like that to
20 also, and also listen to it. That's just not a possibility.

21 MR. BROWN: Okay. That's all I have for right now.

22 MR. SOPER: Great. We'll go ahead and go to Brian.

23 BY MR. SWAIN:

24 Q Thanks for coming in, Richie. I'll start off with a quick
25 question that I had. So you talked at the beginning, it seems

1 like you were very familiar with the weather that day and what was
2 going on.

3 And you mentioned how there's not always a ton of value,
4 depending on when you get the pre-duty weather briefing. But
5 using what, and you're relying on some of your previous work,
6 working with the severe weather unit or unit over there. I think,
7 what was her name on duty that night?

8 A. Krista.

9 Q. Krista. You, it sounds like you go get your weather briefing
10 and updates from them pretty regularly. And use that as how you
11 develop your plan and your structure throughout the day. You work
12 closely with TMU it sounds like on what their plans are and what
13 that weather is developing.

14 How do you take that? How do you follow up and make sure
15 that's getting communicated down that chain towards the actual
16 controller on duty, i.e., via the supervisor and down to the
17 controller that's actually working in that area?

18 A. Well, they're supposed to -- they, I'll use the word,
19 supposed to be. But they're supposed to be doing returned to duty
20 briefings. Part of that briefing is letting them know real time
21 the weather that they're seeing happen.

22 So, yes, they're getting the pre-duty weather briefing. But
23 they're not supposed to be just giving that briefing to the
24 controllers that they have returned back. They're supposed to be
25 giving the briefing of what has changed and what they have real

1 time. And that's how they're getting it updated.

2 If I see something that is changing, if -- or it's affecting
3 us, or something like that, I also will walk down the aisle. We
4 walked down the aisle, there's two of us, probably every 30 to 40
5 minutes. If there's one of us, depends on the day, could be more
6 than that. But usually once an hour we try and get down there.

7 Q. So as far as the weather piece goes, then that return to duty
8 brief, continuously monitoring with Krista, for example, or
9 whoever's in that area, at that time, you feel like throughout a
10 weather event, convective activity, or like the hurricane pushing
11 up that day, you're able to keep everybody as proactively up to
12 date as possible on what you're forecasting as a unit weatherwise?

13 A. Yes. But especially with the sheets that go out, the weather
14 briefing that we're continuously getting, I think it's a whole
15 product. You know? About disseminating and the return to duty
16 briefings.

17 Q. As a controller, do you feel like, especially with the
18 uniqueness of this airspace that we're talking about and being
19 right on the boundary, working into the A80 area, does the
20 controller pay attention to the weather inside of A80, so it helps
21 them understand what?

22 When the aircraft is heading down the arrival, for this
23 example, Ozzie or Andre into A80's airspace, they have a pretty
24 good idea of what's going on inside of A80? What they can expect
25 or how they might be sequencing aircraft around weather that's

1 maybe 30 or 40 miles down?

2 A. I mean can't answer for each controller. Right? If I was
3 working the sector, I would be paying attention to that.

4 Q. So you -- and I guess I should, I'll rephrase that. Is the
5 way that your briefings and that information that we were just
6 talking about the return to duty, and the continuously monitoring
7 with the weather, you feel like you're equipping them with as much
8 as you can from that perspective, so they have an idea of what's
9 going on in and around their area?

10 A. Right. I mean, you know, I'm at OM desk, right?

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. So I'll get an overview of what's going on. But there's a
13 lot of sectors out there.

14 Q. Yes.

15 A. You know? So some areas have seven, some areas have five.
16 So they can -- and there's a lot going on to airports, underlying
17 airports, Jacksonville, Indy, all kinds of things. Right? So,
18 I'm giving them the best overview that I can, especially as I see
19 things change.

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. You know? I don't want to say that I'm giving them
22 specifics. That's hard to do. There's a lot of sectors, a lot of
23 departure sectors, a lot going on. I hope that answers it. But I
24 can't say definitively yes because the changes, there's a lot
25 going on.

1 MR. SWAIN: Oh, well, weather is hard to predict. So just
2 equipping you with as many tools or resources as possible. So,
3 I'll hold there for now and pass.

4 MR. SOPER: Thanks, Brian. Seth?

5 BY MR. MYERS:

6 Q. Just I know that earlier you were talking about the life of
7 PIREP that Brian had asked. And you talked about how it went to
8 in ERIDS, and then it went to flight data. And then, it goes back
9 to the floor. And then you had said, unless it's an urgent, and
10 then it goes to the watch desk, and we do that. Can you --

11 A. No, no it goes --

12 Q. -- is it two separate things, for us?

13 A. -- no the urgent ones are sent out from TMU. The CWSU gives
14 them to them right away. And they send them out immediately in a
15 GI, not to the watch desk. I mean, we get a copy of it.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. We get an actual physical copy from our weather unit, right
18 away as soon as they print it out. They're like this, here you
19 go.

20 Q. And that goes to who?

21 A. That copy is for us.

22 Q. No, I mean, so we're talking about, you said that it goes
23 controller, ERIDS, flight data, always.

24 A. Yes, that's a regular PIREP.

25 Q. Yes, regular PIREP. An urgent PIREP?

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1 A. An urgent PIREP, the CWSU receives it, prints it out, gives
2 it to the TMC. The TMC puts it out in a GI. I don't get that. I
3 mean, we have a GI. I don't get one. I also get a copy of it for
4 myself. And if it's, let's say, a turbulence that we put in, I
5 follow up with the sector, what I know about this.

6 Q. And you being an STMC? Or the watch desk?

7 A. As the watch desk.

8 Q. As the watch desk. So, an urgent PIREP comes to you. Who
9 handed you the strip?

10 A. No, it's a print-out.

11 Q. Okay. Who handed you the print-out?

12 A. Weather.

13 Q. Weather, so CWSU brings you, TMU one, and they bring you one
14 at the watch desk?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And then, you at the watch desk are the one who is ensuring
17 that the area got the UUA?

18 A. No. TMU sends it out in a GI.

19 Q. And how do we -- and how do they ensure that the sector got
20 it?

21 A. If I read it, and I look at it, I go directly to the area.
22 And I'm like, why don't I know about this? Or just depending on
23 what it is.

24 Q. So, I'm just asking. As Atlanta Center, how are you ensuring
25 it at Atlanta Center that that UUA is getting broadcast?

1 A. It goes into the GI. And then they're supposed to be
2 broadcasting it. I usually follow up with the area. But I'm not
3 listening to it at the watch desk.

4 Q. Okay. Then at the watch desk, you follow up there? And you
5 say, hey -- if I was the supervisor, hey, Seth, make sure this
6 gets put out? Or --

7 A. Yes, well, in here we for every turbulence event we put a MOR
8 in, right? This one was a little bit different because A80,
9 there's just a lot of confusion. They were putting the PSC. We
10 ended up putting one in. So, there was a little delay in there.

11 Normally, it is not a requirement. Damages, no damages, no
12 injuries we do anyways. So when I get them, because that's a lot
13 of the ones that we get at the watch desk. You know? Something
14 like severe turbulence or anything like that, I follow up right
15 away because usually I need more info.

16 I want to know exactly where it is. So I follow up with the
17 area. As far as the listening, to make sure that they're also
18 broadcasting it, I'm not doing that at the watch desk. Bandwidth
19 wise that's --

20 Q. Yes, I know. And I was looking through your SOP for the
21 facility here and I can't find that outlined anywhere in your
22 facility. That's why I was asking.

23 A. Right.

24 Q. I've asked a couple of people, like how do we ensure at
25 Atlanta Center if I was here, how do I ensure that that's getting

1 out for, per the requirements so that, you know, point three and
2 all those things. And you're saying that it goes down to the
3 area, comes to you, and we're just assuming that they're doing
4 that?

5 A. If there's a requirement to listen to it --

6 Q. Well, there's not a requirement. It's just to ensure that it
7 gets out.

8 A. It is getting out.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. It is being broadcast via GI to each area, to each sector.
11 That 100 percent is being done.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Now from the GI into here, out the mouth, that I can't tell
14 you that it's actually done.

15 Q. Okay, perfect. What do you know about the local safety
16 council here as an OM and having been here --

17 A. Pretty engaged.

18 Q. You know, in the last couple of months, they regrouped.
19 Maybe it's been a little bit more than that. Real strong, they
20 have a good leadership, NATCA, and management side. They're
21 putting a lot of good products.

22 The light across the watch desk, that screen that's there,
23 that's products from them from QC. So, a lot more engaged.
24 They're getting into the team trainings and doing briefings there.

25 Q. Those briefings you're talking about, those are like the

1 monthly safe discussions?

2 A. Yes. And then they're, what they're broadcasting is, that if
3 the sup. is requesting anything else, or maybe anything specific,
4 they can also come in and brief it, you know. So they're trying
5 to engage the sups. and everybody that way.

6 Q. So those monthly safety discussions, those, where do those
7 happen here at the facility?

8 A. Team training.

9 Q. Team training, can you walk me through what that is and how
10 it works? And how you get people to attend?

11 A. It depends on the area and depends how short they are.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And when it happens. Some areas can do them. In area five
14 and area one can do them all the time. In area two and area six,
15 it's going to be very difficult.

16 Q. Yes?

17 A. But they try and do once a month if they can. Staffing-wise
18 has been a challenge in those areas.

19 Q. And some of those processes that come through the LSC for
20 feedback to the workforce, do you have any input on that as an OM?
21 Or do you go to those, any of those trainings?

22 A. As far as briefings that they do?

23 Q. Yes. Or the discussions, the monthly discussions? As in --
24 I mean, you're an OM to an area, correct?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. What area would that be?

2 A. Area two.

3 Q. Area two. So you would go to --

4 A. Area two and TMU and Flight Data.

5 Q. Great. Do you ever go to like the team training for Area
6 two?

7 A. Yes, sometimes. When I -- if it's happening when I'm here,
8 the sup. always comes up and invites the OM. And says, hey, I'm
9 doing team training at x time, do you want to come in? Can you
10 come in? Sometimes we meet the back part of it. Sometimes -- it
11 just depends. I can only speak for myself.

12 MR. MYERS: Got you. I understand. Great. That's all I
13 have.

14 MR. SOPER: Thanks, Seth. And Louis?

15 MR. HANCOCK: All right, Richie. So kind of piggybacking off
16 of what Seth was saying about an urgent PIREP. It's entered in,
17 TMU sends a GI out. I know what he was saying was, how are you
18 ensuring that the controller's broadcasting it? We all know that
19 they might acknowledge it and they might not broadcast it.

20 But is there any internal way that you guys do compliance
21 verification on that? I mean, really, the only way is to know if
22 one was sent out, and then to listen to the tapes, and see if the
23 controller did it. Do you guys ever do any internal kind of
24 auditing like that that you know of?

25 A. You have to ask QC on that.

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1 Q. Okay. So how do you personally when you're running the ship,
2 the watch desk, how do you verify the PIREPs required in certain
3 sectors, certain areas, without the compliance that that's been
4 that's been done? That the supervisors are ensuring, the sectors
5 are getting them done? How do you personally ensure that that's
6 happening?

7 A. As a group, I know because we work together. This is what
8 we've been continuously doing. Obviously, you know, the PIREP
9 Board is great product. We check, we check our ERIDS on the
10 PIREPs. So, if we don't see that that's happening, we go
11 personally to the area and tell them we need you to get PIREPs.

12 And then, obviously wait a little bit. Sometimes we'll call
13 flight data. Are you getting any PIREPs? Are you guys getting
14 them back there? Just to make sure. ASIR could be down. I don't
15 know, right? And if not, we go back. We check and make sure that
16 they are being put out.

17 Q. And you're saying, you mean, the EDST up at the watch desk?
18 You're getting a GI with the PIREPs?

19 A. No.

20 Q. You're receiving them in your ERIDS up there, too. Okay.
21 So, they don't send out regular PIREPS in the EDST --

22 A. The --

23 Q. As a GI?

24 A. -- there's the GI, but it also automatic. It also comes via,
25 you can also access them via ERIDS.

1 Q. So you don't --

2 A. We don't use the GI.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. For us, it's -- especially as workflow and for ease, we have
5 to use the ERIDS. Because we're able to do it via click. Right?
6 Versus the GI, it's over here. You got to pull it up. You've got
7 to really sort through it. Whereas technology, great. They're in
8 one line, and I can see exactly where they're coming from.

9 Q. So the PIREP page, you have, you know, that's displayed right
10 there when you walk in, do you have that display anywhere else
11 besides that screen in the watch desk area?

12 A. In our computer, like our personal computer, we have access
13 because we put our laptops in there. But we also have access to
14 that.

15 Q. So on the map feature on there, where you can go in and
16 visibly see on the map, where the PIREPS ranks, you click on them,
17 you can see them, do you ever use that as a tool to verify
18 compliance?

19 A. Not as often.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I use ERIDS, and I go straight to the sector.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. To the sector, I make it a habit of communicating with the
24 sup. and not going directly to the sector.

25 Q. Okay. What is your expectation OSs briefing controllers when

1 they first come in for the shift, or back from break? Or whether
2 traffic, volume, complexity? What, what's your expectation, what
3 you should be talking to controllers about that? What, what needs
4 to be talked?

5 A. It happens all the time, and it shouldn't be -- and we've had
6 these conversations. It shouldn't be like, look back, nothing's
7 changed. That's not acceptable. It should be -- especially on a
8 weather day. They should be going back.

9 They should be doing what we preach is do a little pre-
10 planning, see where they're going to go. And then, talk to them
11 about that sector. This is where you're going to go, this is what
12 it is. This is what has changed. This is what you're coming
13 into.

14 Q. You guys ever listed those in an SOP or just expectations of
15 supervisors of the requirement for them to do that?

16 A. In the weather action plan, there's a requirement for the
17 return to duty. But if you're talking about a breakout of what
18 the return to duty briefing should be, I don't think that that --

19 Q. Just the requirement that it needs to be done?

20 A. Oh, yes. It's in the weather action plan, yes.

21 Q. So what is your expectation for CICs?

22 A. The same.

23 Q. The same? Do you -- have you seen them do that?

24 A. Walking down the aisle. That's part of our evening shift
25 summary or dayshift summary where we put our return to duty

1 briefs. And when we walked down the aisle, that is one of the
2 things we're looking for, or when we're doing our, our OMIC OSAs.

3 Q. So you would say it's almost interchangeable with CIC versus
4 an OS? They're doing, they're given the same product, the same
5 briefing for --

6 A. It's not the same product because it's, it's a CIC. Right?

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. But we have had to do on the spot correction --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- for it. But that is, well the product is better.

11 Q. Do you have -- or what is your expectation when there's
12 weather in the area, and let's just say it's multiple sectors, for
13 the OS to be doing at that time? Do you expect them to have a
14 headset on monitoring the busiest sector? To jump around a little
15 bit? Do you -- what is your expectation for the OS during this
16 time there's basic complexities going on?

17 A. Yes. Well, the weather action plan requires them to listen,
18 to have their headset on. So, that is something that, that day
19 when I was walking up and down, they had to have their headset on.
20 But as far as how their monitoring and their flow, I don't dictate
21 that to them, necessarily. Right?

22 Because a weather-soaked sector could have nobody. And they
23 could be inundated over here. I try and give them the liberty and
24 the latitude to do the job, and listen in. Like, sometimes if I'm
25 at the watch desk and I'm listening to something, I call them.

1 And I'm like, are you watching this? You know? And
2 sometimes they're like, yes, I'm already tuned in. Like that, but
3 I don't dictate to them, you have to be on R49, you have to be on
4 R28.

5 Q. So, do you have the same expectation for CICs, as well?

6 A. That is a work in progress.

7 Q. Can you give me give me an example of what the -- what's
8 happening right now versus what the expectation, what you would
9 like it to be?

10 A. Well, yes, we're working on the CIC refresher. And by, we
11 were saying the here. We're working on CIC refresher. We're
12 collaborating with NATCA as to what that looks like and when that
13 is actually going to happen to bring our CIC ranks back in line to
14 be more akin to the product that the supervisor is putting out,
15 especially during weather events, and all that.

16 Q. Okay. What would you say that -- actually, do you know now
17 how many supervisors there are?

18 A. I don't.

19 Q. Approximately?

20 A. Approximately it's between 35 and 40, maybe? That's, that's
21 a ballpark figure.

22 Q. That's what you're allocated, or that's what you actually
23 have?

24 A. That's what we have.

25 Q. So, my question would be what would you say percentage wise

1 that you have CIC coverage? Would you say 50 percent of the time,
2 75 percent of the time?

3 A. It depends on the area.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Right? It really, really depends on the area because, just
6 because of the sups. that we have, doesn't mean that they're all
7 operational. For example, six, about five months ago, maybe, we
8 had a spurt where we just had a lot of incapacitated people due
9 to, for various reasons. Right?

10 In the beginning of the year, we were using a lot more CICs.
11 This summer, we've used a lot less CICS. We've had a lot better
12 sup. staffing, because we picked up several SOIs for six-month
13 details. So, that helped.

14 Q. Okay. What's your expectation when an OS takes over the OMIC
15 desk and TMU is closed for the night? For the OSs to verify PIREP
16 compliance or weather simulation? When they had the desks over
17 the mid, over the morning, late at night when TMU is not there,
18 weather coordinator is not combined up with STMC? What's your
19 expectation for them?

20 A. They should be checking the same. When they get trained to,
21 for the OMIC desk, and as they work the OMIC desk, and recently
22 we've been grabbing sups. and having them spend shifts at the
23 watch desk to kind of get them more familiar with the shift that
24 is the midnight shift. I feel that that adds more value to use
25 ERIDS, to use the PIREP Board. And the same way we follow up with

1 them, to follow up with the floor as far as where PIREPs are
2 needed. I don't work on those shifts, so I don't know if reality
3 if that is actually being done.

4 Q. So you said you picked a bunch of temporary six months
5 recently. So there's been a lot of training going on, the OS
6 desk? There's been a lot of training, I'm sure, at the OMIC desk.
7 And I don't know if they're working, the six-months are working
8 the OMIC desk?

9 A. No, they're not.

10 Q. But they're doing it the same time, I'm assuming?

11 A. Yes, when they first, when they first, first started. And
12 then we let them be out there if they get picked up as permanent.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Then we have them spend more time.

15 Q. So what? So, say you pick them up as permanent, or you're
16 trying to do so they come in the building into a permanent
17 position, is there specific information related to the weather
18 coordinator position training that happens for that supervisor
19 when they're training at the watch desk?

20 A. Yes. There's a checklist. And then, they go to TMU, and
21 they get weather coordinator training. They also spend time with
22 the CWSU. They have their own briefing. They had their own
23 briefing, Chip was the weather lead before. I know he was the --
24 Patricia is brand new. She just got in in the last, maybe
25 month and a half or so, maybe two months. So, I'm not sure what

1 that looks like yet for her. But so there's that. And then they
2 also spend the day in TMU. So there's that whole app.

3 Q All right. And then, just one more question. In your
4 weather action plan that you mentioned, or in just routine OMIC
5 shift duties/responsibilities, do you ever do any kind of direct
6 monitors to make sure that weather is being called at the sectors,
7 anything like that? And if so, what's your frequency? And how do
8 you do you address non-compliance?

9 A. Yes, we do when we have the bandwidth, mostly when we have
10 two. Or when it's -- sometimes you have weather days and there
11 honestly isn't a lot going on, so you have the opportunity to
12 really do. But we do.

13 Like I said, that monitor right in the middle we listen to
14 it. We put it on high. And we sit there. We'll take notes.
15 Just yesterday we -- in our process we get call signs. Why isn't
16 weather being called here?

17 We give the opportunity for the sup. to address it. And if
18 it's still not happening, we ask more probing questions. And
19 then, we may proceed with a PROC to the sup., or potentially be
20 like this needs to be a conversation with the controller. It
21 depends on the situation there.

22 Q. So, you if it's continuous non-compliance, you kind of -- you
23 just have to do, first, have to do a first with it on the spot?
24 That's head for the sup. You're on the spot there. You do pursue
25 with performance management?

1 A. That's my expectation.

2 MR. HANCOCK: Okay, all right. That's all of I've got.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. SOPER: Thank you.

5 BY MR. SOPER:

6 Q. So when it comes to the sups. coming in, I'm kind of curious.
7 Like, can you just give me from your standpoint what your
8 perception is of your roles and responsibilities as an OM? Just
9 for the sake of me. I'm not a Center guy. I'm not, I was not
10 enroute guy. What is your main role and responsibility as OM?

11 A. We're a bridge. Right?

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. We're a bridge for everything. So we're a bridge between
14 areas. We're a bridge between the areas and TMU, between Tech Ops
15 and everything else, other facilities and our facility. And then,
16 on top of that, you have the requirements, you know, reporting
17 requirements and all that. But our, in essence, we are a bridge
18 of information.

19 Q. Okay, all right, good. So, when you, when it comes to
20 supervisors and coming in, and obviously, people come and go at
21 different times, different shifts. That's all very dynamic at
22 every facility, and everyone's different. Do you have any sort of
23 standard or technique that you follow to ensure that sups. do
24 their work?

25 And while you're on, our brief of the information? Like, do

1 you have them -- do they normally check in with you upon arrival?
2 Like hey, I'm getting ready to take Area 3, or whatever? Do they
3 come and talk to you as part of a formal, you know, kind of a form
4 of directing?

5 A. Yes. So, the shifts are different. Right? So, in the
6 morning, they have to get their things. So, they always check it
7 at the watch desk. And you know, what do I have going on? Et
8 cetera.

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. The midnight sup. gives them an actual briefing, the
11 recording. The WCS from the watch desk, and then the OM comes in
12 and takes the desk. On the afternoon shift, a lot of them check
13 in. The ones that don't, I look at the them and I say, good
14 afternoon, and I usher them into the watch desk.

15 Q. Okay, all right. And so -- that's fine. Good afternoon,
16 come with me?

17 A. Yes, welcome aboard.

18 Q. All right. So, do you -- I'll bounce around a little bit
19 here. When it comes to weather information, it sounds like, you
20 know, when I listened to you earlier that you probably just from
21 your past experience being a STMC and that, that you heavily when
22 you need weather information or resource information, you kind of
23 go to the CWSU, if you're going to need some like that. Do you --
24 what about the tools that you have available to you out on the
25 floor, monitor-wise or access to the computer? What do you tend

1 to use a lot?

2 A. Yes, I use CWS a good amount. You know, there's a lot of
3 good tools in there. Right?

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. It depends on how much time I have. Like, for example, you
6 can map out arrivals. You can map out all kinds of stuff. It's,
7 it's really great. Right? I use the TSD a ton. But again,
8 because my experience, I use a lot of hotkeys. I have my own
9 settings, great.

10 But when it, on a day like that one, for example, where
11 things are just generally happening so fast, and at that point in
12 time, we were getting to the decision like, what are we going to
13 do here? Right?

14 I just go straight to them because I do need something
15 faster. Because even though I have experienced on that, it's not
16 nearly as fast as they are. They pull it up, and they just start
17 typing, and keys, and they'll show you right then and there. And
18 I can point to exactly what it is that I'm looking for.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But I use the combination of tools there.

21 Q. Do you feel like there's anything lacking based on whether
22 you know, from talking to other colleagues maybe that work in
23 other facilities or things you've just seen through, you know,
24 emerging tech or anything like that? Is there something you guys
25 are missing here? Do you think you're really well equipped with

1 regard to weather as much as you can be?

2 A. You know, I think a good part -- yes, we are. We have a lot
3 of tools out there. We have more tools coming. Right? I know
4 QC's working on a PIREP thing, which I think will be good. We
5 have a new PIREP Board that's going to be coming out. I think the
6 structure of our CWSU unit, where it is, is good. So, I think
7 that we have it works well if we could use it well.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. You know? That's depends on knowledge, depends on how
10 comfortable we are, and how different we work since we are so
11 different.

12 Q. Okay. Well, that leads me to another piece there. So, from
13 the standpoint of right now, are you familiar with any open caps
14 that you guys have?

15 A. Yes, we have our resource management cap. I believe the
16 other one is safety alert. Those are the, as far I know I think
17 those are the only two.

18 Q. Okay, you have one for PIREP and weather dissemination that's
19 open right now. I'm curious about -- so obviously, you weren't
20 necessarily aware that you still have on open for that. And
21 that's okay.

22 But knowing that you do now, I mean, do you see things that
23 are challenges on the floor for being able to, for PIREP and
24 weather dissemination to be complied with at the level that it
25 should be?

1 Do you feel like, I mean, have you noted over time, yes,
2 well, it's a problem because of the way we have to put in PIREPs?
3 Or it's a problem because we just don't have the timing? Or it's
4 a problem because we don't have -- I mean, what do you feel? Or
5 do you see or know any challenges in being able to meet that?

6 A. Yes, you know, talking to people in general --

7 Q. Yes?

8 A. -- not just you, just in general, I think there's a genuine
9 problem with what employees think should be called, and what
10 shouldn't be called. Right? I think we're doing so much better
11 on gathering the data. But the depicted weather, case in point,
12 Delta 175.

13 Q. Sure.

14 A. That, that portion is harder to, to fix, right? I think that
15 that's one of our biggest weaknesses in how to get that
16 accomplished, right? Especially from the OM desk. Not only am I
17 not in the area, hearing somebody not necessarily call it all the
18 time, right? I mean, I may be able to tune in here or there.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. But it's different. Right? You're now another layer
21 removed.

22 Q. Of course.

23 A. But I think that's one of our biggest weaknesses there. As
24 to what people's perception of what needs to be called. What is
25 being depicted. And how do we cross that hurdle?

1 Q. Do you ever reinforce it as the sups. come in? Are you ever
2 reinforcing that with the sups? Like with, like you said, with
3 the good afternoon, come on in here, here we go. And by the way,
4 you know, you can see the PIREP Board already showing that we need
5 PIREPs in that area. So make sure you guys are getting to it. Do
6 you get that kind of thing? Or is it --

7 A. We -- I can, I can firmly say we, non-stop. And it's one of
8 our highlights at the OM desk, non-stop. call the weather, get
9 the PIREPs.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Get the PIREPs.

12 MR. SOPER: All right, Mike, do you have anything else?

13 BY MR. BROWN:

14 Q. Just how many Oms are here? Working? I mean, you have more
15 that --

16 A. Working, right now, working is five.

17 Q Five?

18 A. Yes. Working is five. On the books we have a lot.

19 Q. Well, five is what we're, the core of what we're working
20 with? How many of those, do you know, STMC backgrounds?

21 A. It's just me.

22 Q. You're the only one?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. So, do you think -- and I know you overlap, or you work with
25 someone. Do you think that they -- I'm not asking you to speak

1 for them, but in general. Do they utilize the weather service
2 unit like you do? Or are you just saying because I have that
3 background, I know that where my tools are, I can get what I need
4 quick? Is that commonplace?

5 A. When I'm working in tandem, I don't see it in the same way.
6 But again, we have our -- but I see them use other tools. Right?

7 Q. Right.

8 A. A different way. So, we receive information differently.
9 But to that capacity, no.

10 Q. Okay. I have one, but I think I want to say you answered it
11 earlier. No, I'm all set for now, thank you.

12 MR. SOPER: Brian?

13 BY MR. SWAIN:

14 Q. Good, good questions and answers, so far. What I was going
15 to ask you was, as far as that day, do you think there's anything
16 from your vantage point, top down, that could have set up tools or
17 resources for a different outcome that day?

18 A. You know, I've obviously thought about that day a lot. You
19 know, whenever that stuff happens, you know, nobody wants to see
20 that. I don't, I don't know. I mean, as the shift was going, as
21 we were running through the shift, and as I look at it, I played
22 in my head, and I look at it.

23 I feel that we were informed. And in my opinion, I just, in
24 the information that was being given, that was out there, I don't
25 think that that was -- I don't think there was anything else that

1 we could have done, from my end at the watch desk to pass down
2 information from our briefing, from our standup. We were only two
3 hours removed from stand up at that point, two hours, 15 minutes.
4 I don't think so. And I've thought about it a lot.

5 MR. SWAIN: Good, thank you.

6 MR. SOPER: Seth?

7 BY MR. MYERS:

8 Q. Yes, great answers today, good discussion. Thank you. Just
9 to touch on, you know, you made a great point about how there's
10 lots of different people that use lots of different tools. You
11 all combine that up and get a great product sometimes. Do you
12 ever see anybody using the map values or monitor alert parameters
13 up at the watch desk?

14 A. Yes, that is used all the time. We use the map values. We
15 preach all the times not to just rely on the green, especially
16 during weather days. That doesn't mean anything. You know,
17 complexity doesn't mean green, right?

18 Q. Yes, it's one piece.

19 A. So, you know, so we preach it a lot. We use it a lot up
20 there, also, to guide us. Since we're on the oversight level,
21 obviously, we're not in there. We're not hearing the controllers
22 when they're getting busy. Right? So we'll see it, we'll first
23 go to the alert. But then if there's nothing going on, then we'll
24 just start scrolling through looking at different sectors. So we
25 do use it.

1 Q. So, the discussions in pre-planning for the day, and
2 whatever, you've heard of dynamically adjusting the maps values?

3 A. Yes, we don't do that often. But yes, I definitely know of
4 that.

5 Q. So that does not get talked about or done much here?

6 A. No, COVID was the only time that we did it to adjust because
7 we had weird configurations. But beyond that, that's not
8 something we use.

9 Q. What is your understanding that you would use that for?

10 A. If there's --

11 Q. For the facilities?

12 A. Yes, if there's complexity, you can lower that number, and to
13 adjust for it. I do think it's a valuable tool. I don't think
14 that's something we've explored or that been put on the table, not
15 for any particular reason.

16 Q. So a day when there's PIREPS that are needed, weather in the
17 area getting offloads, would that be a day that you would think
18 that facility would be advantageous to dynamically adjust those
19 numbers?

20 A. I can definitely see the value in that.

21 Q. Do you think that'll have any effect? More effect internally
22 or externally for the building?

23 A. No, I mean, adjusting the value, I do, I think it's both.

24 Right? You know, if you adjust the value, and they're working
25 less aircraft, they can provide a better service. So which

1 inherently ties into, you know, what kind of service we're
2 providing.

3 Q. And I don't know if you have this here or not, I know other
4 facilities do. Like the OS can unilaterally do it by one. The OM
5 can do it by two with consensus with TMU and having a discussion.
6 Is there any parameter setup here for that conversation?

7 A. No, we don't because we don't do it. Right? Again, and not,
8 I don't think for any particular reason. I, I think because
9 historically, it wasn't done, other than COVID. I don't think
10 it's something. But I do generally see the value in that.

11 MR. MYERS: Great, I don't have any other questions.

12 MR. SOPER: Great. Louis?

13 MR. HANCOCK: Ritchie, you know, I appreciate everything
14 you've given so far, and I don't have any other questions.

15 MR. SOPER: Awesome. So, I just have kind of one question.
16 This one might be a little sticky. But I'm curious. As an OM,
17 here, you've been an OM for a while. You were previously STMC.
18 You were CPC, here, I assume because you started in this facility.
19 So you have a lot of experience.

20 Right now, in your current state of the facility, how are
21 you, how well are you supported at your level and the control
22 level, I suppose, from your QC management program? Like how is
23 that working for you?

24 A. What do you mean by support? I just want to make sure I
25 capture that right.

1 Q. Well, let me ask a different question. Do you have
2 challenges with QC management program right now to be able to do
3 your job efficiently and the best that you can? Or does it not
4 affect you at all? Like it's separate? And I don't really --

5 A. There was a change in support manager there. The previous
6 support manager left. New support manager, you know, getting
7 acclimated. I think it's a really great team. I think we get,
8 they're working on a lot of products --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- to get to us, but it's a work in progress. Right?

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. New team, new everything, no general complaints. The Delta
13 175 night, I called the support manager. Had just recently lost
14 somebody and got me in touch with one of the staff specialists.
15 He rode in. Got that ERAM play back to help me out because I
16 didn't want to pull any of the sups. off the floor. Too complex,
17 right?

18 Q. Okay, yes.

19 A. So, but I consider that as part of the support. Right?

20 Q. Those are the things I'm talking about.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. So you feel like you have an open line there to -- that you
23 are supported. When you need it, you can get it?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay, and all right. And one last question. This is kind of

1 an opinion question. But how do you feel the training program is
2 serving ZTL, here, right now? Your guys' -- the combination,
3 refresher, recurrent, even developmental operational training, you
4 know, qualification and training qualification? Do you think it's
5 going very well, here? It has challenges, Or what? I mean, just
6 your feel.

7 A. I think there are a lot of pieces to that. Right?

8 Q. For sure.

9 A. You know, COVID impacted the NAS in a way that even during I
10 couldn't even imagine that we'd still be feeling it now. Those
11 are facts, right?

12 Q. Right.

13 A. Coming out of it, and getting back into the swing of things,
14 and getting refresher back, and you have drift, and you just have
15 people who've been training for five, six years. There's a lot
16 going on in there.

17 With the influx of trainees, I think our department is doing
18 a pretty good job. They're just gearing up for refresher now.
19 And this is one of the first times that the OM group has had a lot
20 of input into it.

21 I just started a couple of my meetings. What else can we
22 put in here reasonable? You know, we're gearing up for sup.
23 seminar, we're doing OS training, so in that respect. But it's
24 taken a decent amount of time to get back fully into the meat and
25 into the swing of things because it's a big ship to get rolling

1 again.

2 Q. Okay. One last question for you. You just mentioned that
3 you do have OM meetings, at least at some point. They are -- are
4 they done with some sort of regularity?

5 A. Yes, we have one on the first and the third.

6 Q. All right.

7 A. And the fifth if there's a fifth Wednesday of the month,
8 depends on what's going on, sometimes we'll have it. Like we had
9 a last week.

10 Q. Okay, so the actual question I had then is, based on that,
11 that you guys have good communication what is your number one
12 challenge from the OM standpoint right now at this facility?
13 Staffing? Training? People? Ability? Whatever it is for you?
14 I mean, you guys have something?

15 A. Ownership of the message and buy-in.

16 Q. Okay. By?

17 A. Overall, you know, the workforce down from the controllers to
18 you know, some sups. Because you know, even you know, in a
19 facility of three people and a facility a 50, you have different
20 people. Right? Everybody's different. We all come, the
21 workforce comes from the same place. We all come from the scope,
22 right?

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. Buy-in is, and ownership is sometimes the -- for me, it's the
25 hardest part to change people's thoughts, and minds, and not let

1 it be my thoughts.

2 Q. So getting buy-in from the, the workforce to accomplish what
3 you need to do mission-wise? Okay, awesome. Do you have any
4 questions for us?

5 A. I don't.

6 MR. SOPER: Does anybody have any oh, by the ways, say now.
7 Anything they need? All right, great. I'm going to go ahead and
8 stop the recording. I show the time at 1317.

9 (Whereupon, at 1:17 p.m. EDT, 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: DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT
NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA ON
AUGUST 29, 2023
Interview of Richie Pena

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA428

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: September 7, 2023

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.



Margaret C. Boardman
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT *

NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: DCA23LA428

ON AUGUST 29, 2023 *

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Interview of: BRANDON ROOP, Traffic Management Officer
Atlanta Air Route Traffic Control Center

Atlanta, Georgia

Friday,
September 8, 2023

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
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I N T E R V I E W

(9:25 a.m. EDT)

1
2
3 MR. SOPER: Test one, two. All right. Brian Soper with the
4 National Transportation Safety Board, an air traffic investigator
5 there; and I have here with me today Mr. Louis Hancock from
6 Jacksonville TRACON, who is here representing the FAA on our group
7 today; Mr. Seth Myers out of Boston Center representing NATCA on
8 our group; Mr. Brian Swain, Delta Air Lines, representing Delta on
9 our group; Mike Brown here with me from our home office back at
10 headquarters, another air traffic investigator like myself. And
11 you have with you your rep that you've chosen for here, and your
12 name, sir?

13 MR. TOMICICH: Mark Tomicich.

14 MR. SOPER: Thank you, Mark. And could you state your name
15 for the record?

16 MR. ROOP: Brandon Roop.

17 MR. SOPER: Thanks, Brandon. All right. As we mentioned
18 earlier, the FAA is an independent federal agency charged with the
19 investigation of civil aviation accidents and incidents of a
20 serious nature, developing probable cause, and hopefully safety
21 recommendations to prevent reoccurrence. We're not affiliated
22 with the DOT or FAA in any way. We're independent by nature and
23 by design. We don't make rules; we don't enforce rules. We're
24 interested strictly in the safety aspect of this investigation.
25 So, we're here gathering facts at this point, so please just

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1 answer to the best of your ability and as truthful as possible.
2 Don't fill in the blanks with things you think we want to hear.
3 If you don't know something, it's okay to say you don't know. If
4 you don't recall something, it's okay to say you don't recall. Do
5 you have any questions for us before we begin?

6 MR. ROOP: No.

7 MR. SOPER: Awesome.

8 INTERVIEW OF BRANDON ROOP

9 BY MR. SOPER:

10 Q. All right. So, some background things. How old are you?

11 A. Forty-five.

12 Q. All right. And you're the TMO here. How long have you been
13 TMO?

14 A. Three years or so. Say --

15 Q. Three years?

16 A. -- three years.

17 Q. Okay. And prior to that, what were you doing? Were you here
18 doing something else?

19 A. I was a support manager for airspace and procedure for the
20 Atlanta District.

21 Q. All right. And when did you come into the FAA?

22 A. September of 2000.

23 Q. And can you kind of just run me through where you've been,
24 where you've been assigned?

25 A. Montgomery approach control --

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1 Q. From when to when? If you can think of month/year, that's
2 good.

3 A. Well, let's see. September to probably November, I was at
4 the FAA Academy, of 2000. Then, Montgomery approach control from
5 2000 to 2003. And Memphis Tower approach control from 2003 to
6 2007. Montgomery approach again as a supervisor from 2007 to
7 2008, June 2007 to June 2008. Atlanta approach as an air traffic
8 controller from June 2008 through maybe 2010. I'm not sure on the
9 dates on that one.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And supervisor, Atlanta approach, for a couple of years.
12 Don't know dates specifically. Then, a support manager for
13 quality control, support manager for training, support manager for
14 airspace and procedures, all at Atlanta TRACON. And then, support
15 manager for airspace and procedures for the Atlanta District, into
16 this role in 2020.

17 Q. And do you remember what month in 2020, by chance, that you
18 came here?

19 A. June, maybe.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I don't recall.

22 Q. No worries. Sometimes, it's fresh in people's memory;
23 sometimes, it's not. All right. Cool. And so -- I'm not even
24 going to ask you that. You kind of gave us a rundown of where you
25 come from. Do you have any pre-FAA air traffic control work

1 experience: military, DOD, contract tower, or anything --

2 A. No.

3 Q. -- like that? Okay. And have you ever been
4 terminated/suspended/asked to resign from any position --

5 A. No.

6 Q. -- ATC position, since you've been in?

7 MR. SOPER: And I'll skip. I don't need any of the medical
8 stuff on you. Obviously, you weren't working (indiscernible).
9 All right. Okay. That's all I really need for background
10 questions. Now, I'm actually not going to open up with questions
11 this time. I'm actually just going to go ahead and kick it off
12 with some of the others that are here and let them ask questions.
13 And today, we're going to start with Seth.

14 BY MR. MYERS:

15 Q. Awesome. Thanks for coming in, Brandon. So, you've got a
16 wealth of experience, obviously. You've worked here for a very
17 long time. And I'm not sure if you're familiar with it from the
18 past, but could you walk me through the process here of when a
19 PIREP comes into the building, how it's supposed to flow through
20 the building and out to the user?

21 A. Enroute specifically?

22 Q. This building specifically.

23 A. I do not know.

24 Q. Okay. So, yeah, maybe help me out. As a TMO, then, for this
25 TMU unit here, you're oversight for the TMU unit here in Atlanta

1 Center?

2 A. I am not operational oversight. I'm efficiency oversight.

3 Q. Efficiency oversight for TMU here. Okay. So, in this unit
4 here, they have a few different positions and everything. Like
5 Atlanta position, they have a NAS coordinator, they have an STMC.
6 In particular, I'm kind of curious about the weather coordinator
7 position, and what you know of it, and do you know anything --

8 A. I don't know anything about the weather coordinator. I'm not
9 involved in the day-to-day running of the unit here at all.

10 MR. SOPER: Can I interject for a second?

11 MR. MYERS: Sure.

12 BY MR. SOPER:

13 Q. Let's start off with that, because I'm not going to lie to
14 you, I need a better understanding of what a TMO is. I don't have
15 an enroute background, so -- and with a large TMU and stuff. So,
16 can you just kind of give us an idea of what your roles and
17 responsibilities are and how you function at this facility, what
18 role you're playing?

19 A. Sure. My role is to ensure that all the traffic management
20 units in the District, Charlotte, Atlanta Tower, Atlanta TRACON,
21 Atlanta Center, do the best we can balancing efficiency, and
22 capacity, and constraint.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So, I'm assigned -- my office -- or, my direct reports are
25 Atlanta TRACON. I have two STMCs that work for me.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. At Charlotte, at Atlanta Tower, at Atlanta Center, the STMCs
3 are assigned to someone in the building, whether it's an Ops
4 manager like it is here. I'm assuming it's an Ops manager in
5 Charlotte and Atlanta Tower. So, they're performance-managed by
6 people in that building. The Atlanta TRACON, the two STMCs work
7 directly for me.

8 Q. Okay. So --

9 A. I'm a liaison between those four facilities, and all the
10 surrounding facilities, and the stakeholders regarding efficiency.

11 MR. HANCOCK: Well, can I --

12 MR. SOPER: Yeah, go right ahead.

13 MR. HANCOCK: -- ask some further questions?

14 MR. SOPER: Please.

15 BY MR. HANCOCK:

16 Q. So, are you the only TMO for the Atlanta District?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. Did they previously have more than one TMO?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Well, years ago, yes. I'm not familiar with how that worked.
22 Before the district concept, Atlanta Center had a TMO that was in
23 the building, and I believe the TMO duties Atlanta, the TRACON and
24 the Tower facilities, were assigned to an office manager at
25 Atlanta TRACON.

1 Q. Okay. So --

2 A. That was --

3 Q. So, just trying to, yeah, understand the flow here. So,
4 you're the traffic management officer for the District. In-house,
5 the traffic management unit, you do not have any direct reports
6 from Atlanta Center?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. So, none of the STMCs report to you?

9 A. Correct. They report to operations managers.

10 Q. Do you know who?

11 A. Richie Pena.

12 MR. SOPER: Sorry for bouncing around. This is Brian Soper.
13 For the sake of the recording, I want to do this, because I know
14 we're bouncing a little bit for today, but this is unique to me,
15 okay? I'll be honest with you.

16 BY MR. SOPER:

17 Q. So, where's your physical office? Do you have one, or do you
18 work remotely?

19 A. I have an office at Atlanta TRACON.

20 Q. Okay. So, I'm a little bit curious. I mean, is there a
21 reason why you have direct reports at Atlanta TRACON, and you do
22 this external stuff, or kind of collateral, with the district and
23 the other TMUs that exist, or, I mean, was it just convenience at
24 the time, is there a reason that the TRACON would be the place
25 where the TMO would be out of?

- 1 A. The district offices are in the TRACON.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. So, I work for the District.
- 4 Q. Okay.
- 5 A. In reality, I work for the District.
- 6 Q. Yeah.
- 7 A. On paper, I work for the air traffic manager at Atlanta
- 8 TRACON.
- 9 Q. Okay. Okay. Wow. That's pretty unique, a little bit, like
- 10 how your operating seems like, then. I don't know.
- 11 A. The only unique part is that my office is out of TRACON
- 12 versus the Center, because if you go to Miami, let's say. The
- 13 TMO's office may be at Miami Center, but he is still doing the
- 14 same things that I'm doing at Miami Tower, or Fort Lauderdale, or
- 15 wherever else that has a unit.
- 16 Q. I guess, so, the part for me is, so, the direct reports that
- 17 you have there, so they're -- from a performance management
- 18 standpoint, the STMCs at Atlanta TRACON report to you?
- 19 A. Yes, yes.
- 20 Q. You're responsible for the day-to-day operation or oversight,
- 21 or not really that strictly.
- 22 A. Not really.
- 23 Q. Strictly for performance management.
- 24 A. For performance management.
- 25 Q. Okay.

1 A. The Ops manager at Atlanta -- whoever's in charge of the
2 operation that day, which is generally an OM at Atlanta TRACON,
3 has operational oversight of the STMCs.

4 Q. So, is that basically just for convenience because you're
5 there to help break it down? Meaning, if they chose to have you
6 in Atlanta Center, you still wouldn't be the performance manager
7 for the STMCs at the TRACON, right?

8 A. No, but I would still be efficiency oversight --

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. -- for everybody, yes.

11 Q. Okay. I got you. All right. I'm starting to see what that
12 entails now. So, I guess, if you could break that down a little
13 bit further. So, when you talk about efficiency oversight of all
14 of these, are you involved in the procedure-making for these
15 facilities, or -- well, making probably is not the right word. In
16 developing procedures or reviewing those for consistency or for
17 continuity between the different facilities, or that's kind of a
18 separate thing, as well?

19 A. I am. I am, yes, but a lot of that is because of my
20 background in Atlanta. So, I'm brought into a lot of discussions
21 about a lot of different things that aren't necessarily traffic
22 management. As far as efficiency goes, I am brought into those
23 conversations to identify impacts to throughput at, you know,
24 different airports, or facilities, or whatever.

25 Q. Okay. While you're on that thread, then, let me just say

1 that. Can you just give us an example of a typical daily routine
2 for you, what you're involved in? You know, like what you -- I
3 know it's going to vary, but I meant, in general, your daily
4 routine is --

5 A. So --

6 Q. -- probably going to be what?

7 A. -- I start the day reviewing the day before, with its -- just
8 whatever the operations were at Charlotte, Atlanta, and enroute.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Were there any delays that were unexpected? Were there any
11 constraints that were unexpected? How did we perform with the
12 constraints that were present? And what can we do today to
13 improve on what we did yesterday?

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So, that --

16 Q. And then, who do you work with here, then, for things that
17 might involve the Atlanta Center? So, you're over there. Who is
18 your kind of --

19 A. I work with a group of people.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So, if there are issues that need to be handled performance-
22 wise or whatever, Richie Pena is my counterpart.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I work with the air traffic manager, I work with the union, I
25 work with the STMC group, and the traffic management support

1 staff.

2 Q. Okay. Do you guys hold regular meetings of any period? This
3 would be like, yeah, we meet monthly, or we meet weekly, or
4 something ad hoc.

5 A. I'm here once a week.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But it depends on where the need is in the Atlanta area
8 generally.

9 MR. SOPER: Understand. Okay. Hijacked you a little bit,
10 there, Seth, as we went through that, but I'm going to pass it
11 back to you if you have anything right now.

12 BY MR. MYERS:

13 Q. Yeah, I'm just curious, in the role that you're playing for
14 the district, I guess, where do you fall into like the TMR
15 process?

16 A. For A80, for the Atlanta TRACON, I'm the -- not necessarily
17 the initiator all the time, but I do what the QC process says,
18 right? So, if the air traffic manager says, hey, can you do a TMR
19 on this thing from August 6? Absolutely. So, I'll compile all
20 the information and put the TMR together. For other facilities,
21 I'll reach out to STMCs, or the STMCs at Atlanta Tower or
22 Charlotte, and say, hey, can you put a TMR together? Let me know
23 your findings. Because the TMRs belong to the facility. Same
24 thing for Atlanta Center. I'll reach out to the group and the
25 support specialists and say, hey, can you put a TMR together for,

1 you know, whatever event, and let me know what you find? And I'll
2 share that over.

3 MR. SOPER: What is a TMR?

4 MR. MYERS: A traffic management review. It's --

5 MR. SOPER: Review.

6 MR. MYERS: -- just the review process in the 634.

7 MR. SOPER: Of a particular -- is that event-driven or date-
8 driven?

9 MR. MYERS: Yeah. So --

10 MR. SOPER: Like, hey, we have --

11 MR. MYERS: -- SSR is a system service review. It's --

12 MR. SOPER: Yeah.

13 MR. MYERS: -- to review services.

14 MR. SOPER: Yep.

15 MR. MYERS: A traffic management review is to review
16 efficacy, and --

17 MR. ROOP: Right.

18 MR. MYERS: -- if the miles-in-trail and whatnot, so to
19 speak, were effective at what they were trying to do.

20 MR. ROOP: And honestly, I do that every day, whether there's
21 a TMR entered into, you know, the system, or not, I'm looking at
22 the operation every day.

23 MR. MYERS: That's all I have.

24 MR. SOPER: Thanks. Brian?

25 BY MR. SWAIN:

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1 Q. Thanks for coming in, Brandon. You said you talk about
2 efficiency and oversight over the Atlanta District. Can you talk
3 about how you collaborate between the three different entities
4 within the district as far as that goes on a daily basis?

5 A. A lot of it is through Teams. A lot of phone calls. If
6 there is something that is important or emergent, I'm, you know,
7 30 minutes away from any of the facilities other than Charlotte in
8 the district. So, I'll come over here at least once a week,
9 generally, and just, you know, talk about how things are going.
10 But if there's anything specific, yeah, it's targeted to whatever
11 facility has the need and where I need to focus my attention.

12 Q. Okay. On weather days like that, between the three -- we're
13 talking about Atlanta. We'll just use Atlanta as an example.
14 Talk about your involvement then as far as efficiency of input.

15 A. So, it starts with, what are my expectations of how an event
16 would go based on experience and the overall, if we're talking
17 about weather, the overall weather picture? So, if any of the
18 metrics jump out at me that I wouldn't expect to see, that's where
19 I start to focus. And it just goes from there, depending on
20 organically what happens within that, you know, first look at what
21 happened.

22 MR. SWAIN: That's it for me.

23 MR. SOPER: I'm going to jump back in. This is Brian Soper
24 again. I'm still trying to put it all together, here, so I
25 apologize if I seem a little out.

1 BY MR. SOPER:

2 Q. So, in general, you're not involved or have a -- I don't
3 know, I guess the staffing/the positions that each facility has
4 isn't necessarily a concern for you at all. You're looking at the
5 overall, the traffic throughput, you know, the constraints to
6 traffic. You know, how is that working? How are we moving
7 traffic? How is -- those kind of things. You're looking at the
8 big picture. As far as, if you review -- was a TMR done after
9 this event, by chance, for here?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And do you complete something from that, like a report; or is
12 something just provided to them, like, hey, we noted this or that;
13 or --

14 A. It is more, its own thing.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, if it's safe, we can go in and look. If there's
17 something that I feel like the facility needs to be aware of, good
18 or bad --

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. -- whether there's room for improvement or not, I will go to
21 the air traffic manager and say, hey, this is what I saw, or this
22 is what the team found, or whoever completes the TMR.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. These are places we can do better, or these are places that
25 we did very, very well.

1 Q. And that's not really position-driven. That's just saying,
2 you know, that generally, this could be better. It would be up to
3 the facility. If you were to say like, hey, this is an area we
4 would be doing better there by looking at this, it's their purview
5 to then determine how they're going to improve that here and --

6 A. It is informational --

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. -- only.

9 Q. Okay. So you recall, just about this event, what came out of
10 that TMR or what you noted? Did you note anything, you know --

11 A. The units specifically in the facilities overall, I thought,
12 did a great job.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. You know, we're desensitized here, I think, a little bit,
15 because we work around weather so much, and we're really --

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. I don't want to toot everybody's horn, but everybody's very,
18 very good at it --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- from, you know, controllers, to management, to flight
21 crews, to everybody. So --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- from a traffic management point of view, it was a very,
24 very well-run event.

25 MR. SOPER: Okay. All right. That's all I've got for right

1 now. Mike?

2 BY MR. BROWN:

3 Q. Good morning. So, same thing, trying to wrap my head around.
4 So, operation's happening right now, your day-to-day doesn't
5 involve -- you're not overseeing anything?

6 A. No.

7 Q. You're not approving anything? You're kind of the -- I don't
8 want to say this in a bad way, but you're the guy, hey, we had
9 this operation yesterday. Now, I'm reviewing. Those miles in
10 trial didn't work, or you guys did great. You're just kind of
11 compiling all that data and kicking it out for the district?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. So, on that --

14 A. Along with all the other facilities surrounding us that may
15 or may not have things going on, or --

16 Q. Got you.

17 A. -- college football game in Tuscaloosa this weekend, or, you
18 know, whatever.

19 Q. Right, for the special events, things like that. How many
20 people directly report to you, then? Just --

21 A. Two.

22 Q. -- the two? Okay. And you report to the ATM at ZTL? That's
23 your --

24 A. No.

25 Q. No?

1 A. I --

2 Q. This is where I'm lost.

3 A. This is where it's --

4 Q. Who signs your eval?

5 A. The air traffic manager at Atlanta TRACON.

6 Q. At Atlanta TRACON. Okay.

7 A. But in reality, I work for the district. I work for the
8 district leadership --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- and the air traffic managers in the facility and the
11 facilities of the district.

12 MR. BROWN: Okay. I got it. That's all I have right now.

13 MR. SOPER: Okay. Thanks, Mike. Louis?

14 MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Brian.

15 BY MR. HANCOCK:

16 Q. So, a little different than other facilities that I've been
17 to for the TMO role. It sounds more of, your roles fall like a
18 support manager would versus a typical TMO that is normally --
19 that the TMU units directly report. STMCs directly report to the
20 TMO, and involved in the daily operation, versus an efficiency.
21 Is that pretty accurate?

22 A. It depends. Right. So, it's the same, but it's different.
23 If any of the other TMOs, the other 17 of us, I think --

24 MR. SOPER: That's across the NAS?

25 MR. ROOP: Across the NAS.

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1 BY MR. HANCOCK:

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Are assigned to a facility other than a center, they're in
4 the same position that I am. So, if the Chicago TMO, for
5 instance, is, his position of record is at C90, he's in the same
6 position that I am. If it's at O'Hare, it's the same position
7 that I am. So, the job doesn't change, necessarily, other than
8 the performance management part.

9 Q. Okay. So, we'll talk a little bit about A80 and the direct
10 reports you have there with the STMCs there. What is your
11 understanding at A80 in the weather coordinator position at A80 in
12 the TMU unit there?

13 A. And I don't recall specifically. I'd have to go read through
14 SOPs and whatever. But the terminal traffic management units are
15 obviously different than enroute traffic management units or tower
16 traffic management units. So, the TMC at A80 has all the duties
17 and responsibilities of the traffic management unit, other than
18 oversight. They do everything. So, weather coordinator duties
19 are the responsibility of the one A80 traffic management
20 coordinator.

21 Q. So, you typically only have one TMC working on a shift at a
22 time, and one STMC?

23 A. One TMC, yes. The STMC varies. But at A80, the STMC is not
24 only doing STMC duties. They are doing general OS duties,
25 operational supervisor duties, and very rarely are only focused on

1 traffic management.

2 MR. HANCOCK: Okay. That's all I've got for right now.

3 MR. SOPER: Okay. Seth, did you have any follow-up?

4 BY MR. MYERS:

5 Q. Yeah, no, I'm just, I'm not familiar with this setup. Like,
6 every other facility I've ever gone to, the TMU, the TMO --
7 because I thought the -- and I'd have to look it up, but I think,
8 in like the .3, it talks about how each STMC reports to the TMO
9 either at the overlying center or the overlying TRACON, wherever
10 they are. So, I'm just confused as to like who is in charge of
11 the traffic management units, then? You're saying, here at
12 Atlanta, that would be the ATM?

13 A. The ATM of the facility is ultimately in charge of the unit
14 at that facility.

15 MR. SOPER: Yeah, it's different for me, too. I think that's
16 where we're all struggling. To us, it's --

17 MR. ROOP: Yeah.

18 BY MR. MYERS:

19 Q. Well, I think, in the -- and I'm just -- maybe I'm mistaken,
20 but I think, in the .3, like under like line of authority, like
21 the TMO is the head of the traffic management units.

22 A. So, this changed, and I'm not positive, you know, 100 percent
23 positive, on what .3 says, but when the district concept went into
24 effect in like, say, 2018, I'm not positive on that date, either,
25 when everything, you know, was consolidated in the district, all

1 the support managers worked for the district. Everything outside
2 the operation was a district responsibility. The TMO, during that
3 time, had -- all the STMCs in the district were direct reports.
4 The TMO's responsible for hiring for performance management, for
5 everything day-to-day, for every facility in the district that had
6 a unit. When the district concept was refined, all of the traffic
7 management units got separated back to their facilities, so they
8 didn't work for the district TMO. The Atlanta Center TMU went
9 back to Atlanta Center. The Atlanta TRACON TMU went back to
10 Atlanta TRACON, Charlotte, Atlanta. And the TMO was assigned to a
11 facility instead of overall being assigned to the district. So, I
12 don't know, I'd have to go back and read the 7210 --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- to see what it says.

15 Q. I would, too.

16 A. Yeah. But that --

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. -- I mean, again, my position isn't -- the structure isn't
19 unique to me. Where I am assigned is unique or, you know, not
20 necessarily the same as all the other districts.

21 MR. MYERS: No, I get that. I don't have any other
22 questions, Brian, no.

23 MR. SOPER: Do you have anything else, Brian?

24 MR. SWAIN: I don't have anything.

25 MR. SOPER: Mike?

1 MR. SWAIN: No, sir.

2 MR. SOPER: Louis?

3 MR. HANCOCK: (No audible response.)

4 MR. SOPER: I don't, either. I'm going to go ahead and stop
5 the recording for now. I show the time at 9:53.

6 (Whereupon, at 9:53 a.m. EDT, 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: DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT
NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA ON
AUGUST 29, 2023
Interview of Brandon Roop

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA428

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: September 6, 2023

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.



Lisa D. Sevarino
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT *

NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: DCA23LA428

ON AUGUST 29, 2023 *

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* * * * *

Interview of: EVAN WINSTON, Logan Sector Radar Controller (R49)
Atlanta Air Route Traffic Control Center

Atlanta, Georgia

Wednesday,
September 6, 2023

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CHAD MITCHELL, Representative
(On behalf of Evan Winston)

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:35 p.m. EDT)

MR. SOPER: All right. My name is Brian Soper, Lead Air Traffic Investigator with the NTSB. I have with us today, Louis Hancock out of Jacksonville Traicom (ph.) and he is here representing the FAA in our group today. Seth Myers out of Boston Center, representing NATCA on our group. Ryan Swain, representing Delta Airlines on our group. And Mike Brown with me out of headquarters, part of my team back there.

So, and you have with you here today, your representative that you have chosen, could you state your name for the record, sir?

MR. MITCHELL: Chad Mitchell, Atlanta Center FAC rep.

MR. SOPER: Thank you. And you also with you today, observing the FAC rep. incoming?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes, the incoming FAC rep.

MR. SOPER: What's your name for the record, sir?

MR. SHIELDS: Patrick Shields.

MR. SOPER: And Shields as in S-H-I-E-L-D-S?

MR. SHIELDS: Yes.

MR. SOPER: Thank you. And could you go ahead and state your name for the record, sir?

MR. WINSTON: Yes, Evan Winston.

MR. SOPER: Winston?

MR. WINSTON: Yes.

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1 MR. SOPER: Okay, thank you. As I mentioned earlier the NTSB
2 is an independent Federal Agency, charged with investigating civil
3 aviation accidents of a serious nature, developing probable cause
4 and hopefully safety recommendations to some portion of industry
5 to help prevent reoccurrence.

6 We are not affiliated with the DOT or the FAA in any way.
7 We're non-regulatory. So, we do not make rules, we do not enforce
8 rules. Our process can be quite lengthy. It'll probably take
9 about a year for the process to close.

10 We hope that you will return back to that investigation, even
11 though it'll be long in your rearview mirror just to get the rest
12 of the story and understand what really happened because you'll
13 get to see the other side of things. What was going on with the
14 crew, what was going on with dispatch, what was going on with the
15 weather.

16 You'll get to see all those pieces of the puzzle. So it kind
17 of helps put things in perspective and kind of close the loop on
18 it. If you have any questions of us, along the way, just feel
19 free to ask. And if you need to take a break at any time, just
20 let us know. You can take a break. Do you have any questions for
21 us before we begin?

22 MR. WINSTON: No.

23 MR. SOPER: Cool. All right. So I told you I had some black
24 and white kind of questions here.

25 INTERVIEW OF EVAN WINSTON

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1 BY MR. SOPER:

2 Q. So how old were you on the day of the event?

3 A. Thirty-five.

4 Q. Thirty-five. And what are your operating initials here?

5 A. Echo Oscar.

6 Q. Okay. And do you have any prior pre-FAA air traffic control
7 work experience? Military? DOD? Contract? Tower? Anything?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. And while I'm thinking about it, can I get the email
10 address that you would like us to use -- this isn't going into the
11 report. This is for me to send you the transcript.

12 A. Okay. [REDACTED].

13 Q. Yes.

14 A. [REDACTED]

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. [REDACTED]

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. At [REDACTED].

19 Q. Okay. That's where I'll send the transcript when it comes
20 out. If you feel like it's been an exorbitant amount of time, it
21 will take at least a month, a month and a half to get those back.
22 But if you feel like you haven't seen it in a while, and you're
23 wondering, just feel free to email me.

24 As a matter of fact, card right there. Take one, call me,
25 email me, text me, I don't care how you get a hold of me. Just

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1 let me know. Say, hey, did you ever get anywhere with this? And
2 we'll let you know what's up. Do you, do you hold any collateral
3 duties here or have you been in any recent details taking you
4 outside the facility that would affect currency, or that type of
5 thing?

6 A. No.

7 Q. And if you would kind of give us your 10,000-foot aviation
8 bio? What I mean by that is, you know, just kind of, yes, I was
9 always interested in aviation. I graduated high school. I went
10 to college. I did this. I got my pilot's license, or I went to
11 air traffic. I was a bit off the street. Whatever it was for
12 you, that led you to where you're at here today.

13 A. Okay. Basically, in high school, one of my best friend's dad
14 was a controller for the Navy. And he basically was kind of like
15 one of my mentors. And I was always interested in aviation.
16 Ended up choosing the school that he went to, which was Embry
17 Riddle.

18 I got my bachelor's there with minors in Homeland Security,
19 Human Factors and Psychology. And pretty much after graduation, I
20 was working at U-Haul down at Daytona Beach, became a manager
21 transferred here, and waited for my call.

22 Q. Okay, cool. And so, this is your only facility? Your only
23 aircraft facility, awesome. When did you say you got here again?

24 A. I got here in 2012.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. That was my report date.

2 Q. Then, you went to the academy, right?

3 A. Well, you know what, actually, I got here -- did I get here
4 in 2012? It was between 2012 and 2013, early 2013 I think is when
5 graduated from the academy.

6 Q. Okay. All right, cool. And have you ever been, out of
7 curiosity, well, I'll ask you that later when we're not on the
8 recording. Have you ever been fired, terminated, suspended, or
9 asked to resign any ATC position since you've been with the FAA?

10 A. No.

11 Q. And how would you describe your overall health in the terms
12 of excellent, good, fair, poor?

13 A. I would say excellent.

14 Q. And did you have a medical clearance on the day of the event?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And do you have any limitations, waivers, or restrictions to
17 your medical clearance?

18 A. No.

19 Q. I see you wear glasses. Are you required to wear glasses or
20 have them in your possession when you're performing your traffic
21 duties?

22 A. Not required, no.

23 Q. Okay. And were you taking any medications prescription, non-
24 prescription, over the counter on the day of the event?

25 A. No.

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1 Q. Okay. And was drug or alcohol screening performed as a
2 result of this event?

3 A. No.

4 Q. And has there been any major changes in your health over the
5 last year good, bad, or indifferent? These are big things. Had a
6 surgery, had a pin put in my arm, you know, lost 50 pounds.

7 A. Well, I mean, I've lost weight. Probably like 35 pounds.

8 Q. Nice. I need to get on that track. I was there once and
9 then I got it all back quick. How about major changes in your
10 personal life over the last year? Got divorced, got married, had
11 a child, adopted a child, anything?

12 A. No.

13 Q. And last question, similar line, major changes in your
14 financial situation in the last year? Won the Lotto? Filed
15 bankruptcy?

16 A. No.

17 Q. All right.

18 A. I wish.

19 Q. All right. This one's a little bit harder, but I want you to
20 think back and try to be as detailed as you can for me. I'm going
21 ask you some questions to kind of step you through it. I know,
22 it's been about a week or so since the event, or just over. Let's
23 see, the event was on, was that a Tuesday? What was it?

24 A. It was a Tuesday.

25 Q. It was a Tuesday, right? And it happened at about 1830 in

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1 the evening, local here. So, we need to try to capture your 72-
2 hour history. So that 72 hours leading up to that time. So, I'm
3 going to kind of, I'm going work from the time of the event and go
4 backwards.

5 And just try to work with me on that, on answering these
6 questions. So, on the day of the event, what shift were you
7 working that day? Was that your normal shift? Your normally
8 scheduled shift?

9 A. Yes, that was a normal shift. That was a 1500 F to midnight.
10 So, early at night.

11 Q. Okay, all right. And what day was that in your set?

12 A. That was my first day back.

13 Q. That was your first day back? And did you, were you coming
14 off or two days off?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Or are you guys on mandatory sixes here?

17 A. No, I was coming off -- we're not mandatory six, but I do
18 have six overtimes in a row.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So, it's -- I pretty much, except for the weeks that I've had
21 leave for the last two months, I've been working six-day work
22 weeks.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So, prior to that event.

25 Q. So, you were coming off one day off?

- 1 A. Right.
- 2 Q. All right. And so on that, on that day, you said you were
3 working a 15. Do you remember what time you got up that day?
- 4 A. I don't recall.
- 5 Q. That's okay.
- 6 A. It's very possible that around 5:45 or 6:00 a.m. because I
7 normally take my son to his private school --
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. -- on Tuesdays. So it's possible. However, I had a mid the
10 day before that. Overtime shift was a mid. So, my wife could
11 have taken him.
- 12 Q. I got you. Okay, do you remember? So, so not the immediate
13 day before you were off, but then you had the mid right before
14 that is what you're saying, right? So, you have the mid on Sunday
15 night?
- 16 A. Had the mid on --
- 17 Q. Sunday night to Monday morning?
- 18 A. Gosh, you know, I'm thinking, let's see. So, Friday, Friday
19 night into Saturday morning. And then, Saturday night into Sunday
20 morning.
- 21 Q. You had two mids there.
- 22 A. Double mid.
- 23 Q. Saturday night into Sunday morning. Then you were -- so
24 Sunday was that? That was actually considered a workday because
25 you were coming off the mid.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. And then Monday with your off day?

3 A. Right.

4 Q. Okay. All right, I'm caught up with you now on that. So
5 thinking back, so on the day, you said you don't really know what
6 time you got up. Do you remember what time you would have went to
7 bed on your off day, roughly? On that Monday?

8 A. Maybe midnight, probably. Because it's hard because you're
9 still in that rotation.

10 Q. No, I get it.

11 A. Yes, so maybe 12:00 to 1:00 a.m., maybe.

12 Q. Okay. And so on that day, what did you do on your off day?
13 Do you remember?

14 A. The off day --

15 Q. Not every single thing but I mean.

16 A. Monday, basically just picked my son up. Took him, I
17 probably took him private school, picked him up, did homework with
18 the kids. And that was probably it.

19 Q. Basic home stuff? Normal daily routine for you?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Nothing that was out of the ordinary?

22 A. No.

23 Q. And so, on Monday, you were coming off the mid? No, I
24 apologize, you weren't coming off the mid. You were -- so,
25 Sunday, do you remember? You probably don't remember what time

1 you got up that morning, then on Monday, your off day?

2 A. On Monday, on my off day, they didn't have school, right?

3 Q. Yes, that's right.

4 A. Because that was a holiday. So no, they didn't. Monday

5 probably got up, say maybe 10:00, then in that case.

6 Q. Right. So Sunday night, what time do you feel you went to

7 bed? That would have been your, coming off your second mid in the

8 morning. That night, what time you think you went to bed?

9 A. Okay, so that day. Probably about, like, at least 7:30 in

10 the morning, I probably went to sleep.

11 Q. Yes?

12 A. Because getting off at 6:30, getting home.

13 Q. Yes.

14 A. Kind of unwinding -- so there's, probably by, like, by 8:00.

15 Q. And then you, did you, then you got up again later that day,

16 I assume or something, maybe?

17 A. Yes, yes, yes, I get up. Because everybody wakes up.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. Starts making noise, so.

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. So, I was probably at least by 1:00 or 2:00.

22 Q. So, overall, how do you, how many hours of sleep do you need

23 to feel rested? Like, just for you personally? What do you need

24 to really feel rested?

25 A. Personally?

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. Probably anywhere between six to eight hours, I'll be okay.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. You know, coffee, stuff like that.

5 Q. And then, on the, those three days, right there where you had
6 mid watch off day, and do you feel like you were getting normal,
7 adequate rest like you normally would? Enough to get you through,
8 I mean, all things considered?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. I mean was there anything out of the ordinary happening in
11 your life, that was kind of, I mean, you know. Did you have a
12 sick child? Did you have, you know, somebody got in a car
13 accident that was a friend of yours, you had to go help out? Or
14 any of those kinds of things? Everything was pretty much daily
15 routine?

16 A. Yes, pretty much.

17 Q. Normal eating, normal sleeping?

18 A. Yes, the only thing that was different was the, normally when
19 I have an overtime shift on Sunday, it was scheduled for like an
20 8 o'clock shift. And this one happened to be a mid. So, it was
21 kind of like a back-to-back mid.

22 Q. Yes.

23 A. And with me, now, I had switched schedules, that's what my
24 days are kind of running together. I switched schedules earlier
25 this year.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So I'm still kind of on Wednesday, Thursday, days being off.
3 And on that shift, I had a mid every week. So, now when the mids
4 are kind of being rotated throughout the team, you know, it can be
5 a little challenging sometimes because my clock is so set on
6 always having --

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. -- a mid. To now, with school kicking back off and things,
9 it's kind of weird and wacky.

10 Q. I got you.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. All right, so did you file a NASS app as a result of
13 this event?

14 A. I did.

15 Q. Did you get confirmation back from the FCC that they received
16 it?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay, good. And have you been interviewed about this event
19 prior to now? Other than your pre-briefing that you had with
20 them?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. What was that from?

23 A. That was yesterday with a supervisor to kind of like go over,
24 or review the event, and go over the details and stuff like that.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And then, I guess, the week that it happened I had another
2 little sit down, and watch it, and talk about what happened.

3 Q. Okay. Did, was part of what you got yesterday, did you get
4 it, did they do PROC with you guys?

5 A. Yes, they did.

6 Q. That was yesterday?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. All right, and how long do you think you were in the
9 pre-brief with the FAA today? Not, not counting the attorney.
10 Just the other guys that you went in with.

11 A. Fifteen to 20 minutes, maybe.

12 Q. Okay. And so you have had an opportunity to read, to watch
13 and replay the event, obviously, you said.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Was it like a Falcon replay or SATORI?

16 A. It was, yes.

17 Q. Okay. And was it, do you remember, was a relief briefing
18 conducted when you took the position that day?

19 A. I believe so.

20 Q. And was that recorded?

21 A. I believe so, yes.

22 Q. And do you guys utilize a checklist here?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Is it electronic, or is it like a paper one that you have?

25 A. Both, both. There's one that's actually on our scopes. I

1 have mine built in on the scope.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And I believe there is a little cut out that is on sector, as
4 well.

5 Q. So, what one do you think you used that day?

6 A. When I got off position?

7 Q. When you were when you were taking the position?

8 A. When I was taking the position? I don't remember what they
9 used.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. All right. And on a scale of one to five, five being the
13 heaviest, how would you rate the traffic volume at the time of the
14 event?

15 A. I would say four.

16 Q. And was that normal? Was that average, above average, or
17 below average for that day, and shift, and time of the week do you
18 think?

19 A. Above average.

20 Q. Above average? And a similar question, on a scale of one to
21 five, five being the most complex, how would you rate traffic
22 complexity at the time? And when you answer this one, anything
23 that could have made it more complex.

24 Weather in the area? Comm problems you were having with
25 somebody. Not getting the right stuff from the Traicon or having

1 trouble, you know, whatever. Had lost comm with an aircraft?
2 Anything that could have been a distraction or, or been, added
3 complexity, rather.

4 A. I would say a four.

5 Q. Four. And same, was that average, above average, below
6 average for that time of day and type of --

7 A. Above average.

8 Q. Okay. And were there any distractions leading at, occurring
9 at, or leading up to the time of the event? And this again, like
10 I was kind of just mentioning, this can mean anything and from
11 loud noises in the room, somebody bugging you for relief, you
12 know, lost comm problems, equipment issues, aircraft not doing
13 what you needed, emergency in progress, anything. Anything that
14 you can think of.

15 A. Say the question again?

16 Q. There may have been a distraction --

17 A. Oh, distractions.

18 Q. -- leading to or during the time of event?

19 A. Sure, there was abnormal conditions from an area being shut
20 off. And I was getting their arrivals to blend into my feed going
21 into Atlanta. So, I was kind of distracted by seeing where those
22 aircraft were, and trying to figure out where they were going to
23 fit.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. There was also training going on next to me. So, the

1 communications between them, what they were talking about. And
2 also, I was concerned with the feed I would be getting from the
3 trainee and how that was going to work with the extra aircraft.

4 Q. So, that, that training that was in progress, though, that
5 was a position that was directly feeding you?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Okay, all right. What position was it that was next to you?

8 A. Linear. So, the R50.

9 Q. All right, so you did not have a d-side, correct?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Do you guys normally, ever, do you ever have d-sides here?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Is it routine, not routine?

14 A. Just depends on the situation to be honest with you.

15 Q. Okay. All right, had you, had you asked for a d-side at all?

16 A. No.

17 Q. At that time with the other stuff that was going on?

18 A. No. When I was about to ask, one was given to me because
19 after I got the call, basically the shut off call, when I was
20 about to ask, he put one in.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So, I got one kind of like right in the nick of time.

23 Q. Okay. So, you ended up getting one.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And this was after the event occurred? Or --

1 A. It was after the event occurred.

2 Q. Yes, okay. And so, do you recall the general weather
3 conditions that existed at, or, or leading up to the time of the
4 event? What I'm looking for here is not some particular METAR per
5 se, but did you guys have a lot of precip. in the area, or some
6 precip.? Was it building? Was it not building? Was it moving?
7 Was it not moving? Did you have convective activity? Do you
8 remember any in-flight advisories? Were there SIGMETS or AIRMETS,
9 or anything? CWAs in effect?

10 A. It was definitely precip. in Atlanta Approach's airspace.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. That was one of the reasons why I was getting the offloads.
13 It was affecting the southern sectors of my airspace. And after
14 the event happened, you can basically after that it started
15 building into my airspace.

16 Q. Okay. And did you receive a pre-duty weather briefing on
17 that day?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. All right. And does anything stand out to you from it? Do
20 you remember anything standing out as something that would just,
21 yes, I remember specifically they mentioned this was going to be a
22 problem or that was going to be a problem? Was there anything?

23 A. No.

24 Q. And what is your general feel of the pre-duty weather
25 briefing, right now, in its current state? Is it very helpful?

1 Somewhat helpful? Not very helpful?

2 A. Somewhat helpful.

3 Q. Okay. Did you have a cellular phone or PED on you at the
4 time of the event?

5 A. No.

6 Q. And had you requested a relief at, or leading up to the time?
7 Or were you in your normal rotation where you were expected to be
8 at the time?

9 A. I was in the normal rotation.

10 Q. And did -- when the event occurred, it actually happened in
11 TRACONS airspace, how did you become aware of the event occurring?

12 A. As I said, I got a d-side like right at the perfect time.

13 Q. Yes?

14 A. And I honestly thought that supervisor had got the call. But
15 he told me that it was my d-side that got the call. All I
16 remember was being shut off and we had to go into a holding. But
17 I never knew specifically anything about the incident other than a
18 plane got severe turbulence. But I didn't know where.

19 Q. Okay, all right, cool. Do you remember when you were made
20 aware? Were you still in position when somebody told you --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- or had you been off?

23 A. I was still on.

24 Q. You were still on? Okay, all right, okay. So, this is, if
25 you can do me a favor, I'd like you to kind of just give us a

1 recollection to the best of your ability, be as detailed as you
2 can, but don't make up things obviously, fill in the blanks,
3 right?

4 Just try to recollect as if you were telling us the story.
5 And you can pick us up from the time you remember, you know,
6 you're going have to, you're picking up these guys from the other
7 thing. You're going have to reroute them yours.

8 You're going have to absorb that traffic. And what you can
9 remember about Delta 175, specifically. There, checking all the
10 way through to the point where you get a d-side and you've been
11 notified that this guy just reported severe.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. Kind of step me through that.

14 A. So basically, things were pretty normal in the airspace. I
15 think I'd been sitting there for, I don't know, maybe 15 minutes,
16 maybe 20 minutes. Delta 175 checks on, along with a couple other
17 aircraft at the time, pretty much. Delta 175, I know he asked me
18 about weather around Killer, I think, is what he said.

19 Q. Killer is that K-I-L-L-R. Do you know what the spelling of
20 that last --

21 A. It's either K-I-L-R-R or K-I-L-L-R, something like that --

22 Q. No worries.

23 A. -- along those lines. And I told him that Approach is going
24 to have his, Approach is going to have vectors before he gets to
25 Killr. Because any other day, that we're working and that we're

1 dealing with weather and a plane needs --

2 Of course, Approach is more familiar with their airspace.
3 They're going to have the vectors for him if they can't fly or
4 stay on the actual arrival. But until then, since he asked
5 specifically for Killr, I knew that was like 30 miles in
6 Approach's airspace.

7 So I told him, you know, he can expect the vectors then.
8 That way he wouldn't deviate into our East Departure Gate and be
9 in potential conflict with East departures that were coming off of
10 Atlanta.

11 So, he basically says, okay. I get another Southwest that
12 checks in. And he was asking about the ride. Up until that
13 point, I hadn't had any complaints about any rides going into
14 Atlanta.

15 And I asked the Delta for a PIREP as he was going into
16 Approach before I switched him. Approach already had a hand-off
17 on him and everything. He was still on the arrival. Delta tells
18 me that, he says that the ride is good. It's been good. But it
19 looks like it's going to get a lot worse.

20 I'm assuming he was talking about this stuff around Killr.
21 Because of course, Approach had been shut off. Weather was in
22 Approach's airspace, mostly majority to the East and South of the
23 airport.

24 So I switched them. Told Southwest about the ride. And I
25 had, I guess, some other aircraft. I think I had an aircraft on a

1 vector, one of the offloads. And I realized that I had left one
2 of the vectors probably a little bit too long.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. To try to hit my gap. So I turned them in pretty much. Once
5 Delta 195 was switched. Approach said to hand-off, I guess, on
6 the Southwest behind him. And I switched the Southwest. And
7 about at that time is when my d-side was coming in. And he got
8 the call to shut off the airport. And I just started vectoring to
9 get them in an order --

10 Q. Okay. So going, just to kind of clarify on that. So, Delta
11 175 inquired about -- did they inquire about weather around Killr
12 or did they say, or did they specifically request a deviation for
13 weather?

14 A. I think he requested to deviate around the weather at Killr?

15 Q. Okay. And Killr was well inside of their airspace? So --

16 A. Yes, 30 miles in their airspace.

17 Q. I'm with you, okay. All right. Okay, I'm going to go ahead,
18 I've asked you a bunch of questions, I'm probably going to have
19 some more for you about the event, but I'm going go ahead and pass
20 it along for now to Louis.

21 MR. HANCOCK: All right. Let's see, I've got a couple
22 questions here.

23 BY MR. HANCOCK:

24 Q. Do you recall what your weather altitude limits were set
25 during that event? Or is there a standard altitude limit that you

1 always use where you're working that sector setting your
2 precedents?

3 A. I don't know them verbatim. Although I do know that we did
4 our maps earlier this year. And whoever was in charge of that
5 program, basically set everything to how it's supposed to be. And
6 I was told that everything was how it was supposed to be pretty
7 much for the weather.

8 Q. Okay, do you know what, if there's a facility directly over,
9 over that specifies what, what altitude limits, or weather that
10 you're supposed to depict on your scope?

11 A. I don't recall if it's a specific one. I just know that we
12 are, I believe we're supposed to run it from the ground up on the
13 low sectors. So anywhere that we have like approaches, I believe
14 we're supposed to run our altitude limits for the weather all the
15 way up to the highest possible.

16 MR. SOPER: Real quick, does that thermostat work in here?
17 Are you guys getting warm? I'm warm. I'll see if it works. I
18 don't know if you can actually --

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It should work. Might have to turn
20 them on over here though.

21 MR. HANCOCK: So --
22 along those lines.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You have to turn one over here though.

24 MR. SOPER: Oh, you got to turn them on?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

1 MR. SOPER: Separately? Let's get some air flowing in here.
2 It was off, feeling warm. A lot of dudes breathing up in here.

3 MR. HANCOCK: Are they going to be able to hear with --

4 MR. SOPER: Yes, maybe that's part of the problem. Do you
5 want to keep that one on?

6 MR. HANCOCK: Leave that one on over there, Brian.

7 MR. SOPER: And that's a little better. I think we'll be all
8 right.

9 MR. HANCOCK: All right.

10 MR. SOPER: So, think you're, okay?

11 MR. HANCOCK: I think so.

12 BY MR. HANCOCK:

13 Q. So as far as you're aware that, that you had all levels that
14 you're required to on weather displayed on that day? And you say
15 that --

16 A. Every time you pull up that map isn't the same.

17 Q. Okay. How are you normally notified of your PIREP
18 requirements? So, when you come in either for your shift that day
19 or from a break, how were you notified if you're required to get a
20 PIREP or not?

21 A. Normally, the supervisor will tell you that we're getting
22 PIREPs at this sector or this sector. And it'll let you know that
23 there's going to be changes to the weather, and then they'll tell
24 you range, and if he has other classes for you take.

25 Q. So, it's typical that you get a verbal briefing from the

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1 supervisor?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. There was a supervisor on shift that day, correct?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. So if it's not a supervisor, there's a CIC and you get the
6 same type of briefing from a CIC?

7 A. Not normally.

8 Q. Not normally, okay. Is there any other like visual items
9 that would show you like a requirement when you walk in a control
10 room or in the area that says specifically for turbulence, or for
11 precipitation, or anything required?

12 A. I know like sometimes if I'm CIC, they'll have the weather
13 sheet on the desk from standup briefings. It's like sometimes I
14 go and stand there and look at that. That's it, I guess.

15 MR. HANCOCK: Okay, we got a little air circulating there.

16 MR. SOPER: Yes, it helped, it helped.

17 BY MR. HANCOCK:

18 Q. All right. So when you started to get impacts to your sector
19 from weather, well complexity due to weather, how do you normally
20 communicate with TMU about what's going on at your sector? Do you
21 talk to the supervisor? Do you call TMU directly? What do you
22 do?

23 A. Normally, we would just tell the supervisor, hey, this is not
24 going to work for much longer. The weather is affecting the
25 sector this way. Maybe we need to move, you know, the aircraft

1 over to a different fix or something along those lines. So, the
2 supervisor is pretty much the one who will call TMU. We don't
3 normally reach out to them for anything.

4 Q. So when you said that you're also CIC as well, so if you're a
5 CIC, do you receive those reports also from controllers, and you
6 communicate in the CIC position with TMU?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And relay that information?

9 A. Sometimes I'll go over to the controller, and I'll see, you
10 know, that something. I'll kind of like think what I would want.
11 And then, I'll, you know, ask the controller, what their thoughts
12 are, and then I'll call TMU myself.

13 Q. Okay, is there ever anybody from TMU down in the areas of
14 observing weather, seeing what's going on, asking questions,
15 communicating with the OSs, or the CICs, or even the controllers
16 in the sector --

17 A. No.

18 Q. --if anything's going on? Okay, let's see. And you don't
19 recall any, or do you recall any previous reports of turbulence in
20 that proximity of Ozzie intersection, or on that arrival before
21 Delta?

22 A. No.

23 Q. And what do you recall being displayed on that route? On
24 that arrival for precipitation? Do you recall any precipitation
25 on that route, or near that boundary?

1 A. No.

2 Q. You said it was about about 30 miles in Atlanta's airspace?

3 A. Right. So, the precip. mostly was to the East of the
4 airport and South. It was blocking definitely on the southside.
5 I don't display that the entire Atlanta Approach, but I could see
6 where it was.

7 And I knew based off previous shifts that I've worked dealing
8 with weather that Approach normally is going to have some form of
9 vectors for them if that stuff is surrounding the airport like it
10 was.

11 Q. And when you were, you said you were shut off by Atlanta
12 TRACON. And that was, you were told by your d-side, was there any
13 context given when they called your d-side? Or did they just say,
14 we can't take any more handoffs? Or did they say, we got severe
15 turbulence, this is why. Was there any context or information
16 provided to you to disseminate out to anybody else in that area?

17 A. No. Basically, I didn't take the call personally. It was my
18 d-side, like I said. So, I couldn't actually hear the call. The
19 only thing he told me was they're not taking anymore. There's
20 severe turbulence.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And at that point, I just kind of went into survival mode,
23 turning the planes away from the fix, stopping them off, so I can
24 keep them separated. And then, at that point, I would have to re-
25 clear them back to Atlanta, over their holding fixes, and hold

1 them, at that point. And I kind of broadcasted on the frequency
2 that Approach had severe turbulence in their airspace, which is
3 why we pulled them.

4 Q. Okay. When, when Delta was requesting vectors or deviations
5 around Killr intersection, and you told them to expect vectors
6 with Atlanta TRACON, is it routine, do you tell the aircraft to
7 make the request for the next sector, or is it an assumption that
8 they would make the request? Or was it relayed? Do you know if
9 it was relayed to Atlanta that that aircraft in particular was
10 requesting deviations?

11 A. So, routinely, if there are deviations within Approach's
12 airspace, what we will do is keep them over their fix and let
13 Approach kind of handle that. Because I know in the past, if I've
14 had aircraft deviate in too far to the South or whatever, I've
15 gotten a call from Approach.

16 And they have told me, hey, these guys need to be this way.
17 I can't take them down here, or whatever the case might be. So,
18 routinely, if, unless it's immediately impacting their route of
19 flight in my airspace, I won't typically let them deviate to a fix
20 that's like 30 miles in Approach's air space.

21 And sometimes they say a fix that I could be unfamiliar with,
22 you know. And, you know, I'll call Approach and coordinate with
23 them. But if they're able to stay on their route, I leave them on
24 their routes.

25 Q. So, I'm assuming Atlanta TRACON has control of turns.

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. Do you know how far from the boundary and what, what control
3 for turns? So, if they checked in, Atlanta TRACON did have
4 control to turn that aircraft if they needed to?

5 A. Yes, they have control for turns. Sometimes they'll call and
6 get control for, you know, early turns or descents, speed,
7 anything that they need. This wasn't the case on that day,
8 though.

9 Q. Okay, so. But they do have control?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do you know how far from the boundary and how many degrees?

12 A. I don't recall how many degrees.

13 Q. Do you know how far from the boundary?

14 A. I thought it was on contact.

15 Q. Okay. So, prior to that event, you didn't have any previous
16 reports. So, after that event when Atlanta TRACON shut you off,
17 and you started holding, did the OS have any other communication
18 with you about what happened there? Or did you communicate back
19 to them about the building weather, or those reports, and then the
20 complexity building of the sector?

21 A. No. As I mentioned, basically, when we got shut off, I kind
22 of went into survival mode. I had several planes pointed at the
23 fix descending to the same altitude. So, I pretty much went back
24 through, and it took me probably, I want to say, like 20 to 30
25 minutes, just to get the sector pretty much under control to where

1 everyone was, you know, in the holding pattern and separated.

2 Because I was still getting offloads from the other areas
3 that were coming. And those had been coordinated with the
4 supervisor across to come at 21. So they were all at the same
5 altitudes coming.

6 So, I was basically trying to make sure that I had separation
7 and all that stuff under control. I definitely gave or informed
8 the pilots about the reason why they were holding and checked with
9 them about the rides.

10 And even when I started to put them in a holding pattern, the
11 weather had started building in my airspace, as well. So, I ended
12 up having to move, you know, one of my holding patterns. And even
13 provide left-hand turns for the other one, so that they could, you
14 know, have a ride, have a better ride.

15 Q. All right, I got one more question. It's, how do you, when
16 you receive a PIREP from an aircraft, how do you enter that? And
17 what do you do here in Atlanta?

18 A. Me, personally, I know there's a paper form. But we have the
19 ERIDS. So, every time that I get a PIREP, I'll enter it into the
20 ERIDS, given I have, you know, time.

21 Q. So, if you don't have time to enter a PIREP, what do you do?

22 A. If I don't have time to enter the PIREP then I'll have either
23 a supervisor does it or my d-side. If I have one, he'll put it
24 in.

25 Q. So, you notify someone? You pass information on, still?

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1 A. Correct.

2 Q. And so then, what you were saying is you have the option to
3 do paper or ERIDS?

4 A. I think there's a paper. I always use the ERIDS because I've
5 never used the paper.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. We've always had the ability to do it through the ERIDS that
8 sits out there.

9 MR. HANCOCK: Okay. That's all I have.

10 MR. SOPER: Great, thanks. Seth?

11 MR. MYERS: Thanks, Evan.

12 BY MR. MYERS:

13 Q. What sector was that again you were at?

14 A. R49

15 Q. R49. And like typical traffic flow in the R49 loading
16 sector, what is it if you could explain to somebody not from here?
17 What do you guys do?

18 A. It's the last step before, last step with mostly aircraft
19 coming from the Northeast that goes into Atlanta Approach to land.

20 Q. It's all my crappy spacing from Boston Center.

21 A. Washington.

22 Q. Yes. So, anyways, so typically one flow, two flows? What do
23 you guys do in that sector?

24 A. It's two flows.

25 Q. Two flows. It

1 A. Two traffic patterns. One comes from Indy and the other
2 pretty much comes over Pulaski from Washington. And we just kind
3 of work them down like that.

4 Q. Do they both converge over Ozzie or is just one?

5 A. No, it's two fixes. One is Andre, one is Ozzie.

6 Q. One's Andre, one's Ozzie. All right, so. Because, on that,
7 the ERAM playback we were watching, you did have a flow north, it
8 looked Northeast of your position that was coming. It looked like
9 a jazz and a couple other airplanes. And when you're talking
10 about, just trying to, situationally --

11 A. Yes?

12 Q. -- when you're talking about this stuff, you don't have much
13 room to put those airplanes in there, correct?

14 A. Right. Like I, my main focus was, I knew that the situation
15 was abnormal. And I was getting, I had a trainee that was feeding
16 me from the high side. And then I had these planes that I don't
17 even know if they had been holding before or not.

18 But I just knew, like supervisor told me, you're going to get
19 some offloads. So, I initially kind of ranged out and pulled up
20 all the Atlanta's. And I kind of picked them out to make sure I
21 was going to have space to kind of pre-plan what I needed to do.

22 Q. Yes, so typical day for you there not, weather, not anything,
23 how many airplanes would you think would be, typically be on your
24 scope for anybody sitting there? Fourteen, 15, 20, ten?

25 A. About maybe 15, ten to 15 because Logan is combined up with

1 Commerce, which is our lower level ten and below.

2 Q. Yes?

3 A. So most of the time, those are combined up. So you got your,
4 you know, clearances off satellite airports and things like that,
5 that you'll have, along with your Atlanta arrivals, and other, you
6 know, traffic that's just over flying the space.

7 Q. How often does that, is that not combined?

8 A. During the summertime, like, in the weekends and stuff, you
9 can, you'll see commerce taking off. But for the most part it's
10 combined. Yes, if there's like a nice VFR day and things like
11 that, the planes are, you know, flying around sightseeing.
12 They'll split it up because the frequency congestion and stuff
13 like that can be around.

14 Q. So, typically, if it's combined, you have a d-side there?

15 A. I wouldn't say that no.

16 Q. Prior to 2017 did you have a d- side there?

17 A. I mean it kind of just depends. It really does, man. Like
18 sometimes we have them, sometimes we don't, you know. But a lot
19 of the times unless there's like somebody training in there or
20 something like that, no d-side.

21 Q. Does a d-side help reduce any of the complexity or any
22 anything that you would have there?

23 A. When it gets busy? Yes, most definitely.

24 Q. Do you guys, I know that in there, obviously, looking at the
25 traffic, you said you're a CIC. And you're obviously listening to

1 people that are working. If they, you know, can't breathe, or
2 they can't get a word in edgewise, you know, they're busy.

3 Anything else you guys look at in the area to understand?

4 A. When it needs to be split?

5 Q. When it needs to be split, or any other thing? Any other
6 business? STMC call down? Does the watch desk call down? Does
7 anybody walk down? Does it all pretty much --

8 A. No, they don't really call down. It's pretty much, of
9 course, we had a board in the control rooms that show the number
10 count. So, you can kind of get a gauge on how many planes will be
11 working. And then they turn colors --

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. -- when they'll be oversaturated.

14 Q. Yes, map values.

15 A. So, you know that when you see red, split it, you know. Or
16 if you're getting several calls from flight service for
17 clearances, of course that takes the controller off of the line.
18 So, you'll split it at that point.

19 Q. Do you know what the number is that makes that red?

20 A. I do not know.

21 Q. You had said that earlier in the day that there was no really
22 bad rides. There was nothing like that. So, when you walked in
23 to assume that position, how many times have you been on earlier
24 that day?

25 A. I don't recall. I think I might have worked one position

1 before that. But it very well could have been CIC. I don't
2 remember.

3 Q. I hear you, man. They all blend together.

4 A. It does, man.

5 Q. What else? You had -- I just want to hit back on one thing
6 that Brian was talking about earlier, the pre-duty weather brief.
7 Do you find that on a scale of one to ten, here, what is that,
8 what is the general consensus on controllers with that?

9 A. Mostly, I would say that on a scale of one to ten, like how
10 helpful is? Or --

11 Q. Scale of one to ten, do people do it? Is it helpful? Do
12 they, is it check the box --

13 A. I think --

14 Q. -- mentality?

15 A. -- honestly, I think that that's what it is. Kind of like a
16 check the box thing. It just depends on the controller. Some
17 people actually, you know, take their time with it, listen to it.
18 And some, you know, it's kind of like sign in, do the weather.
19 You know?

20 Q. You said that there is a weather sheet on the desk that you
21 guys use and utilize for CIC? What kind of information does that
22 give you? Or does it get thrown in the trash? Does it end up on
23 the desk? Is it upside down?

24 A. It ends up on the desk. I mean, I never personally go to the
25 standup meetings. Normally the managers do.

1 Q. Yes?

2 A. So, more looks like the schedule. You'll have that sheet
3 there and it pretty much like think tells you about how the
4 weather is. Like, where it's going to impact, you know, certain
5 sectors or whatever. And I mean, they don't really go over it
6 with us.

7 Q. Yes. So, like, perfect example, you're sitting in the area.
8 The supervisors come back from standup. Anything ever said when
9 they come back from standup to the controllers in the area? Or
10 when you're leaving the area, you're coming back into the area,
11 shortly after standup?

12 A. One hundred percent, all the time, I would say, no. But
13 certain supervisors do come back, they'll say, hey, it's going to
14 be turbulence in, you know, ultra highs. Make sure you're getting
15 PIREPs.

16 Q. And as far as I know that -- and he touched about PIREPs.
17 What do you know of the life of a PIREP inside this building?
18 When you put it into ERIDS, do you know where it goes? Or does it
19 just go into ERIDS, and it comes back to you?

20 A. It goes through the weather, the folks back in weather. And
21 then, from there, I guess they, you know, disseminate it or
22 whatever. I just know how to recall, to make sure that I put it
23 in properly and things like that. But I think it goes back to the
24 weather.

25 Q. Does it get back to you, at the sector?

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1 A. I can pull up the ones that I've done, but I don't typically
2 see any, like from other sectors, unless that's when we get our
3 SIGMETs and GIs, you know, the SIGMETs and stuff.

4 Q. Okay. How many typically in there? On a weather day?

5 A. On a weather day, I can see four at a time, you know.
6 Sometimes, more depending on, like, if I sit down and the
7 controller before me didn't read them, or whatever, for whatever
8 reason. It just depends on the workload, I guess, so.

9 Q. Yes. So, every time you look over, there's four or five in
10 there.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. How many are pertinent, relevant to you?

13 A. All of them. I read them all.

14 Q. And they're all pertinent and relevant to your sector? To
15 what you're working?

16 A. Well, some of them have generalizations. So it'll be like a
17 Convective SIGMET for Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi,
18 things like that. Sometimes I can look in there and I'll see, you
19 know, maybe severe turbulence, and it'll give you, you know, the
20 fixed distance radial from whatever.

21 MR. MYERS: Awesome, man. Thanks.

22 MR. SOPER: All right. Thanks, Brian?

23 BY MR. SWAIN:

24 Q. All right, thanks Evan. Some of the stuff they've hit that I
25 was going to talk about. But I am curious when there's weather

1 out there --

2 A. Yes?

3 Q. -- how do you? Do you typically solicit any input from the
4 pilots yourself as to what the ride is like? Or what it was like?
5 You know, just as you mentioned, you're aware there was weather in
6 the area, and it was building, and it was active. Do you kind of
7 say that? Every now and then say, hey, how's the ride going
8 through this area? How's it look? You know? Do you typically do
9 that on a regular basis --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- during a shift?

12 A. On a regular basis, yes.

13 Q. Okay. As far as PIREPs, unless it's asked for, do you
14 specifically asked for the PIREP?

15 A. I do.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Yes, I do. Typically, I do.

18 Q. All right. And we talked about the life of, and then, how
19 you enter that, and where it goes. Your d-side, you talked about
20 when you got the d-side. When would you normally feel that you
21 would ask for a d-side? You know what I'm saying? On a day like
22 that.

23 A. Well, like I said, it was perfect timing, pretty much that
24 the d-side got there when he did. Because I was about to ask for
25 one.

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1 Q. Yes.

2 A. Whenever I have an excessive amount of calls, or coordination
3 that needs to be done, then I'm going to ask for one, right?

4 Q. Yes. I got that. You were talking a lot about the
5 distractions and you kind of categorized those very well. One
6 that I was going to ask if you would consider it a distraction.
7 CPDLC?

8 A. Not really. I feel like CPDLC is kind of like a way for me
9 to cut back on using so much voice. I actually taught it before
10 the pandemic, pre-pandemic. So, I'm familiar with like how to use
11 it and stuff. So, I find it helps me be more efficient.

12 Q. Right. Would that be something that you could focus more on
13 if you had previously had a d-side, so to speak? Like would you?

14 A. Are you talking about as far as CPDLC?

15 Q. The CPDLC.

16 A. With if I had a d-side, would that help me? Not
17 particularly. Except with switching aircraft and stuff like that.
18 Sometimes you can, you know, pick up on things that my eyes are
19 scanning to the right that d-side might be over here and realize
20 that the sector took a handoff, and they switched the aircraft
21 seamlessly with the command. So that could help.

22 Q. Let's see. The other question I had was -- let me go back up
23 here. Not necessarily this event, so to speak. But typically on
24 weather days, does the TMU, or your supervisor, do you guys go
25 back and talk about the plan? Like what is you know --

1 Hey, this routing was not necessarily advantageous. It was,
2 it really put a lot of strain on me. Like you were talking about.
3 That you know, one side was closed off.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You know you were protecting maybe a little for the East
6 departures? You know, do you guys go back and have debriefs on
7 that on a regular basis?

8 A. We don't debriefs about it. What I will say is like,
9 sometimes they implement a plan. And let's, you know, let's say
10 the plan stops working. Then, of course, if I'm working with the
11 position, I'm going to tell them, hey, this isn't working anymore.
12 We need this, or you know.

13 That day, I, you know, it was kind of coordinating with the
14 supervisor. He was kind of walking back and forth, really, about
15 what I needed for the offloads that I was receiving and stuff like
16 that. So, that was kind of stretching into it, I guess, yes, a
17 little bit.

18 MR. SWAIN: All right. I'm good there.

19 MR. SOPER: Thanks, Brian. Mike?

20 BY MR. BROWN:

21 Q. Hey, Evan. So, when you were talking about when you were
22 coordinating with OJTI that was taking place, were you physically
23 talking to him?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Or were you just kind of like trying to listen in to what's

1 going on over there?

2 A. I could hear, you know, them talking. You know? Anytime
3 somebody's training, there's always dialogue. If the trainee
4 picks the wrong speed, then you know, there's going to be
5 correction from them. So, me, personally, you're going to hear
6 what they're saying, regardless. You know, so?

7 Q. That's --

8 A. You have a training team right next to you, and you're on a
9 sector, an arrival sector, there's going to be, unless that
10 trainee is further along in their development, you're going to be
11 talking to them all the time about speed selection, things like
12 that. And you're just going to automatically hear it.

13 Q. I got you.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So, that -- before when the event was going on, you're just
16 listening. You're not coordinating? You're not asking, hey, what
17 heading? What altitude? What --

18 A. No.

19 Q. You're just listening to see what they're doing?

20 A. And I don't --

21 Q. You're like ranged out --

22 A. But you know what? I did, actually. They -- I was verbally
23 coordinating with them about one aircraft specifically. The one I
24 was talking about that I left on the 360 head in. You could kind
25 of hear him key up and say yes. But I was talking to him, next to

1 me though. I got it. Because he was asking, hey, you know, the
2 turn just got it. And I was answering him, while turning him in
3 at the same time.

4 Q. I got you. Back to kind of what he hit on. So, when you're
5 closing the gates, or you're, you're, you're shutting off. So,
6 you can make that call as the feeding sector, right? A80 makes
7 the call. Does TMU ever come down and say, hey, in 30 minutes,
8 this weather is going to impact you. We're going to be proactive
9 and start re-routing these now?

10 A. No. But I think in the past, they have called supervisors
11 and told them like, there's potential for this, so. Because I
12 have worked before, during weather, and they'll say, hey, you
13 know, we expect the airport to maybe get shut off in about 30
14 minutes when that extreme hits the airport.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, you know.

17 Q. So, for on that day, in particular though, is there a run in
18 you had? You five total in trail. So, you had a Delta in the
19 front, then 20, 30 miles was Delta 175 in your string out behind
20 them.

21 When they called you and they said, hey, we're done. We had
22 a severe turbulence. You had the last two, which was Delta 49 and
23 1690. You had to scramble to put them in the hold, right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. So those were the two that you're working. Did you

1 have anybody else coming up from the South? I mean, you said
2 earlier, you had a bunch of airplanes.

3 A. Yes. Well, I had -- I know I pulled up at least five planes,
4 five or six planes that were, were coming from the South.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So, you have an input where you can quick look, 54. And
7 it'll pull up all your Atlanta's. So, I didn't know specifically
8 the number of guys that I was getting. So, I just clicked on all
9 of the limited for Atlanta. That way I could see kind of what was
10 coming and where they were. And what was the specific question
11 again?

12 Q. Just basic. What I want to know is, when you're when you're,
13 they're shutting you off.

14 A. Yes?

15 Q. Okay? And I guess the crux of this question is, you had a d-
16 side at that time when all this started, because you said
17 yourself, you got one just in the nick of time.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. Are d-sides, are they assigned like -- because I'm not a
20 Center guy.

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Okay, so are they assigned like, ah, he needs a d-side? Or
23 hey, we know we're going to get busy, but we're on it. Let's get
24 a d-side in early. Or is there a sup. helping you?

25 A. I would just say, it just depends, honestly. Most of the

1 time d-sides, it's going to be reactionary.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. So, if something's going to happen. Like I say, excessive
4 amounts of calls, something like that. And boom, you're going to
5 get a d-side. i will say that that's pretty much --

6 Q. That's the norm? Okay.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. So, when all this was going on, the sup. is in the area,
9 helping? Was he was somewhere else?

10 A. He was bouncing back and forth, it seemed like. To be
11 honest, I was pretty much completely, like, focused on what was in
12 front of me. But I know he did come over at one point, and say,
13 hey, you're going to get these offloads. What do you all think?
14 And I guess he was talking to me and linear sector. What do
15 you all think is a good entrail? And I was like, ten. And I
16 heard him kind of relay that to the Area 4, which is across the
17 hall from our area. And that was pretty much it. I don't know
18 where he was, other than that.

19 MR. BROWN: Okay. No, that's all. That's, that's good.
20 That's all I have for you.

21 MR. SOPER: All right. So, when it comes to PIREPs that take
22 you back -- let me rewind just a little bit. So, for here, what's
23 the main source that you know that you have that let's you know
24 you need to request it? That you're required? Is it the sup.
25 telling you? Is it just your knowledge of knowing when you come

1 in and checking the weather? Is it checking the PIREP Board you
2 guys have. I mean, what's the main source that you usually?

3 A. Well, I personally make it my business to get PIREPs.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Every time that I plug in.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. We do have some supervisors that will tell you, hey, we're
8 getting PIREPs, we're getting PIREPs, or whatever, for this
9 sector, this sector. But I personally tried to get PIREPs all the
10 time just because if I know how the rides are, then I'm know what
11 to tell the planes when they're checking in.

12 So, instead of letting the planes ask me about, you know,
13 hey, we're getting bumped around here, or where do I need to go?
14 I like to be, I like to know that. And then, sometimes I've even
15 called Washington and said, hey, these guys that you're giving me
16 in 36, they're getting moderate, my control over decent.

17 And that way, they'll stop putting them at that altitude.
18 Because it's just going to increase workload. If I know about my
19 airspace and my rides, then I have a better chance of managing the
20 sector, in my opinion.

21 Q. Okay. That's good. So, how? This is kind of a difficult
22 question. So if I if I don't word it well, you know. I may
23 reword it. How often? If you had to take a stab at it, so I
24 know, you said that when you get a PIREP, your normal way to put
25 it in is through the ERIDS.

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1 A. ERIDS, right.

2 Q. And if you, as long as you're able to, as long as you have
3 the time or the capability. And ERIDS is a bit clunky, you know?
4 So, I know that that probably comes up a lot. How often do you
5 think you're unable to get PIREPs into ERIDS like that? If you
6 know? And so, like I said, I know it's a tough question.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Because I'm not looking for an exact number. But do you
9 think it's, it's frequently, somewhat frequently, sometimes, not
10 often?

11 A. And this is me, personally?

12 Q. Yes, for you, for you.

13 A. Me --

14 Q. Because it sounds like you probably, generally, get more
15 PIREPs maybe than the average controller.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Because you use them a lot, personally, for yourself.

18 A. It's 50/50. And I'll say this. If the rides are good, I'll
19 ask a couple of aircraft. And I'll put in a PIREP for that
20 specific altitude or whatever.

21 Q. Yes?

22 A. And I won't generally put in any more until the next hour.
23 However, if they're terrible rides, and I'm getting multiple
24 aircraft at this altitude. For instance, this happens with me on
25 the high side a lot. The rides are just not good.

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1 Q. Yes.

2 A. And they'll have to go all the way up to 43,000 feet just to
3 get a decent ride. I'll put in several. And my goal with that is
4 to pretty much make it so that the airspace doesn't get any planes
5 in my --

6 Q. I got you.

7 A. -- at those altitudes.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Because it's just going to make it more difficult and they're
10 not going to like their rides.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So, I'll say it's 50/50 as far as the ease of me being able
13 to put them in. As I mentioned before, anytime that I'm not able
14 to put something in, I can ask a supervisor, and they'll put it
15 in.

16 Q. Okay. So, what is your understanding of how the lifecycle of
17 a PIREP here once it leaves your hands? Whether it's in the
18 ERIDS, or whether you're having to tell the sup.? Either one.
19 Once it's beyond you, where does it go? How does it make its way
20 out to the system? And do you see that come back to you in any
21 way?

22 A. Okay. I personally think that once I put it in the ERIDS, it
23 goes back to weather.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. From there, I don't know their specific steps of, you know,

1 taking that information and disseminating it. Other than me
2 thinking that it's through the SIGMETs and stuff that come
3 through.

4 Q. I see.

5 A. Yes. So like, I know that if I give them a severe turbulence
6 or a moderate turbulence report, that will show up in my GIs. And
7 it'll have my information --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- that I put in there.

10 Q. Okay. And so, and that's how you receive all of your
11 SIGMETs, and CWAs, and stuff too, right? Is through the GIs --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- on UVST?

14 A. GIs, and the SIGMETs, I think.

15 Q. Oh, on the --

16 A. The SIGMET. It'll come on the EDST.

17 Q. The EDST.

18 A. Yes, so for the d-side, it'll have the two tabs. Some of
19 them come through SIGMET, some of them come through GIs.

20 Q. How do you know when you have a new advisory that needs to be
21 read?

22 A. It'll show up yellow --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- on the board.

25 Q. When you get one of those, I think, if I remember right, in

1 the EDST, you have the choice to either inhibit it, or actually
2 suppress it, right?

3 A. Right.

4 Q. Like where you can make it disappear.

5 A. Right.

6 Q. What do you do with ones that apply to you? So if you have a
7 SIGMET that applies to your area, once you read it, do you just,
8 do you then remove that and suppress it? Or do you just take away
9 the yellow block that you've read and it still stays there?

10 A. If it is a SIGMET for like the East Coast and has the States
11 written, East Coast or whatever, or Jacksonville severe weather
12 advisory 301, whatever that is, after I read it, I suppress it.
13 If it's something like icing or turbulence that is specifically
14 around my airspace, I can just click it, and it'll make it not
15 show yellow.

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. But I'll leave it in there so I can revisit it and for the
18 next controller.

19 MR. SOPER: Okay, that's good. That's good to hear. Okay,
20 that's all I have right now. Louis, do you have anything extra?
21 No? Seth, how about you?

22 BY MR. MYERS:

23 Q. Yes. My thing, just a couple of quick questions just because
24 you're obviously in control and on the floor here. Do you know
25 what the LSC is here?

1 A. LSC?

2 Q. Yes, local safety council. Ever heard of it?

3 A. Oh, okay, local safety council, yes.

4 Q. Okay. Do you guys, do you ever get to those discussions,
5 monthly?

6 A. Monthly? No. What normally happens I guess is the
7 supervisor will give us a verbal briefing at the desk. Those are
8 like the items of the month pretty much, right? Like for --

9 Q. Well, like the supervisors not supposed to give those. But
10 if that's, if that's how they're doing it here. Yes, so that.

11 A. Unless I'm mixing up the names.

12 Q. What are they normally giving you?

13 A. Is it like local? Like local safety council things will be
14 like, how to get PIREPs, or stuff like that.

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. Or, hey, make sure you're getting your rest and things like
17 that, right?

18 Q. Yes, sometimes --

19 A. Those are the things?

20 Q. -- things come through, yes. It's usually, you know, some
21 ATSAP stuff, some sup. stuff, so.

22 A. Yes, yes. They'll have like the printable sheets?

23 Q. Printable sheets. Anything ever come back in those like
24 other than like ATSAP, or CIF stuff? Do they ever talk about
25 SSRs, here? Do they ever talk about, you know, a system service

1 review, a traffic management review? Any feedback to the floor on
2 any of those things? You ever heard of them?

3 A. I don't recall, man. I don't really --

4 Q. Yes, I know, it's a lot of stuff that comes through on those
5 things.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. So you know, just wanted to kind of touch base on that. When
8 was the last time you guys had refresher training, or recurrent
9 training?

10 A. I'm not sure.

11 Q. So, you obviously don't remember what it was that was in
12 refresher or recurrent? And to be honest, man, you may not have
13 had it. That's not a surprise.

14 A. I don't remember it. I know that normally when we have that
15 kind of stuff, we touch on the same, same things just to refresh
16 phraseology, VFR on top, stuff like that. But I don't remember
17 the last time I actually had it.

18 MR. MYERS: Awesome, thanks, man.

19 MR. SOPER: All right, Brian?

20 MR. SWAIN: I have nothing else.

21 MR. SOPER: Mike?

22 MR. BROWN: I'm good.

23 MR. SOPER: Okay, I have a couple questions on --

24 BY MR. SOPER:

25 Q. Where do you? What do you have access to tool-wise?

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1 Displays, systems that give you or provide you weather-related
2 information that's going to be applicable to you while you're
3 working?

4 A. While I'm working, well we got the NEXRAD and I guess some of
5 the ERAM (ph.), that display of the weather.

6 Q. Actual on your control display, right?

7 A. Yes, you're actually on display.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I guess the SIGMETs and GIs, that kind of provides us a sense
10 of what's going on. And aside from that, I mean, that's pretty
11 much it.

12 Q. Do you ever -- so for the SIGMETs, I know you get a
13 texturally, right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. You're getting, you're receiving the text ones in EDST or
16 URPI (ph.), or whatever. And you're getting those, and you don't
17 have to read them. Do you have them graphically depicted anywhere
18 in your areas that you can have access to? So, you can actually
19 see it visually?

20 A. They do, I think after so long, they'll print out on a strip.
21 That's --

22 Q. Got you.

23 A. I don't think they're anywhere else in there.

24 Q. Okay. And --

25 A. We got a weather board, as well. There's a monitor in the

1 areas that kind of have Atlanta Center in there.

2 Q. The one that's flipped backwards?

3 A. It's behind us.

4 Q. Well, when I say backwards, you've got the two, the big ones
5 down at the end.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q And then, you have one that's like, right by the sup.'s
8 console? It's --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And that normally has up on it, what?

11 A. That normally has Atlanta Center. And then, it shows like, a
12 bigger picture of the actual weather.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. All right, cool. And do you ever have any direct interaction
15 with the center weather service people here? Do you ever request
16 tactical support from them? I mean, you know, like, hey, this
17 seems to be moving through? Or you just go through your sup. for
18 things that are odd or, or whatever, when it comes to weather?

19 A. Yes. We normally -- I don't call them, ever.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Unless the ERIDS is down. I've done that. In past years,
22 sometimes the ERIDS has been down.

23 Q. I got you.

24 A. And I've had to call them on the line.

25 MR. SOPER: Okay, all right. Does anybody have any, oh, by

1 the ways? I do have one last question for you before I -- and I
2 just want to make sure anybody doesn't have any oh, by the ways
3 before I did it.

4 BY MR. SOPER:

5 Q. So when you look at this event, in retrospect, right? It's
6 always easier once you're done, you look back on it. What do you
7 see as successes, failures, and lessons learned? Do you identify
8 with any of those in this case? Like, do you see anything? Tell
9 me what your thoughts are.

10 A. When I look at the entire situation as a whole, honestly, the
11 moment that I heard that I was getting these offloads and stuff, I
12 probably should have just asked for a d-side right there. Even
13 though, you know, they hadn't yet got there --

14 Q. Yes?

15 A. -- I probably should have had it because it's better to have
16 the d-side before things get real --

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. -- then be reactionary and wait until I start feeling it in
19 my gut. Also, looking back at it, I probably would have called
20 Approach to find out what they wanted me to do if they were having
21 or being impacted. Like, I knew they were being impacted by the
22 weather, obviously.

23 Q. Sure, yes.

24 A. Because it shut off the whole --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. -- area.

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. But on my particular arrival, how it was, you know. And I
4 probably would have done it differently.

5 Q. Okay. All right, good. So I mean, you feel like it changed
6 your thought process as far as like moving forward now? When
7 you're back out there? Like how you kind of perceive that stuff?

8 A. Oh, most definitely.

9 Q. Do you get good support when you do requests d-sides? Is it
10 difficult to get one? Or do you -- are you reluctant to ask for
11 it or is it pretty good?

12 A. I'm not reluctant to ask for one. Of course, anybody, any
13 supervisor that I've been in contact with will be happy to provide
14 me with one.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So I don't think that's an issue, there.

17 Q. All right, cool. Last question, is there anything that we
18 didn't ask you that you're surprised we didn't?

19 A. Well, yes, kind of.

20 Q. What?

21 A. I was kind of like thinking that you guys were going to ask
22 me about, you know, the whole holding situation, or whatever
23 afterwards. And all of that kind of stuff.

24 Q. Did you ever deal when -- no. So, that's what I tell you.
25 So, our thing is little different sometimes, right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. I mean, we're looking at what made this event precipitate.
3 So, the after action, the recovery, that's a little more in the
4 FAA's lane, right? And your facility. I hope you guys do look at
5 that stuff to know, you know, did that, did recovery go well? Or
6 was there, needs improvement there too.

7 But for our standpoint, unless you would have had another
8 deal during recovery, you know? I mean, not you but then if
9 something would have happened as a result of recovery, then that
10 might be something significant.

11 But you know, I think that it appears that A80 did a pretty
12 good job on their end, and stuff, you know. I mean, it doesn't
13 appear like something that was nefarious. Like, you could see it.
14 You can't turbulence, you know.

15 A Right.

16 Q You know, we don't know that. And nothing reported that
17 beforehand that we can see. And it seemed very spur of the
18 moment.

19 MR. SOPER: But, all right, well, do you have any questions
20 for us before I stopped the recording?

21 MR. WINSTO: No, sir.

22 MR. SOPER: All right, well, I'm going to stop the recording
23 now. I show the time at 1547.

24 (Whereupon, at 3:47 p.m. EDT, the interview was concluded.)
25

CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT
 NEAR ATLANTA, GEORGIA ON
 AUGUST 29, 2023
 Interview of Evan Winston

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA428

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: September 6, 2023

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.



Margaret C. Boardman
Transcriber