

DCA23LA179

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

Group Chair's Factual Report - Attachment 1

ATC Interview Transcriptions

December 15, 2024

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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AIR CANADA & AMERICAN AIRLINES

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NEAR-MISS INCIDENT AT THE

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SARASOTA-BRADENTON INTERNATIONAL

*

Accident No.: DCA23LA179

AIRPORT IN SARASOTA, FLORIDA

*

ON FEBRUARY 16, 2023

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Interview of: LAQUALAN BILLINGSLEY, Air Traffic Controller
Federal Aviation Administration

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

TIM KECK, Controller
National Air Traffic Controllers Association
Cleveland Tower

ROD TAYLOR, Air Traffic Manager, Orlando Exec.
Federal Aviation Administration

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:10 a.m.)

MR. KOSCHIG: Good morning. I will be recording the interview with a digital recorder, and will have a transcription made. The transcription will become part of the factual report, not the audio. So what we do is we will use that audio; we'll send it to our transcriptionist that has a, an agreement with us that once they transcribe it, they send the transcription back to us, and then once we approve the transcription, which is we, this group, then they destroy that audio. So the only person left with that audio is me, and we do not put audio of interviews in the -- in a docket out to the public at all. So this is staying with us. The only thing that will be used in our report is the actual transcription.

The start time is 10:10.

Can you please state your name?

MR. BILLINGSLEY: Laqualan Billingsley.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Would you, would you spell those for us please?

MR. BILLINGSLEY: First name Laqualan, L-a-q-u-a-l-a-n, last name Billingsley, B-i-l-l-i-n-g-s-l-e-y.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. So what we're going to do now is introduce ourselves.

I am Betty Koschig. I'm an air traffic control investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. My

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1 experience is I was in the Navy as a controller for 20 years.
2 Worked in Memphis, Bermuda, Point Mugu, on some ships, and then
3 at SURFLANT. So I've gotten quite a diverse background on that.
4 I've been doing this for almost 15 years now. And part of our
5 process since we've been, you know, I've been out of the -- away
6 from the glass, away from the tower, I mean, I can, I can throw
7 out any kind of regulation and everything, but we need smee to
8 help us to make sure that we are capturing everything. So as
9 part of the process we do invite groups to participate in our
10 investigation. The FAA is automatically a party to our
11 investigation, and NATCA we, we love having NATCA for our
12 investigations, and they request party as well.

13 So I will let my group members introduce themselves.

14 You want to go first?

15 MR. KECK: Sure. So my name is Tim Keck. I'm a controller
16 at Cleveland Tower. I also came out of the Navy. I've been a
17 controller for 25 years. I've been doing ASI stuff for about
18 nine and a half now. If you've never heard of us or dealt with
19 us, and I understand your management's a little bit different
20 for, for your viewpoint, but we're active controllers. We're
21 not on a permanent detail. I got off the boards to come here,
22 and when I'm done, I go back to work. Just regular rotation.
23 There's only 12 of us across the country; 4 tower, 4 TRACON, 4
24 enroute. So we're specifically detailed to them for subject
25 matter expertise. We can't do anything on our own. So we're

1 just here to help find out what went on.

2 MR. TAYLOR: And as you know, I'm Rod Taylor, the air
3 traffic manager at Orlando Exec. And currently serving on a
4 six-month detail at F11 as a support manager. Started with the
5 FAA in '91, and been in multiple positions but mostly Orlando
6 Exec. As you know, we have a little history there. And this is
7 my first time being on an NTSB investigation on this side of the
8 fence, just kind of taking notes and figuring out what's going
9 on.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, cool.

11 This interview, the reason we're here is this interview is
12 being conducted for the event that happened on February 16th
13 between Rouge and American Airlines.

14 So our purpose once we see an incident our purpose is to
15 find out what happened, to get the facts. We're here to
16 determine the probable cause, and find anything that we can help
17 prevent this. Because the way we see it, it can happen here, it
18 can happen anywhere, and we don't look at blaming the person.
19 We're not here to blame. We're not here to put liability,
20 anything like that. Our goal is to see what you, you can tell
21 us that could help improve safety -- are things that, you know,
22 anything with the safety issue end of it. Because if it
23 happened here, like I said, it could happen anywhere. And these
24 things have been happening at different places. So that's --
25 we're trying to figure out what can we do to help fix it because

1 all we can do is recommend. Actually, we don't have any kind of
2 enforcement powers. As the NTSB we can't, we can't make
3 anything happen except by the pen. Our strength is -- and our
4 connection with going through Congress getting things done --
5 our recommendations. That is truly our only, only thing that we
6 have available to us is -- nothing with discipline. We're not
7 looking at anything like that just so that you know.

8 You are, as part of the process, you are welcome to have to
9 have a representative. I see there's no one here. Is that your
10 choice not to have someone?

11 MR. BILLINGSLEY: I'd say yes.

12 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Is there somebody that you wanted to
13 have, and just couldn't be here or --

14 MR. BILLINGSLEY: No.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: And also just to let you know being an
16 independent agency, we don't work for the FAA, Department of
17 Transportation. We don't work for anybody. We stand alone. So
18 we don't report to anybody except straight up to Congress. That
19 gives us a little bit more leeway on, on things we're not --
20 looking at things -- we're looking at things from an only safety
21 issue.

22 So what I want to do now is go over what we're going to do
23 today. We're going to ask a bunch of questions, but first of
24 all to let you know is if you -- if we ask you a question, and
25 you don't know the answer, I don't know is a perfect answer. We

1 don't want you to speculate. But if you want to give us your
2 opinion about something or speculate, you are more than welcome
3 to do so. If you don't recall something, I don't recall is the
4 perfect answer. Again, if you wanted to -- if you had some
5 experience with something that you want to give your opinion on
6 that or to speculate in that, that's fine. But we just want to
7 make sure that we're getting -- that you understand what we're
8 asking. And if we are asking a question that doesn't make
9 sense, just say what do you mean? Because this is, you know, we
10 may ask a question that just doesn't come out exactly right. So
11 we're human too.

12 So what's going to happen is each group member -- I'm going
13 to start, of course like now, I'm going to start asking you a
14 bunch of questions, and then we're going to go around the room,
15 and we're going to have good conversation with each group member
16 asking questions, and trying to fill in holes, and just trying
17 to pick your brain about this facility and what goes on at this
18 airport, and to see if you've got some ideas on, on some things
19 that could change, and to help the safety here at this airport.

20 All right. Have you got any questions so far?

21 MR. BILLINGSLEY: No.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Ready to get started again?

23 MR. BILLINGSLEY: Yes.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. And part of this, you know, we're
25 recording this, but I like to type just to, to take notes

1 sometimes so that if I have a question I can go back and ask
2 you, and I can look at it.

3 INTERVIEW OF LAQUALAN BILLINGSLEY

4 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

5 Q. So what are your operating initials?

6 A. Charlie Tango.

7 Q. When did you start working for the FAA?

8 A. May 13, 2007.

9 Q. Was that at the Academy?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Did you go to the Academy?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. Were you a VRA hire?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. And where was that you started?

16 A. Tamiami Executive.

17 Q. How long were you there?

18 A. Five years.

19 Q. Then where did you go?

20 A. Orlando Executive.

21 Q. How long were you there?

22 A. Three years.

23 Q. And then where did you go?

24 A. Fort Worth Center.

25 Q. How long were you there?

- 1 A. Three years.
- 2 Q. And then where?
- 3 A. Sarasota.
- 4 Q. Been here ever since?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. What year was that you got here?
- 7 A. 2019.
- 8 Q. Have you been to the Academy for any courses?
- 9 A. Only management.
- 10 Q. So when you came here to Sarasota were you hired as a
- 11 controller?
- 12 A. Controller.
- 13 Q. And when did you become manager?
- 14 A. December of 2019.
- 15 Q. Oh, okay. So shortly after -- what did you get -- what
- 16 month did you get here in 2019?
- 17 A. I don't recall.
- 18 Q. Okay. All right. Do you have any -- you've got military
- 19 service. What service were you in?
- 20 A. Navy.
- 21 Q. Navy, okay. What -- were you a controller?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. What years were you in?
- 24 A. 2000 -- wait -- 1999 to 2006.
- 25 MR. KECK: We ever cross paths?

1 MR. BILLINGSLEY: No, but you look familiar.

2 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

3 Q. Where have you -- where did you work in the Navy?

4 A. *USS KITTY HAWK*, and Naval Station Mayport. That was it.

5 Q. Do you have any degrees?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Got any college?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Do you have any other aeronautical certificates other than
10 air traffic?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Current medical?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Any restrictions?

15 A. What does a restriction mean?

16 Q. Like glasses.

17 A. Glasses?

18 Q. Um-hmm.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Are you required to have them on or have them with you?

21 A. On.

22 Q. Did you have them on at the time of the incident?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Who is your supervisor?

25 A. Kelly Young.

1 Q. And some of these questions we're going to ask you we may
2 know the answers, but we, we can't put words in your mouth. So
3 if it sounds like a stupid question, you'll know why. Why
4 positions are you qualified or certified on here?

5 A. Ground control, flight data, clearance delivery, local, and
6 controller in charge.

7 Q. Current on all?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And you're an OS, right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do you recall what your schedule was the week of the
12 incident, your work schedule?

13 A. I work four 10-hour shifts.

14 Q. What days?

15 A. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

16 Q. Do you work overtime?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. How much overtime do you work? About a month, how many
19 shifts or --

20 A. I can't say.

21 Q. That's not --

22 A. It's not --

23 Q. -- steady?

24 A. -- steady.

25 Q. Do you remember what time your shift started that day?

- 1 A. 10. No, that's what time I got off. 2 p.m.
- 2 Q. So you worked 2 to 10?
- 3 A. Dayshift.
- 4 Q. Yeah. Got you. Okay. What's your normal work hours?
- 5 A. Sunday 11 to 9; Monday 11 to 9; Tuesday 5:45 to 3:45;
- 6 Wednesday 5:45, 3:45.
- 7 Q. Okay. So that day was a little bit different. You said
- 8 you started at 2 p.m.?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Okay. Was there some reason?
- 11 A. Overtime.
- 12 Q. Overtime. Okay. Did you have your cell phone with you in
- 13 the tower?
- 14 A. No.
- 15 Q. You guys have a rule here to not have it up there?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. Now I'm going to ask a few general human factor type
- 18 questions. How's your overall health?
- 19 A. It's okay.
- 20 Q. Do you recall how you felt the day of the incident? Were
- 21 you well rested?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. About how many hours sleep you get at night?
- 24 A. Average six.
- 25 Q. Remember if you got about that the night before?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Any big changes going on in your life that could be
3 distracting or -- either good or bad?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Was there anything in the facility that was distracting
6 that day either on the tower, airport?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. So going to ask -- start getting into the incident.
9 So were you given the opportunity to listen to the audio or
10 watch the replay?

11 A. I listened to the audio. I saw, I saw the Falcon.

12 Q. When did you, when did you listen to the audio and see the
13 Falcon? Was it recent?

14 A. Sunday.

15 Q. Sunday? Oh, okay. Did you file ATSAP?

16 A. No.

17 Q. All right. So now I'm going to ask you a question about
18 the incident. I know you listened to the audio, and you watched
19 the Falcon, but I want you to go back to when you were in the
20 tower your perspective from that view. Not what you recall the
21 audio saying because it's important if we get what was going on
22 with you, and what was going on with the airport. So if you
23 could take us back to that. I -- whatever time you feel is, is
24 appropriate to start out with your story. Okay. So what time
25 did you get to the tower? Two o'clock that day?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. So but the incident happened at eight.

3 A. Almost nine.

4 Q. Nine o'clock, yeah. So --

5 A. Yeah. As far as, as far as the incident is concerned, I --
6 Rouge was on Taxiway Alpha approaching Runway one four. I saw
7 that American was on about a three-mile final. I asked Rouge if
8 he was ready. He said yes. I cleared him for takeoff. I went
9 to the computer -- I was, well, I went to the computer, and
10 reviewed the, the facility log, spoke with the watch helicopter
11 as he was departing. Was preparing to cut an ATIS when I heard
12 that American was going around. I assigned American fly heading
13 two seven zero. Called Tampa approach to coordinate. And the
14 American asked for an altitude. So I gave them 3,000. Switched
15 Rouge. Once I saw American was established in the turn I
16 switched him, and that's it.

17 Q. Is it normal to just have one person in the tower at that
18 time of night?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Where was the -- there was another person on, on duty that
21 night. Where were they?

22 A. On break.

23 Q. Break. And where would they normally go on break? Are
24 they in the tower or they're outside?

25 A. No. They're downstairs.

1 Q. Downstairs. Do you remember what time you started working
2 alone in the tower that night?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Do you and the other person you switch up were they working
5 the tower, then you working the tower? How does that -- explain
6 to me how all that works.

7 A. Once it's down to two people we usually do hour on, hour
8 off.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: I'm going to let Tim ask some questions.

10 BY MR. KECK:

11 Q. Is there any guidance on when you guys can come down to one
12 person in the tower or no?

13 A. It's more staffing and workload.

14 Q. So it's pretty discretionary?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. Do you guys have to let Tampa know or anybody else
17 when you go single tower or single man in tower?

18 A. No.

19 Q. I haven't seen a position log yet. How long were you on
20 before the event happened?

21 A. I don't recall.

22 Q. You don't remember. After the event did you call for
23 relief or just keep working 'til your normal release time?

24 A. I didn't have to call because she was coming up.

25 Q. Okay. Do you know about how long you were left alone until

1 she got up there?

2 A. Maybe 10 minutes.

3 Q. Okay. When you guys have missed approaches -- let me
4 rephrase this. Did you see the event happen or were you
5 concentrating on something else during the sequence?

6 A. I was alerted to the situation when American said he was
7 going around.

8 Q. Okay. And what were you doing at that time?

9 A. I was about to cut the ATIS.

10 Q. So you were over there to the right?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. When you looked back out the window in your judgment where
13 were the aircraft in relation to each other?

14 A. American was at the intersection of Charlie 2, and Rouge
15 was in this area.

16 Q. Where's Charlie 2 up there? Okay. So Rouge was past the
17 intersection.

18 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

19 Q. Around Juliet, is that where Rouge was?

20 A. Yes.

21 BY MR. KECK:

22 Q. So you gave Rouge runway heading. Was that what he would
23 have been on had there not been a missed approach or would he
24 have
25 been expected to be turning similar direction?

1 A. Runway heading.

2 Q. Okay. Is that your standard release --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- runway heading and what do you climb to on --

5 A. 3,000.

6 Q. -- runway heading -- okay. Listening to the audio Rouge
7 confirms runway heading assignment. Where was he when that
8 happened? Like did you see was he in position powering up? Was
9 he rolling on the runway? Was he rotating? Do you know where
10 he was when, when he asked for that, that question confirmation?

11 A. I believe he was on the runway powering up.

12 Q. Okay. On one-four you get approach lights out there?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Was it dark at the time?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Is it a full LSF or MALSR?

17 A. MALSR.

18 Q. And they were on?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. Just want to just pilot side of the airport versus,
21 you know, does he see the airplane, is he lost in the lights?
22 Just trying to make that picture.

23 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

24 Q. Do you recall where American was when Rouge asked about the
25 runway heading?

1 A. No.

2 Q. What's your normal scan in that area?

3 A. I mean, always look at the, the ARTS, out the window, and
4 then my strip bay.

5 BY MR. KECK:

6 Q. Nothing triggered you that the situation might not work?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. One last thing. So when you reached out to Rouge to
9 see if he was ready where was he on the airport surface? Was he
10 already at the hammerhead or was he still on the parallel?

11 A. Alpha one.

12 Q. Okay. And he went full length for the departure?

13 A. Yes.

14 MR. KECK: Okay. That's all I have for now. Thanks.

15 BY MR. TAYLOR:

16 Q. Just a couple. American-- when you, when you launch an
17 aircraft in front of him -- what's your normal cutoff point
18 before you start realizing you're going to make that call?

19 A. Usually use three miles.

20 Q. Three miles. Do you normally look at speeds too?

21 A. I mean, not really. I mean, I've felt like types.

22 Q. Okay. So you look at three miles. Speed wasn't a factor
23 because that's usually the distance, and Rouge you said was at
24 alpha one just about ready to round the corner, able to run the
25 corner right away, and that would normally work for you?

1 A. Yes.

2 MR. TAYLOR: All the other questions I had he already
3 asked. So --

4 MR. KECK: Sorry.

5 MR. TAYLOR: No, that's good.

6 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

7 Q. When after American called that he's going around you
8 looked out the window?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. What did you see? Tell me what -- how the proximity
11 of the airplanes were to each other. How close did you think
12 they were, what they were doing just in your vision of it?

13 A. My vision of it was American was at Charlie 2. Well, would
14 have rotated at Charlie 2, and Rouge was airborne approaching
15 the
16 -- approaching numbers of runway three two.

17 Q. Okay. About the same -- what altitudes? Do you recall
18 about?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Were they close in altitude? Was one higher, lower?

21 A. Rouge was higher than American.

22 Q. Did you feel there was a, there was an incident at that
23 point or what, what was your thought on that?

24 A. I mean as soon as American said he was going around it was
25 an incident to me.

1 BY MR. KECK:

2 Q. Would you normally ask the reason for a go-around or a
3 missed approach or did you, did you know right when it happened
4 why he was going around?

5 A. I didn't feel the need to ask because I assumed seeing that
6 Rouge wasn't -- like, for instance Rouge wasn't passed the
7 approaching numbers for three two, like he wasn't off the
8 departure end of the runway.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. So I assumed that American, American chose a go-around due
11 to the proximity.

12 Q. Okay. Do you have -- I'm not intimately familiar with your
13 field just, you know, I've been here for what, two hours. What
14 -- where's your 6,000 foot point from the --

15 A. Charlie 2 is actually 5,700.

16 Q. Charlie 2 is 5700 feet from the display's threshold?

17 A. That's 5,700 feet remaining.

18 Q. Okay. I got you.

19 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

20 Q. Is that the normal configuration your runway configuration
21 you have or is there -- is there another configuration that you,
22 you go on -- do you normal land on one-four or --

23 A. I mean we --

24 Q. Switch around a lot.

25 A. We switch around based on the wind.

1 Q. You in four two two much?

2 A. Four two two is mostly for general aviation and pattern
3 work.

4 Q. Is there any construction or anything going on out there on
5 the airport?

6 A. Taxiway Charlie construction and Foxtrot.

7 Q. The position of the tower relative to the end of the runway
8 did you have any problems seeing aircraft coming in on final or
9 is there any lights or anything out there that would obstruct
10 your view?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Is there anything you feel that would have helped?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Was the level of traffic that night was that -- how would
15 you gauge it? Moderate? Light?

16 A. Light.

17 Q. Complexity level, would it be --

18 A. Not complex. I had three, three planes on the frequency.

19 By MR. KECK:

20 Q. Where was that helicopter going for departure from?

21 A. Dolphin Aviation.

22 Q. So right at the base of the tower or --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay. And you sent him, what, northwest bound initially?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So that wouldn't have been a conflict.

2 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

3 Q. What do you think went wrong?

4 A. I think maybe Rouge took his time taking the runway for
5 departure, and I didn't notice.

6 Q. Have you worked at a facility that had like an ASDE-X or
7 ASSC?

8 A. No.

9 By MR. KECK: I wasn't sure if Tamiami did. I know they are
10 fairly busy.

11 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

12 Q. What level facility is this?

13 A. Sarasota? Seven.

14 Q. You have 13 controllers and one --

15 A. Developmental.

16 Q. -- developmental. How's that developmental doing?

17 A. I don't recall.

18 Q. How many Oss do you have there?

19 A. Two.

20 Q. You guys actively control?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Feel staffing is adequate for the amount of traffic that
23 you do?

24 A. For the most part.

25 Q. Okay.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: I don't think I have a question.

2 MR. KECK: Yeah. Nothing else stands out to me off the top
3 of my head. Just kind of getting a picture of who was where,
4 when, why and how.

5 Mr. TALOR:

6 Q. What would you do differently (indiscernible)?

7 A. Let American land, and let Rouge depart second.

8 Q. Did Rouge have a release time or anything?

9 A. No.

10 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

11 Q. Any questions for us?

12 A. No.

13 (Indiscernible comments and laughter.)

14 MS. KOSCHIG: I'd like to think for a minute just to see if
15 we can remember something.

16 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

17 Q. Oh, yeah. Is there something that you thought we were
18 going to ask that we didn't ask?

19 A. No.

20 By MR. KECK: It's not a trap. It's all right.

21 MS. KOSCHIG: It's okay.

22 MR. BILLINGSLEY: I've never done this. I have no idea.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, I know it's, it's not easy doing these.
24 We really are just out for the safety of it.

25 By MR. KECK:

1 Q. So you submitted the MOR on the event?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. That night or did you do it later?

4 A. That night. As soon as she came up I started working on
5 the MOR.

6 Q. Was there any upward reporting initially or no?

7 A. Yeah. I called the ATM and JTOC--or JSEN.

8 Q. One of the J's.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Since it's all the same house.

11 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

12 Q. Did you talk to Tampa at all that night?

13 A. After the fact, no. Only -- the only time I talked to them
14 was when I coordinated American.

15 Q. Okay. So American came back around, landed. Did he say
16 anything or --

17 A. No.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Last chance.

19 By MR. KECK: No. Nothing glaring.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So we're going to end the interview,
21 and the time now is 10:49.

22 (Whereupon, at 10:49 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: AIR CANADA & AMERICAN AIRLINES
NEAR-MISS INCIDENT AT THE
SARASOTA-BRADENTON INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT IN SARASOTA, FLORIDA
ON FEBRUARY 16, 2023
Interview of Laqualan Billingsley

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA179

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.

[REDACTED]

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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AIR CANADA & AMERICAN AIRLINES

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NEAR-MISS INCIDENT AT THE

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SARASOTA-BRADENTON INTERNATIONAL

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Accident No.: DCA23LA179

AIRPORT IN SARASOTA, FLORIDA

*

ON FEBRUARY 16, 2023

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Interview of: KELLY LANCE YOUNG, Air Traffic Control
Federal Aviation Administration

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

TIM KECK, Controller
National Air Traffic Controllers Association
Cleveland Tower

ROD TAYLOR, Air Traffic Manager, Orlando Exec.
Federal Aviation Administration

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:59 a.m.)

MR. KOSCHIG: Good morning again. I will be recording the interview with a digital recorder, and will have a transcription made. The transcription will become part of the factual report, not the audio. So basically what we do is we will take the audio; we send it to our transcriptionist that we hire to do this. They make the transcription. They send it back to us. We will all review the transcript, and once we agree upon it, then we let the transcriptionist know, and they destroy the audio on their end. We keep the transcript. The transcript will be the only thing that we would put it in, in of our dockets (verbatim). So I would be the only one left with it, and believe me I am not going to put it out there. So we do safeguard those. We're still hoping that in a time we'll be able to destroy the audios because the transcript that's all we need.

The time now is 10:59.

Can you please state your name?

MR. YOUNG: Kelly Lance Young.

MS. KOSCHIG: Can you spell that, please?

MR. YOUNG: K-e-l-l-y Y-o-u-n-g.

MS. KOSCHIG: Great so first of all, I'll reintroduce myself. I'm Betty Koschig. I'm an air traffic control investigator with the NTSB. My history is 20 years in the Navy as a controller working from Memphis, Bermuda, Point Mugu, and on ships, and then

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1 as COMNAVSURFLANT as a QA person. So I've got a variety of
2 experience. Then I've been working for the NTSB almost 15 years.
3 So it's been -- it's very interesting.

4 As part of the NTSB working with you is we are an independent
5 agency, and our main goal is to find the probable cause of an
6 accident or accidents, and we want to promote the safety. So if
7 there's anything that we can find out of that that will help it
8 from recurring here or anywhere else, that's, that's what we're
9 going to -- that's what we're looking for.

10 As part of this process me being in the NTSB for 15 years, I
11 don't have the recency on the equipment and everything, but I do
12 stay very, very well-informed on regulations, procedures. I'm
13 very entuned with a lot of that. But in this -- it's good to have
14 people that will help us that have recency, and get some smee.
15 The FAA, we always use the FAA smee, and as a party -- NATCA
16 always asks -- we always enjoy having NATCA on our team which they
17 are party to this investigation as well. So we are the NTSB team,
18 and the product that we will put out as a report, and all of our
19 names will be on that.

20 But I'm going to let them introduce themselves right now,
21 tell us a little bit about themselves.

22 MR. KECK: So my name's Tim Keck. I'm a controller at
23 Cleveland Tower. I've got 25 years talking to airplanes. I, too,
24 came from the Navy. I spent just shy of 10 years in the Navy
25 before I got picked up in the FAA. If you've never dealt with us

1 as a NATCA entity, I know you're the manager, so some of that
2 might be a little different, but we're active controllers. We're
3 not on a permanent detail. I was working traffic Sunday, and here
4 I am now. I'll be working back soon as I get back. So there's
5 only 12 across the country; 4 for each discipline. And when the
6 NTSB launches we request to go with them, and for the most part
7 we're approved. If it's a non-union facility sometimes there's a
8 rub there, but otherwise we'll go, and we provide current
9 perspectives and how things work in the real world. So that's a
10 quick down and dirty on us.

11 MR. TAYLOR: And as you know, I'm Rod Taylor, the air traffic
12 manager at Exec. I've been in the FAA since '89, multiple
13 positions. Currently on my second week of six-month detail as a
14 support manager, and this is my first NTSB -- on this side of the,
15 of the fence learning how this works.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So that's -- okay. As part of the
17 regulations, you are welcome to have a representative, and I see
18 that you don't have one. Was that your choice not to have one?

19 MR. YOUNG: Yes.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. Going to get -- first what we're
21 going to do is I'm going to ask you a bunch of questions, and get
22 to know you a little bit about your history, and then want to talk
23 about the airport, the incident, just various things as to get the
24 manager, you know, get a manager's point of view as. But this
25 incident is, is what we're talking about is one that occurred on

1 February 16th with Rouge 1633 and American 2172. So one thing
2 also about the NTSB. We are not here to put blame on anyone. We
3 don't look at it from that point of view. We're just looking at a
4 safety point of view. We're not here for any kind of looking at
5 liability, anything like that. That's what everybody else does.
6 We want to find those issues, and see what they can do to help
7 this facility, any other facility. Because if it happens here, it
8 can happen anywhere. So we're just fact-finding. I know that a
9 lot of people don't believe that but, but we do. So I don't think
10 we'll be in here long enough for you to need a break, but if you
11 do need a break, you are more than welcome. Just let me know.

12 MR. YOUNG: All right.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: We're going to ask -- during the time that
14 we're asking a bunch of questions if you don't know something, I
15 don't know is a good answer. You are more than welcome to
16 speculate or give your opinion on something. But if you don't
17 recall something, you know, I don't recall is a good answer.
18 Again, if you want to speculate or give your opinion on something,
19 that's, that's up to you, but it's acceptable if you just say I
20 don't recall it, I don't know.

21 And also when we ask questions sometimes we might get tongue-
22 tied, and might not be asking correctly. Say what do you mean?
23 So please have us to clarify anything because we're human too.
24 And we also may ask some questions that may sound like, well, you
25 guys should know that something very simple, but we never want to

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1 put words in your mouth, and we never want to make assumptions.

2 So that's the reason for that. Any questions?

3 MR. YOUNG: Not yet.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So here we go.

5 INTERVIEW OF KELLY LANCE YOUNG

6 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

7 Q. First I want to find out a little bit about, about you and
8 your experience with the FAA even though you don't use your
9 operating initials what were they?

10 A. Alpha Uniform.

11 Q. When did you start working for the FAA?

12 A. Flight service in June of 2000.

13 Q. Where was that?

14 A. Casper, Wyoming.

15 Q. And did you go to the Academy?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. What year did you go to the Academy?

18 A. 2000.

19 Q. In 2000. And then you went to flight service?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. Okay. And where did you go after Casper?

22 A. Casper Tower in 2002.

23 Q. And then where did you go?

24 A. Myrtle Beach 2007.

25 Q. Then?

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- 1 A. Florence, South Carolina.
- 2 Q. What year was that?
- 3 A. 2013.
- 4 Q. Then where?
- 5 A. Jacksonville Tower.
- 6 Q. Nice locations. What year was that?
- 7 A. 2016.
- 8 Q. Where then?
- 9 A. Florence Tower, 2019.
- 10 Q. Um-hmm.
- 11 A. Sarasota Tower, 2021.
- 12 Q. So did you come in here as a manager?
- 13 A. Air traffic manager.
- 14 Q. Okay. Were you manager at Florence the second time?
- 15 A. The second time.
- 16 Q. Okay. And Jacksonville Tower?
- 17 A. As the supervisor.
- 18 Q. Okay. You have any military?
- 19 A. Yes. Navy, 6 years, 7 months, 14 days, 2 hours.
- 20 Q. What airports or what airfields or where did you work in the
- 21 Navy?
- 22 A. I went to school in Millington, *USS Kearsarge*, NAS Pensacola,
- 23 OLF Choctaw.
- 24 Q. I worked at Whiting Field for four years ago. Choctaw I
- 25 thought that would be a great place. You were a controller the

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1 whole time, right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Do you have any -- what, what years were you in the
4 Navy? I'm sorry.

5 A. '92 to '98.

6 Q. Do you have any college?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Do you have any aeronautical certificates other than air
9 traffic?

10 A. No.

11 Q. You don't have to, but do you have a current medical?

12 A. No.

13 Q. A lot of these questions I don't need to ask. Okay. So
14 let's talk a little bit about the incident. Just for the record
15 you have listened to the audio and watched the replay?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Watched the replay. Okay. Do you know if anybody filed an
18 ATSAP?

19 A. I do not.

20 Q. Okay. So tell us just a little bit when you were informed
21 about the incident, and what were the steps taken at that point?

22 A. I received a call from supervisor. I do not recall the exact
23 time, but stated that he had air carrier go-around, and might have
24 not had runway separation. So I asked what, what do you have or
25 what he thinks he has. He says right around 5,750. Got the call

1 signs, and told him the QA would be requesting the recording.

2 Then hung up the phone and notified district.

3 Q. Do you know if the manager, the OS, completed the MOR?

4 A. Yes, he did.

5 Q. So tell me what happened right after that.

6 A. I received the MOR. I forwarded the MOR to QC the district,
7 and that was pretty much it for that, for that day. Next morning
8 is when notification of everything.

9 Q. All right. So the next morning is when everything started
10 going on. Tell us some of the, the mitigations -- some of the
11 things you did, the mitigations, the people you approached for
12 looking at any, any safety issues with this, and how you handled
13 all that.

14 A. First was to watch the recording, listen to the recording,
15 watch the Falcon, evaluate what the issue was. The Falcon does
16 not provide distances at the ground, and so we're based on
17 supervisory -- the controller at the time testimony of what he
18 estimated separation was. And then at that point we're preparing
19 for an SRT, gathering information for that. Based on our decision
20 looking at it for the SRT mitigation was going to be a verbal
21 briefing, LSC review. Possibly IPM. And we decided to do an SSR.

22 Q. So on the verbal briefing what, what was the, the topic of
23 the verbal briefing?

24 A. The expected separation or the determined separation. At
25 that time my information was still based on the controller working

1 the position at the time, but the AJI -- I'm not sure who, said it
2 was closer to 3,300. That's the first we heard those numbers.

3 Q. Okay.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: I'm going to let you guys ask some questions.

5 BY MR. TAYLOR:

6 Q. So the verbal briefing was just about paying attention to the
7 separation runway separation you said?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. That was our main concern.

11 Q. I guess I will just ask it -- so what do you think was the
12 issue then? What do you think caused -- trying not to give you
13 the answer with my question. What do you think, what do you think
14 happened?

15 A. I think he was trying to rush the airbus to get it out
16 before --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- the Boeing. For reasons unknown.

19 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

20 Q. You guys have any cutoffs? Anything written on when you
21 would cutoff departing someone?

22 A. I think, I believe, we have recommended cutoffs in the SOP.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I believe.

25 BY MR. TAYLOR :

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1 Q. When you, when you said the verbal briefing was on runway
2 separation, I guess my thought is once you, once you run a play
3 like that making sure that you're paying attention to it, and is
4 what I thought you were probably -- go with that. And based on
5 just what we're hearing so far my, my recommendation would be to
6 kind of keep an eye on that as well. So he got distracted after
7 he cleared them for takeoff to turn around and take care of other
8 activities. So --

9 A. That's the first thing I've heard of that.

10 MR. TAYLOR: Can I keep going?

11 MS. KOSCHIG: uh-uh.

12 BY MR. KECK:

13 Q. So at your facility what -- you're more in the know of things
14 that might be coming down the line. Do you know are you guys
15 anywhere in the waterfall for surface surveillance project or no?

16 A. RVR.

17 Q. You don't have RVR up here?

18 BY MR. KECK:

19 Q. You don't have RVR up here? Okay.

20 MR. KECK: Interesting.

21 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

22 BY MR. KECK:

23 Q. How often are you IFR on this side?

24 A. Ah, the winter we could get some fog, in the summer you get
25 thunderstorms, you know, so a percentage maybe 30, 40 percent

1 maybe.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But that's, that's purely a guesstimation on my part.

4 Q. Do you have any other improvements inbound that you're aware
5 of equipment-wise or like NIDS or anything like that?

6 A. (No audible response.)

7 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

8 Q. Have any plans for rearranging anything in the tower so that
9 it may be more -- everything's closer together for the controllers
10 if they're working alone where they have to go to different parts
11 of the tower?

12 A. It's been some suggestions, but no formal determination.

13 BY MR. KECK:

14 Q. Do you guys do like a work group for stuff like that, or do
15 you have a suggestion process?

16 A. Through the ATM. I'm sorry. Through the --

17 Q. That's you.

18 A. Through the facility representative.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And, yes, we would do work group on it with LSC being
21 involved in it.

22 Q. Do you have any guidance on when to -- when they're down two
23 controllers going to one up, one up at a time, timing of that?

24 A. I leave it to the CICs with the expectation that the other
25 person was available.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Small facilities that's very common.

3 Q. Who is your main carrier out of this airport? Do you have
4 one?

5 A. Delta and Allegiant, some United, yeah, there's not, not a
6 main one, I would say.

7 Q. Okay. I mean Allegiant's headquartered down the road out of
8 Punta Gorda. So I wasn't sure.

9 A. Yeah. We get quite a few flights of Allegiant, Southwest got
10 a couple. But I don't know if one dominates more than the other.

11 Q. Okay. Do you guys have any -- what's the word I'm looking
12 for -- any outreach between the operators, both commercial and
13 civilian --

14 A. We have an RSAT that we do every year. We have done several
15 pilot briefings, forums. We've worked with FSDO. They do one or
16 two meetings a year.

17 Q. Okay. Have you guys done any, like, operation rain check
18 events?

19 A. No. That sounds familiar, but I don't, I don't recall what
20 that is.

21 Q. It's similar to what you're putting on there. It's just kind
22 of -- it falls under the, the FAASTeam, that's all.

23 A. Yeah. We worked for FAASTeam a couple of times with pilot
24 forums.

25 Q. They can come up with -- two on the tower, and have, you

1 know, face-to-face interactions with the controller, stuff like
2 that. You can even offer wings credit to them if you wanted to.
3 We've done it for one event we had at our facility. That's more
4 for the GA guys, but sometimes the commercial guys if they're
5 flying here frequently might, you know, if they, if they're in the
6 area know that something's coming up might want to go and check it
7 out.

8 A. I know we have put a lot of effort into talking with the
9 flight schools, and the GA pilots because during Covid although we
10 didn't necessarily traffic slow down because the GAs took it over.
11 After Covid air carrier traffic has increased dramatically, and
12 that's pushing the GAs --

13 Q. Ruffling some feathers?

14 A. Correct. They're not getting that freedom that they had
15 before.

16 Q. Right.

17 A. So we put a lot of effort into getting word out that go in
18 the mornings or later in the evenings when the carriers are not
19 flying as much to do their touch-and-gos, so like that. I think
20 for the most part it's worked.

21 Q. Have you -- I didn't pay attention for this. So since you
22 mentioned air carrier traffic's increased, do you have like a TSD
23 in the tower or available? You familiar with what that is? A
24 traffic situation display where you can -- it will plug in your
25 expected flow to the airport. You can kind of base your staffing

1 and training on it, both arrivals and departures.

2 A. Yeah. Where it shows the carriers coming in or IFR flight
3 plans, planes coming?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Yeah, we have that up there, but we don't -- it's not
6 mandatory for it to be there. And some controllers use it, some
7 don't. And plus that tells you what you're looking at for the
8 next hour or so, but it can change dramatically with the VFRs --

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. -- in Tampa and everything else. It's an added tool. Some
11 people use it, but a lot of people use the arrival list on the
12 TDW.

13 Q. Yeah. Just wasn't sure. It will project out 6, 7 hours as
14 far as the commercial stuff goes.

15 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

16 Q. How many people in your local safety committee?

17 A. Two.

18 Q. Is one of them part of management.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. They feel like they can -- people feel like they can come to
21 you with anything and address it if they bring the facility issues
22 to you?

23 A. Yes. They write up meeting minutes after every meeting.
24 They send it to me and the FACREP, and then they brief it out to
25 the controllers.

1 Q. Great. Do you have some more questions.

2 BY MR. KECK:

3 Q. You have a new tower -- were you -- that was here prior to
4 you correct, the new tower opening up?

5 A. This was built in 2018.

6 Q. And you got here what was it '19?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. So you didn't have --

9 A. No. I got here in '21.

10 Q. I'm sorry, 21. Is there anything you want that would help or
11 you think would help that you haven't been able to get any
12 traction on?

13 MR. TAYLOR: I wish someone would ask me that for Exec.

14 MR. KECK: Careful what you ask for.

15 Mr. TAYLOR: I know, right.

16 MR. YOUNG: Well, it -- PDC would be great. The airport has
17 offered to pay for the PDC, but the FAA said no.

18 MR. TAYLOR:

19 Q. I was going to say digital ATIS, but that's not part of the
20 same thing, right?

21 A. Part of it.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. Part of the --

24 MR. KECK: Data com can't encompass that.

25 MR. TAYLOR: Because you guys don't have digital ATIS --

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1 MR. YOUNG: Correct.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: All --

3 (Crosstalk)

4 MR. YOUNG: If we get a PDC it comes with the digital ATIS ,
5 but like I said the airport's willing to buy it, buy the
6 equipment, but the FAA says no because there's other facilities
7 are ahead of us or, you know, plus the, the actual equipment.

8 MR. TAYLOR: We kept getting told no, there's no money,
9 that's why you can't get it. And we don't have the spot for it,
10 but we -- they'll buy it for you. That's crazy.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: I hope you tell the other guys that.

12 MR. KECK: So that's -- we have it. CPLC, PDC, digital ATIS
13 it makes things faster, yes. You don't have to spend as much time
14 cutting an ATIS. There's your clearance. But I'm surprised that
15 whole datacomm thing a couple years ago, I figured it would have
16 been shaken out with that.

17 MR. TAYLOR: Small facilities didn't get it and can't.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: No.

19 MR. KECK: You're a busy seven. I mean that's not -- you're
20 not a level four.

21 MR. TAYLOR: Sanford is a nine, and they can't get it.

22 MR. YOUNG: Well, and I think, you know, even a year ago the
23 argument against it would have been we just didn't have the
24 carriers.

25 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah, that could be.

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1 MR. YOUNG: But that has changed.

2 MR. KECK: Right.

3 MR. YOUNG: And so now I think we, we are -- I mean Fort
4 Myers has it.

5 MR. TAYLOR: Do they?

6 MR. YOUNG: Yeah. And we don't. So --

7 MR. TAYLOR: Maybe this will get it. It's worth asking,
8 definitely, definitely --

9 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah. And --

10 MR. YOUNG: And I have. I went through tech ops. We put in
11 a request for it. I know the airport's gone through congressional
12 side to try to get it.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: That's crazy.

14 MR. KECK: Things that make you go hmm.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly. That's one thing that would help
16 reduce controller workload.

17 MR. TAYLOR: Um-hmm, yeah.

18 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

19 Q. Have you worked anywhere that has ASDE-X or ASSC? Those are
20 fantastic for predicting and detecting any -- something like this.

21 A. MR. KECK: Do you guys have? No. This is -- I have to word
22 this carefully because there's other places that do. We'll say
23 for situational awareness only any type of ADS-B feed where you
24 can see who is moving where, why, how.

25 MR. TAYLOR: I know why you are asking that.

1 MR. YOUNG: Whether it's surface, whether it's -- I mean,
2 you've got a radar feed so you see that airborne stuff, but I know
3 there are some place, and I won't name them, that have a -- we'll
4 say like a bastardized type ASDE. They can't use them for
5 separation. There's no safety logic in it. It's not going to
6 tell you you have something happening.

7 MR. YOUNG: I am not familiar with that.

8 MR. KECK: Okay.

9 MR. YOUNG: So --

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, totally off the books.

11 MR. YOUNG: Yeah. It's situational awareness only.

12 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

13 MR. KECK: That's how I'll preface that.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Lot of private towers will use different things
15 like that.

16 MR. KECK: There are some federal ones that have it too.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. It's not saying it's bad. It's just not
18 -- it's not part of the, of the --

19 (Crosstalk)

20 MS. KOSCHIG: -- toolbox the FAA puts out, but, you know,
21 it's --

22 MR. KECK:

23 Q. With your increased air carrier traffic are they expanding
24 the terminal at all?

25 A. MR. YOUNG: There's plans for it, yeah.

1 Q. MR. KECK: There is.

2 A. MR. YOUNG: Yeah. There's a lot of construction going on in
3 the airport.

4 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

5 Q. How many -- do you know how many carrier ops go on here?

6 A. MR. YOUNG: No. I don't recall the exact number. I think
7 we're still dominated by GA, but for their, you know, especially
8 seasonal traffic is --

9 MR. KECK:

10 Q. With the increase in carrier ops that puts your passenger
11 count up. Any chance of putting up to a Class C?

12 MR. YOUNG: We are a Class C.

13 MR. KECK: Oh, you are. I'm sorry --

14 MR. YOUNG: Oh, yeah.

15 MR. KECK: -- I thought you were a D. Okay. Well,
16 disregard. Trying to find other ways to get you some things.

17 MR. YOUNG: Money is not the issue.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

19 MR. TAYLOR: I got nothing else.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Before we let you go is there anything that we
21 didn't ask you, you thought we were going to ask you?

22 MR. YOUNG: No, that --

23 (Crosstalk)

24 MS. KOSCHIG: I always feel funny asking that question
25 sometimes, sometimes people are like, what?

1 MR. YOUNG: No. I'm good.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So last chance everybody.

3 All right. Then we will end the interview at 11:29.

4 (Whereupon, at 11:29 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: AIR CANADA & AMERICAN AIRLINES
NEAR-MISS INCIDENT AT THE
SARASOTA-BRADENTON INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT IN SARASOTA, FLORIDA
ON FEBRUARY 16, 2023
Interview of Kelly Lance Young

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA179

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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AIR CANADA & AMERICAN AIRLINES

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NEAR-MISS INCIDENT AT THE

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SARASOTA-BRADENTON INTERNATIONAL

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Accident No.: DCA23LA179

AIRPORT IN SARASOTA, FLORIDA

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ON FEBRUARY 16, 2023

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Interview of: TIMOTHY PATRICK PIATEK, Air Traffic Controller
Federal Aviation Administration

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APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

TIM KECK, Controller
National Air Traffic Controllers Association
Cleveland Tower

ROD TAYLOR, Air Traffic Manager, Orlando Exec.
Federal Aviation Administration

JUSTIN RODRIGUEZ
Representative for Mr. Piatek

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:52 a.m.)

MR. KOSCHIG: So first of all like I said we're going to record this. We'll be recording the interview via digital recorder, and we'll have a transcription made, and the transcription will be part of the factual report, not the audio. So what happens with the audio is there's one person that will have it is me.

MR. PIATEK: Sure.

MS. KOSCHIG: And I will send that to the transcriptionist to have it transcribed. Once they give us the transcript back they destroy the trans -- the audio, and we keep the transcript. So after that I'm the only person with the audio.

MR. PIATEK: Sure.

MS. KOSCHIG: And that audio does not go out in any -- in anything that we send out. You won't ever see us send out an audio of an interview. So just to let you know --

MR. PIATEK: Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: -- where that is. So we're good to go.

First of all let's get started. The time is 8:52.

Please state your name.

MR. PIATEK: Timothy Patrick Piatek.

MS. KOSCHIG: Could you please spell your full name?

MR. PIATEK: T-i-m-o-t-h-y P-a-t-r-i-c-k P-i-a-t-e-k.

MS. KOSCHIG: Great. So good morning.

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1 MR. PIATEK: Good morning.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, like, like I was saying earlier we just
3 want to talk to you about some of the things here, but first to
4 get started, I'll introduce myself.

5 MR. PIATEK: Sure.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: I am Betty Koschig. I am from the NTSB. I'm
7 an air traffic control investigator. My history is 20 years in
8 the Navy as a controller working at a variety of airfields and
9 ships, and of course for the NTSB for 15 years. At the NTSB we're
10 an independent agency. So we don't work for the FAA, Department
11 of Defense, Department of Transportation, anything. We're our own
12 agency. So that gives us a little bit more leeway on different
13 things since we don't report to anyone except to Congress.

14 As part of our process we invite or actually we, we have
15 party members that will join us to help us with our investigation.
16 So in this case we have the FAA, which is a mandatory party member
17 which is great to always have a SME. And I'll have him introduce
18 himself in a minute. And NATCA which is -- we always enjoy having
19 as a party member is -- they're also a SME, and we need this
20 expertise because we cannot do this alone, and this is what makes
21 our, our group so much better because we do want other people to
22 help us with these investigations, and in this case that's what we
23 have.

24 So I would let Tim introduce himself.

25 MR. KECK: So hi, Tim. I'm Tim.

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1 MR. PIATEK: Hi, Tim.

2 MR. KECK: So I'm from Cleveland Tower. I've been a
3 controller for 25 years, in the agency for almost 16 now. I'm one
4 of your 12 NATCA ASIs. If you don't know what we do, we're
5 regular controllers. We're not permanently detailed to this. So
6 I was working afternoon shift Sunday. When I go back after my
7 RDOs I'm back again.

8 MR. PIATEK: Sure.

9 MR. KECK: So we're not one of those entities that doesn't
10 talk to airplanes. We have to be current in order to be part of
11 this team. So we're just here to provide current views and how
12 things work in the real world, and help make this a little bit
13 easier.

14 MR. PIATEK: Okay.

15 MR. TAYLOR: Hi. I'm Rod Taylor. I'm the air traffic
16 manager at Orlando Exec, but I'm currently assigned as the quality
17 control support manager at F11. And like Tim said, this is not
18 something I do. This is my very first time sitting on this side
19 of the fence on an investigation like this. So just here to help
20 out and kind of go through the process.

21 MR. PIATEK: Great. Thank you. Good to meet you all.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: As far as the regulations, you are welcome to
23 have your -- a representative, and I see that you did bring
24 someone to represent you, correct?

25 MR. PIATEK: Yes, ma'am.

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1 MS. KOSCHIG: Can you please state your name?

2 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Justin Rodriguez.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

4 MR. RODRIGUEZ: (Indiscernible).

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Would you spell your name?

6 MR. RODRIGUEZ: J-u-s-t-i-n R-o-d-r-i-g-u-e-z.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: Great. Thank you.

8 So now we're going to start getting into where -- we want
9 this to be a conversation of, of things that we're, you know,
10 we're looking for. But we -- I don't -- we're here because of the
11 incident that happened on February 16th with Rouge 1633 and
12 American 2172. And I do realize that you were not part of that
13 incident, and you were not in the facility at that time, correct?

14 MR. PIATEK: Correct.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So but with this incident what
16 we're here to do is find out what's the probable cause of. We're
17 not here to lay blame on anyone. As the NTSB we, we're not
18 looking for liability, blame. Our goal is to find out what
19 happened, and to see if there's anything that can be put in place
20 to keep from recurrence, from it recurring.

21 So we're just fact-finders, and I think that's a lot of
22 things sometimes people don't realize. We want the safety issues.
23 We're not here to --

24 MR. PIATEK: Sure.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: -- point fingers. So but one of the things

1 we're -- we're just going to ask a bunch of questions. So if you
2 don't know something, you don't know it, you know, just that's a
3 fine answer. And you can, you know, if you want to speculate or,
4 or speculate on anything or give your opinion that's fine because
5 it will help us with our, you know, figuring out the facility, and
6 what's, you know, what things can do to improve the safety. So
7 your opinion's is very valuable in that area. I don't know if
8 I'll ask you anything that you don't recall, but if you did, if
9 you don't recall is a fine answer as well.

10 And you might hear us ask you some very simple questions. We
11 are like you should know that. We might but --

12 MR. PIATEK: Okay.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: -- we never want to put words in your mouth,
14 okay?

15 MR. PIATEK: Yes, ma'am.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: So that's the reason behind that.

17 A break, if you need a break, you're more than welcome to
18 take it. I don't think you'll be --

19 MR. PIATEK: I should be okay.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

21 MR. PIATEK: Got me for a good two, three hours at least.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, I don't think we'll be here for that --

23 MR. PIATEK: Okay.

24 MR. KECK: Stretch my hands --

25 MR. PIATEK: Exactly.

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1 MS. KOSCHIG: And with your representative you are more than
2 welcome to -- if you wanted to ask your representative, if you
3 want to leave and ask, you can do that. All the questions are
4 going to come to you, but he's here for your support.

5 MR. PIATEK: Of course. Thank you.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: And if you wanted to talk to him, you're more
7 than welcome to either say something here or go out. It's, you
8 know --

9 MR. PIATEK: Okay. Just kick the chair.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly. So you ready to get started?

11 MR. PIATEK: Yes, ma'am.

12 INTERVIEW OF TIMOTHY PATRICK PIATEK

13 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

14 Q. So first what we're going to do is find out a little bit
15 about you.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. All right. What are your operating initials?

18 A. Alpha Golf.

19 Q. You might see me typing because I like to keep some -- just
20 write down things -- refer back so --

21 A. Of course.

22 Q. -- I don't have to keep asking you.

23 A. No problem at all.

24 Q. When did you start working for the FAA?

25 A. 2009.

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1 Q. Was that the Academy?

2 A. That was -- affirmative, yeah. That was when I got hired on.
3 First arrived in facility November of 2009.

4 Q. And that was here?

5 A. That was Kansas City Center.

6 Q. Oh, okay. How long were you there?

7 A. Kansas City Center for around about two years. I don't
8 recall the exact duration, but it was about two years.

9 Q. And when did you leave?

10 A. It would have to be around 2012, 20 -- maybe late 2011, 2012.

11 Q. And where did you go?

12 A. Kansas City, Downtown Tower.

13 Q. Oh.

14 A. Charles B. Wheeler.

15 Q. Yeah. And how long were you there?

16 A. Three years. Just under three years, I think. The next
17 answer I can get that one because --

18 Q. Oh.

19 A. -- I showed up here.

20 Q. That's fine. Oh, then you showed up here?

21 A. That I --

22 Q. And what year was that?

23 A. 2014.

24 Q. Oh, so you've been here for a while.

25 A. Here for a while, yes, ma'am.

- 1 Q. Yeah. Do you like it here?
- 2 A. Very much so.
- 3 Q. Oh.
- 4 A. Best place I've been.
- 5 Q. You have beautiful view out there.
- 6 A. Wonderful. You're not kidding.
- 7 Q. Yeah. So you were here with the old tower that was here?
- 8 A. Oh, yes.
- 9 Q. How was that?
- 10 A. Asbestos filled, old, dank, not great. This place is
- 11 fantastically better. It's really, really nice.
- 12 Q. It is.
- 13 A. Yeah.
- 14 Q. It's a nice tower --
- 15 A. Shiny and new.
- 16 Q. It still looks kind of new, and it's --
- 17 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.
- 18 BY MS. KOSCHIG:
- 19 Q. Have any military?
- 20 A. No, ma'am.
- 21 Q. Okay. Have any college?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. Degrees?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. What kind of degrees do you have?

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- 1 A. Bachelor's in sociology from Beloit College.
- 2 Q. What city is that in?
- 3 A. Also Beloit, Beloit, Wisconsin.
- 4 Q. Okay.
- 5 A. B-e-l-o-i-t.
- 6 Q. What year did you get that?
- 7 A. 2004 graduation.
- 8 Q. Any other degrees?
- 9 A. That's it.
- 10 Q. Enough isn't it?
- 11 A. It's a degree.
- 12 Q. Yeah, it's great. Do you have any other aeronautical
- 13 certificates other than air traffic?
- 14 A. No, ma'am.
- 15 Q. Have a current medical?
- 16 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 17 Q. Okay. Do you have any restrictions, like eyeglasses?
- 18 A. No. I had LASIK. So no more restriction on that. The only
- 19 restriction is annually I have to go for a pulmonary function test
- 20 for asthma just to make sure it's under well controlled, you know,
- 21 well under control. That's it.
- 22 Q. Okay, great. Who is your supervisor?
- 23 A. Luke Billingsley, Laqualan.
- 24 Q. What positions are you qualified and/or certified on?
- 25 A. Well --

- 1 Q. Everything?
- 2 A. Everything. Yes, ma'am. Yeah.
- 3 Q. I told you I have to ask you questions.--
- 4 A. No, no trouble. I can rattle through the positions or
- 5 whatever you need.
- 6 Q. No, everything is fine.
- 7 A. FPL.
- 8 MR. TAYLOR: That's an old term.
- 9 MR. PIATEK: There you go, yes. CPC.
- 10 MR. TAYLOR: Yes.
- 11 BY MS. KOSCHIG:
- 12 Q. And so are you current on all positions?
- 13 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 14 Q. All right. What's your normal work schedule?
- 15 A. For the rotation-wise?
- 16 Q. Yes.
- 17 A. Okay. So four 10s. My workweek begins on Sunday. Typically
- 18 starting at 2 p.m., working until midnight. Rotating back the
- 19 next day. Could be a noon or 10 o'clock shift. Subsequent day
- 20 frequently an 8 o'clock or a 10 o'clock shift. And the ultimate
- 21 day would be a 5:45 opener to get the tower open at 6 a.m.
- 22 Q. So do you work much overtime?
- 23 A. It depends. Just recently no. Sometimes, I mean, when it's
- 24 there, and when I'm able to work it, yes.
- 25 Q. Okay. Were you working the day of the incident?

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1 A. No, ma'am. It was one of my RDLs, my regular days off.

2 Q. Okay. Are cell phones allowed in the tower?

3 A. No, ma'am.

4 Q. These are questions that I (indiscernible). So did you just
5 -- did you happen to see the replay on this incident?

6 A. No. No, ma'am.

7 Q. Okay. So, yeah. So you're not very well aware of what's
8 going on with --

9 A. I've seen the news. Nothing more than that.

10 Q. Oh, that's fine. Okay. So now what we're going to do just
11 start asking you some questions about the facility, and I'll ask
12 some. Then we're going to go around the room just kind of have a
13 conversation about things that -- your, your opinion and your
14 knowledge on things. So about what time, about what time do you
15 guys usually break down to two in the tower? I mean from two, two
16 to one or how, how you break it down.

17 A. Sure. One -- I mean, depends on factors, traffic, staffing.
18 If we have people to keep positions open we'd like to keep them
19 open until 7, 7:30, right around there. If we don't have
20 staffing, may have to have earlier just so we can ensure break
21 rotations so people can get adequate -- don't go overly long on
22 position. You become fatigued.

23 Q. Okay. How many people are usually in the building at one
24 time?

25 A. Varies through --

1 Q. At certain --

2 A. Yeah. It varies throughout the day. Two people to open,
3 sometimes a sup. Frequently a sup, I'd say early in the morning.
4 Eight o'clock we're supposed to have a third person. There's
5 usually a second or a fourth person that is at 10 o'clock, and
6 sometimes more at noon. It depends on the day, but that's
7 frequently what's scheduled. And then the closers, people coming
8 in at 2 o'clock; or if they're on an 8-hour day, they come in at
9 4 o'clock.

10 Q. You feel like that schedule works pretty good?

11 A. It can. When -- it can work well.

12 Q. Would you have any improvements you think that would help?

13 MR. PIATEK: You want to chit-chat for a second?

14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Sure if you'd like to.

15 MR. PIATEK: Just for a quick second.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

17 MR. PIATEK: Sorry.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: I'm going to, I'm going to pause it.

19 MR. PIATEK: Be right back.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

21 (Off the record.)

22 (On the record.)

23 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

24 Q. All right. So, yeah --

25 A. The schedule was the last question.

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1 Q. Yeah, yeah.

2 A. Right now we have most controllers on a 10-hour AWS work
3 schedule. Personally in my opinion staffing had been better when
4 it was more half of the people on the 10 hours, and half of the
5 people on an 8-hour shift. I thought it ensured slightly better
6 coverage throughout the week, and just my opinion.

7 Q. Right, and that's --

8 A. Yeah. And I can't back that up with data. I don't know if
9 that's actually the case, but my subjective interpretation was it
10 seemed better.

11 Q. Right. Yeah. And that's exactly, it's your opinion. You
12 work it you know how things work.

13 A. Thank you.

14 Q. So what do you feel about the traffic? Has it been
15 increasing lately? What type of traffic has been increasing or is
16 it decreasing? Tell me what's going on with --

17 A. Okay. In general, well, since I arrived in 2014 the traffic
18 has gone up and down, but the general trend has been busier and
19 busier. And in general it's been biasing towards more
20 straightforward traffic, air carriers, air taxis. We still have a
21 lot of general aviation, but a greater proportion of our traffic
22 than ever before is air carriers at this point. So we're
23 definitely getting busier, but I'm not sure if it's getting more
24 complicated.

25 Q. Got some construction going on out there?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Has that impacted how you do operations?

3 A. Yes, ma'am.

4 Q. And how is that? How, how would that be that -- how does it
5 impact?

6 A. Predominantly ground control for taxi routes. Also sometimes
7 local control when you're issuing exits for aircraft. A great
8 number of exits that are frequently used aren't available. For
9 example at this moment when north, north of Charlie 2 -- old
10 Charlie is closed, and a lot of jets will roll past Charlie 2, and
11 now they have to turn left. That creates more runway crossings.
12 That creates more opportunities for things to go wrong,
13 miscommunications.

14 Q. And as far as tower equipment, how do you, how do you feel
15 the layout in the, in the tower works as far as where the
16 equipment's located if you're working alone?

17 A. I have no complaints. I, I -- maybe it's just that I'm used
18 to it, but for me it works, and at this stage I have no problem
19 with where everything is. Everything seems located pretty fine.

20 Q. Oh, okay.

21 A. Adequately.

22 Q. And I know you guys have an ATIS up there. Is it -- what
23 kind of ATIS is it? Is it digital or is it --

24 A. Manual. Just cut it every hour. I mean, there's the ASOS,
25 but that's, that's only at night when we're closed. That does it

1 automatically. But during the day we're cutting one every hour.

2 Q. Oh, okay. And where is the, where is the ATIS located?

3 A. That would be at the south, south corner of the tower cab.

4 So as you walk up the stairs it's immediately on your right after
5 you exit through the door.

6 Q. All right. Have you worked at -- I don't know -- I don't
7 think Kansas has an ASDE-X).

8 MR. KECK: No, they don't, no.

9 MR. PIATEK: No, no, ma'am.

10 MR. KECK: MCI might.

11 MR. PIATEK: They probably did, yeah.

12 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

13 MR. KECK: Because they were a, a Class B.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

15 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

16 Q. So have you, have you looked at -- have you seen how an ASDE-
17 X works or?

18 A. Yes. I've seen it on information videos in the FAA, and I'm
19 familiar with, with the general idea of it.

20 Q. Yeah. With all your experience how do you feel that that
21 kind of system, something like it would work here?

22 A. It would be interesting. I mean, I'm, I'm not opposed to
23 things that could improve safety, but I don't know how it would
24 impact things particularly. It's a tool, and some tools are
25 really hand. But I really don't have any experience with it so I

1 couldn't say.

2 Q. Right. And so speaking of that line, same line, if there was
3 a piece of equipment or several pieces of equipment if you guys
4 are like me I wish we had this, I wish we had that --

5 A. Sure.

6 Q. -- what are some of those? What would be helpful?

7 A. Some of the things that -- the pilots wouldn't mind the ACARS
8 wouldn't be bad, especially as more and more air carriers are
9 coming in they're expecting it. And then they're calling up, and
10 saying, hey, it's broke. Like, oh, no, it's not broke. It's just
11 not there.

12 Q. Yeah, good.

13 A. So that's -- the automated ATIS wouldn't be bad. Personally
14 an IDS -- or the IDS 4, IDS?

15 MR. KECK: IDS.

16 MR. PIATEK: IDS 4, thank you, or whatever number they're on
17 right now --

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

19 MR. PIATEK: -- wouldn't be bad. Five.

20 MR. KECK: E-IDS I think is -- don't know which one.

21 MR. PIATEK: There you go. Well, something would be handy
22 because not only do we have occasional line issues with Tampa
23 having to pass information through the FSDO, give general
24 information, it's not onerous, but it still takes time, and I
25 think typing something into a keyboard into an IDS would be handy.

1 We have an IDS at Kansas City, and it wasn't a bad thing. Justin
2 had some experience with that maybe more than me with the newer
3 systems.

4 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

5 Q. Definitely good to know. So working in the, in the tower,
6 what do you usually -- how I'm going to phrase this. I don't know
7 how much you know about the situation that happened, but just your
8 -- I just want your opinion as a controller.

9 A. Um-hmm.

10 Q. If you've got a, like, if you have an American that's coming
11 in on final, and you've got somebody that is getting ready to take
12 off, and you've got -- what is your minimum --

13 A. Sure.

14 Q. -- what's your cutoff for when you would launch them?

15 A. And the aircraft --

16 Q. I mean --

17 (Crosstalk)

18 A. -- on the ground is in position?

19 Q. We're talking hypothetical.

20 MR. KECK: No.

21 MR. PIATEK: Not holding position.

22 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

23 Q. No, he's not --

24 A. Not holding position. Okay. And --

25 Q. Just hypotheticals.

1 A. -- it depends on the speed of the aircraft. If they're doing
2 110 knots, they're effectively a Cessna. If they're doing 160
3 knots, then it's a very different story.

4 Q. So you look at the speed?

5 A. Very much so.

6 Q. Okay. What else would you -- what else --

7 MR. TAYLOR: Can I add to that?

8 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, yeah, please.

9 BY MR. TAYLOR:

10 Q. If the speeds were comparable for two -- talking two air
11 carriers, what would your normal spot be?

12 A. Normally for an aircraft holding short, and an air carrier
13 inbound not looking at the individual company or specific
14 individual factors, because I can get into that later if you have
15 questions --

16 Q. No, no.

17 A. -- but I would say inside of three miles is going to be tight
18 to maybe not a good idea. Outside of three miles is probably a
19 good idea, is probably fine.

20 Q. Thanks.

21 A. But, again, depending on --

22 Q. Right. Things can change.

23 A. Exactly.

24 Q. Yes. Just a general rule.

25 A. Generally, I'd say three miles is a -- is the cutoff, the

1 cutoff with air quotes.

2 Q. Good answer.

3 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

4 Q. And what is -- when you look out the window at night do you
5 have a good view at the approach end?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. And how about -- are there any lights or anything out there
8 that, that would -- can you see the aircraft coming in or is there
9 anything that would be distracting out there?

10 A. One four to my recollection is very clear. Three two is as
11 well. But there's the terminal -- it does have some bright
12 lights. One four in particular. I can't think of anything that
13 would be distracting or that would obscure view other than
14 atmospheric conditions.

15 Q. Okay. Right. Do you run a configuration -- what, what
16 configuration do you run more?

17 A. Settings you mean or --

18 Q. Like Runway One Four.

19 A. Oh.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. Seasonal. So right now in the winter, well, we're, we're
22 coming out of winter. Frequently the winds are coming from the
23 north. We're on three two very frequently, very -- usually. And
24 during the summer one four is very common.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It swings around especially during the summer with every
2 passing thunderstorm. But those are the dominant runways, yeah.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Tim.

4 BY MR. KECK:

5 Q. Just while you're talking about runways. Do you guys have a
6 runway use program, like an agreement with the city in your SOP or
7 anything like that?

8 A. I can't recall any. I mean, we have an SOP with, with the
9 airport ops. And I don't know what you mean the runway use
10 program. How are they allowed to use the runway?

11 Q. No. Like prevailing winds.

12 A. Oh.

13 Q. Say a 10 knot tailwind with -- in this configuration or, you
14 know, from this time to this time they prefer to be on this --
15 noise abatement, something like that.

16 A. I see. No. To my knowledge none of -- that does not exist.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. It's just based on our factors.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. Air traffic factors.

21 Q. All good. So you don't like the 10s, huh?

22 A. I like the 10s for me.

23 (Indiscernible simultaneous comments and laughter.)

1 Q. -- days off a year is great. I didn't get one this year. So
2 you mentioned that you had a little bit of coverage when you were
3 on 8s or with more 8s mixed with the 10s.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. You guys are what, 13, 14 people?

6 A. That sounds right.

7 Q. What's your shift number?

8 A. Shift number --

9 Q. I know it's a guideline, but what's your shift number?

10 A. The absolute minimum I thought was five. But you'd be -- you
11 negotiated it. Can I ask him?

12 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

13 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I'll have to get back to you on that just to
14 make sure.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

16 MR. PIATEK: Yeah. Because -- yeah, I, I would be making it
17 up if I answered.

18 BY MR. KECK:

19 Q. Okay. Wasn't sure. And just my own thought would be was --
20 is that the same as it was when you guys had more 8s or not?

21 A. I don't think the shift guidelines have changed. If -- but,
22 again, the subject matter expert might have more --

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: The shift guidelines didn't change with --
24 even with AWS. Still had the same numbers who were coming in for

1 the morning as the night.

2 MR. KECK: Okay.

3 MR. RODRIGUEZ: And whatnot.

4 MR. KECK: Ours adjust a little bit because we're a heavy AWS
5 schedule this year at my facility, and they did adjust slightly,
6 but we've had a ton of people at the overlap.

7 MR. PIATEK: Yeah.

8 MR. KECK: Trying to think.

9 BY MR. TAYLOR:

10 Q. When do you guys normally drop down to two controllers?

11 A. Again, subject to staffing and workload. I'd say usually
12 7, 7:30. If traffic is --

13 Q. And that's when you also drop down to one up, one down at the
14 same time.

15 A. That's typical, yes.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. If it's busy, if traffic warrants, we're more than happy to
18 man the positions that are required. That's -- and I, I'd like to
19 think that we're all responsible enough to do that, but I can only
20 speak for myself -- people I work with.

21 BY MR. KECK:

22 Q. How is your relationship between controllers and management?

23 A. Generally good.

24 Q. And both your sups? Because you've got two sups, right?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. And both qualified here as sups or as controllers first or?

2 A. Megan showed up as a sup.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And so she's never been here as a controller only. And Luke
5 showed up a controller. Worked maybe a month or two after he
6 certified. But, again, I could be misremembering.

7 Q. It's fine.

8 A. For a short while as a controller, and then he bid a sup job.

9 Q. Okay. But no issues working with them? Everybody gets along
10 well, works well together?

11 A. I get along with everybody.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I try to anyway.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. To the best I can.

16 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

17 Q. The safety culture is -- I mean, is it something that is
18 stressed or what -- how do you feel about safety? Do people try
19 to cut corners or --

20 A. I don't feel like people try to cut corners. I feel like the
21 controllers take it very seriously, at least, again, the people
22 that I work around really do want to deliver a good product. And
23 this -- we take pride in what we do because it's a good
24 profession, and I think most of us do take that responsibility
25 seriously.

1 Q. You on the local safety committee?

2 A. I am not.

3 Q. How do you, how do you feel they -- do they, do they ask, you
4 know, get your input on things?

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. How does that work? Tell me how -- what you think about your
7 local safety committee.

8 A. So local safety council.

9 Q. Oh, council. I'm sorry.

10 A. That's fine. No worries. It's actually Justin's wife. She,
11 I think, right? Amber is on it. Amber is on it. I work with her
12 a little bit. So if I have concerns, I could bring them to her
13 or, or obviously to management, but typically talk to either
14 Justin who could pass it along to his wife, or just talk to her
15 directly, and that works out well. I don't see any problems
16 there. Anything that we feel is an issue feel like we can make
17 known, and it should be addressable within the bounds of what
18 we're able to accomplish.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Now we have to think of more questions.

20 BY MR. KECK:

21 Q. So since your air carrier ops have increased --

22 A. Um-hmm.

23 Q. -- has that brought any other issues that you've seen either
24 between the little guys --

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. -- or between the air carriers themselves?

2 A. That's a great question. So two things that I can think of.
3 The first being it has increased the mixing of the GA with the air
4 carriers making -- that does create a complexity factor, and
5 unusual situations. Typically our small aircraft if they're local
6 and in, just in the pattern, we'll put them on the crossing
7 runway. So it's not usually too big of a deal. If they're being
8 sequenced on the main runway, then you have massive speed
9 mismatches. It can create things that need to be watched and can
10 take more attention. The other thing is just air carrier to air
11 carrier and like types with the jets inbound as traffic is
12 increased. Tampa is also working short staffed. I know they're
13 very hard worked up there. And they're doing the best they can.
14 Sometimes we do get minimum separation on final which is -- it's
15 fine, it's minimum. But it makes it harder to sometimes get our
16 aircraft out when we need to, but we all try and do the best we
17 can, and we know we can bring up, ask for more space if we
18 absolutely need it. And I think they're -- they do a great job of
19 accommodating when they can.

20 Q. Can you guys use two and a half miles on final or you have to
21 use three?

22 A. Three.

23 Q. Okay.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: You have automatic releases?

25 MR. PIATEK: Yes, ma'am.

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1 BY MR. KECK:

2 Q. Silent or do you use the F13?

3 A. Both. Silent, but when we, when we don't have autos they've
4 negotiated a trial. I think we're still in the trial period. Are
5 we still in the trial period?

6 MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, we're not.

7 MR. PIATEK: We're not in the trial. Okay. Well, they were
8 trying to do a trial of doing a trial of do an F13 when they've
9 taken away for certain departures, but I don't know if that's
10 going to go anywhere or what, but right now it's just silent.

11 MR. KECK: Okay.

12 BY MR. TAYLOR:

13 Q. I'm sorry. How's that work?

14 A. We have fixed headings for specific aircraft types.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Based on if it's a -- based on their ultimate destination or
17 heading and aircraft type and altitude climbing to -- we just send
18 them off on that.

19 Q. Awesome. If I remember this area just went under a big
20 metroplex, right, redesign?

21 A. Oh, there was some STARS modifications. I'm not -- it didn't
22 impact us. That's what I can say. So I --

23 Q. So you didn't get, like, SIDs off the ground, nothing like
24 that that would take them out of the --

25 A. Nothing new. Nothing new.

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1 Q. Okay.

2 A. We've had, we've had RNAVs and SIDs. All the -- these things
3 have been implemented for years now, and the numbers have changed.
4 That's been the only impact.

5 Q. Okay. What else, what else?

6 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

7 Q. How's your relationship with Tampa?

8 A. Frequently good. It more depends on the individual
9 controller, and how they're -- and what's happening to them at the
10 time like always. Many of the people up there are always
11 wonderful to work with. Some people are a little more prickly.
12 It's personalities. Everything's fine, and I think we get along
13 pretty well with them. And we've had -- I've had worse over
14 overlying facilities.

15 Q. Yeah, yeah.

16 BY MR. KECK:

17 Q. Are you OJTI also?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. So as part of your OJTI program do you guys send your local
20 trainings up to Tampa to watch departures or arrivals for any time
21 period or does -- do people ask to go up and see how that works?

22 A. People have not asked to, to my knowledge but, again, they
23 wouldn't be asking me. I went and saw Tampa, and visited at
24 Tampa, but that was just on my own initiative. It's a good idea,
25 I think. I would agree with that. But I don't think it's part of

1 our official training program in any way.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. At least it wasn't when I went through or for any of the
4 people I was training.

5 Q. Okay. One of those things just to see your opponent, you
6 know.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. This is what happens when you do this, and this is why they
9 do that.

10 A. Sure.

11 Q. Especially with an increase in air carrier ops.

12 A. Um-hmm.

13 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

14 Q. So with all the, the new -- without the air carrier ops if it
15 keeps increasing can you -- with your experience here are you --
16 can you see if there's going to be future issues that might arise?

17 A. With increasing volume it just makes things tighter. And we
18 can -- as long as it's not a constant stream of high speed jets
19 all doing high speeds at minimum separation, I think we can, we
20 can handle things fine. As long as there's an occasional break
21 for some departures, the small guys, if we're truly terribly busy,
22 we can take them to the crossing runway. Many of the small jets
23 can accept that too even if they don't like it. Here are your
24 choices. We can offer that to them. Want to delay or go now?
25 There's -- I don't see any particular problems. It's just going

1 to discourage local operations from the GA aircraft who are
2 providing -- who are demanding the most service and attention from
3 us. So we might have to curtail some of the local traffic pattern
4 services, and say have a nice day, go over to Venice or Port
5 Manatee because we're unable at the present time. We'll do the
6 best we can when traffic and workload permit, but I can see that
7 may be something that we'd be less able to accommodate in the
8 future.

9 BY MR. KECK:

10 Q. Do you guys have LAHSO here?

11 A. On runway one four we do.

12 Q. Okay. When you're shooting your crossing runways do you have
13 an arrival-departure window requirement?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Okay.

16 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

17 Q. Do you have high times of traffic, and low times or is it
18 just steady?

19 A. Generally speaking, I'd say from 9 o'clock a.m. until 4 or
20 5 p.m., is usually the busier portion of the day. That's
21 generally. Could go as late as 8 o'clock on an extreme day, or
22 could start as early as really not before 8 o'clock. But I say
23 that 12-hour window is when probably 85 percent of the traffic is
24 in really 9 to 4, 9 to 5 business hours more or less. That's
25 really when, when most of it seems to happen.

1 Q. Okay.

2 BY MR. KECK:

3 Q. What's your mix with, with your flight schools and whatnot?

4 A. The proportion of traffic --

5 Q. Like types. Like do you have helicopters on --

6 A. Oh.

7 Q. -- the surface? Do you have --

8 A. It's --

9 Q. -- the college, you know, are they just private flight
10 schools? What do you have?

11 A. Three private flight schools. One -- to my knowledge one
12 helicopter school. We used to have two. I'm not sure if the
13 other shut down or just isn't flying. Frequent medevac
14 helicopters coming inbound for fuel. There is a jet -- I'm not
15 sure if it's affiliated with the flight school out of Dolphin or
16 if it's just a pilot training out of a Citation. But I know
17 there's some Citation jet training going on there as well.

18 Q. Type rating stuff?

19 A. Occasionally, yeah, yeah, a Beech jet, some other aircraft.
20 Lots of itinerants, East Coast trainers. The aircraft from
21 Daytona and stuff like that --

22 (Crosstalk)

23 A. -- Riddle and -- you got it. If they're coming in and just
24 do a touch-and-go or a taxi back. That's pretty much all the
25 training stuff that I can think of.

1 MR. KECK: What else are we missing?

2 MS. KOSCHIG: I don't know.

3 MR. KECK: See, this isn't so bad, right?

4 MR. PIATEK: Right. Trying to help. All just trying to
5 help.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly.

7 BY MR. TAYLOR:

8 Q. Probably doesn't have anything to do with this incident, but
9 your line up and wait, what are your requirements for that?

10 A. Okay. Line up and wait have to have spit off CIC in the
11 back. Sunrise, sunset, VFR.

12 Q. I was just more interested --

13 A. No. We -- FAA we're supposed to be split.

14 Q. Got you.

15 A. You can't be lining up when we don't have three people in the
16 tower. That might change. I don't think it's nationally
17 required.

18 Q. No.

19 A. But it's not a bad idea.

20 BY MR. RODRIGUEZ:

21 A. The third person has to be stand alone CIC.

22 A. Right. It can't be --
23 clearance delivery.

24 A. That's right. It can't be --
25 combined.

1 MR. TAYLOR: That's where your -- local procedure is, yes.

2 MR. PIATEK: That's the only that.

3 MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

4 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

5 Q. Do you have LOAs and stuff for the or MOUs or whatever it is
6 for flight schools and all the, all the operators here?

7 A. I'm not sure if we have one for every single one. I've seen
8 a number of them. The helicopter operators, I've seen several of
9 those. We have one within the Manatee sheriff. They fly out of
10 here. I'd expect that we did, but I haven't reviewed them
11 recently so I can't -- yeah.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. Off the top of my head -- I'm sorry.

14 Q. Yeah, that's great. Just curious.

15 A. We've been trying to communicate with them as well also to
16 try and keep them out of the core hours, and come get your touch-
17 and-gos at six in the morning, it's great. Seven in the morning
18 it's wonderful. We're happy to help you.

19 MR. KECK: Not only are we slow, but there's better.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, exactly.

21 MR. TAYLOR: Don't want to do that.

22 MR. PIATEK: We could do figure eights in the morning.
23 if it permits

24 MR. KECK: I don't like waking up early either though. I
25 understand it.

1 MR. PIATEK: Right. I'm not a morning person.

2 MR. KECK: I'm not a dayshift guy. Not a fan.

3 MR. PIATEK: I get it.

4 MR. TAYLOR: I got nothing else.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Come on, Tim. I know you got something.

6 MR. KECK: No. I think I've asked everything I could think
7 of that would be applicable to what we're looking at.

8 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

9 Q. Is there something you thought we were going to ask you and
10 we didn't?

11 A. Reference markers for distance, anything like that.

12 Q. Yeah, is --

13 MR. TAYLOR: That's a good question.

14 MR. PIATEK: Should I be --

15 MS. KOSCHIG: Tell us about them.

16 MR. PIATEK: Okay.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: This is good stuff. This is, this is what we
18 need.

19 MR. PIATEK: 3,000 and 6,000 are the important lanes because,
20 honestly, I want to know when my jets are airborne 6,000 feet
21 downhill, and I'll hear the small single-engine smalls 3,000 feet.
22 We have 3,000-foot markers. And between Alpha 7 and Alpha 8, if
23 you aim right at the middle portion of it, that gives you about
24 500-foot buffer to the 6,000 feet. So you know you're well clear
25 of it from, from that portion there. You're just shy at Alpha 7,

1 and you're, you're way over at Alpha 8. So that's like your sweet
2 spot. And, yeah, 4500 strangely is right in the middle.

3 MR. TAYLOR: Right. Nice.

4 MR. PIATEK: That's the only thing g I thought you would ask.

5 (Crosstalk)

6 MR. PIATEK: Okay. Okay.

7 MR. KECK: Yours is the one I expected.

8 MR. TAYLOR: I agree.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: Anything else?

10 MR. KECK: Trying to think.

11 BY MR. KECK:

12 Q. Have you -- so you've been here for a little bit. Did you
13 partake in any flight deck training?

14 A. Flight, never, never.

15 Q. No.

16 MR. KECK: Oh, wow.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, wow.

18 MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

19 MR. PIATEK: By the time I had got to -- in the agency it was
20 already not the program that it was before that, and I had done
21 the CBIs or whatever --

22 MR. KECK: Yeah.

23 MR. PIATEK: -- instruction, and I don't have anywhere I want
24 to go. My family's here. Everybody's here.

25 MR. TAYLOR: And the new program is not as good as the old.

1 MR. KECK: It's not, but it, it gives you the perspective.

2 MR. TAYLOR: It does.

3 MR. KECK: Especially since you don't have any --

4 MR. PIATEK: Right.

5 MR. KECK: -- pilot training.

6 MR. PIATEK: I do want to do it for that reason, I do,
7 eventually.

8 MR. KECK: Hopefully they'll bring it back, but, yeah,
9 because then you see how your airport works. You'll see how other
10 airports work. Maybe we're doing something right. Maybe you come
11 back, and, like, what in the world, like, I did one just for an
12 example, I came back, and we don't usually use our center line
13 lights coming off the taxiways or off the runways. But we're
14 landing at night, and the pilots are looking for the intersection.
15 I don't want to go hunting for them. So I started using my center
16 line lights despite my airport operator crying about it.

17 MR. PIATEK: Okay.

18 MR. KECK: Because I don't want them hunting when I'm working
19 a squeeze play. I want them to see that green line, and get off
20 the runway.

21 MR. PIATEK: Yeah, yeah.

22 MR. KECK: So just something like that. It's a good program
23 even if you're just taking a two-day vacation somewhere to go up
24 to Cleveland, come on up.

25 MR. TAYLOR: And, actually, another good thing too was a lot

1 of our local pilots at Exec are trying to get the controllers to
2 go up with them so they can show them the local pattern and what
3 they're doing.

4 MR. PIATEK: That I've done. I've done local FAMS with some
5 of the friendly pilots just --

6 MR. KECK: Good.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: Come on --

8 MR. PIATEK: And that's always an experience. That is good
9 to see it even just seeing it from 1,000 feet.

10 MR. TAYLOR : Right. And just kind of get the -- just get
11 their perspective like what we're putting them through as control
12 -- yeah, exactly.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

14 MR. KECK: What about the opposite? Do many come up for
15 tower tours or --

16 MR. PIATEK: Many. I'd say, yes.

17 MR. KECK : Okay.

18 MR. PIATEK: I don't know what many qualifies as, but we have
19 frequent controlled number of people, tours, coming up and --

20 MR. TAYLOR: That's good.

21 MR. PIATEK: Yeah. It's fantastic. It's putting a face to
22 the name so you realize you're controlling an actual human being
23 not a tail number. I think that's excellent.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: And they have a different perspective of what
25 your job is. Usually they're, like, wow.

1 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: There's a lot going on up here.

3 MR. PIATEK: Sure. That's great. We do have a lot -- a lot
4 of the flight instructors will bring their students up at least
5 once. Some of the flight instructors we're very familiar with,
6 and, you know, will call and ask for tours, no problem. Trying to
7 help them out when we can, and that's great.

8 BY MR. KECK:

9 Q. And you guys are a Class C?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Do you provide any radar service from the tower or do you
12 just defer all that to Tampa?

13 A. Tampa does all the radar. Really it's just a identification
14 tool that -- what is it called? Is it still the CTRD?

15 MR. TAYLOR: Yes.

16 MR. PIATEK: Anyway, okay, there you go.

17 MR. KECK: TDW.

18 MR. PIATEK: TDW, yeah, yes. Yeah, no, just, just a aid for
19 visually locating.

20 BY MR. KECK:

21 Q. Okay. So does Tampa sequence all your VFRs with your IFRs?

22 A. Tampa is responsible for establishing the sequence to the
23 field. We're responsible for providing visual separation, and not
24 affecting their sequence. That's, I mean, the short of it.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So they do sequence VFRs. Sometimes they will call us, and
2 ask us to fit him in please. Okay. Provide visual.

3 Q. To do other stuff.

4 A. We get it, yeah. Our LOA also allows just for certain
5 inbounds to be automated point out. Like helicopters inbound and
6 stuff like that. So they don't have to be sequenced by approach.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: I don't have any more.

8 MR. KECK: I can't think of anything else. I'm reaching.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: Nothing?

10 MR. TAYLOR: No. I think, yeah, we've already just went over
11 a lot of neat things for this airport to help them out, but kind
12 of getting away from --

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Do you have any questions for us?

14 MR. PIATEK: No. I can't think of any. But sorry you have
15 to be here, but I'm glad you're here. Good to meet you and --

16 MR. TAYLOR: Nice to meet you too.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: No, it's -- we appreciate you coming to talk to
18 us.

19 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: And the information's very valuable. It gives
21 us a really good insight on another perspective, and it --
22 especially having someone that's been here for a long time, it --

23 MR. PIATEK: Yeah.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. But, yeah, it's been a -- yeah, I guess,
25 a lot of changes coming with the construction and more traffic.

1 So that's going to be interesting.

2 MR. PIATEK: Could I -- a suggestion?

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Yes.

4 MR. PIATEK: Okay.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Absolutely.

6 MR. PIATEK: I know this is just things that would be great
7 that never are going to happen but --

8 MS. KOSCHIG: You never know.

9 MR. PIATEK: -- our -- the full-length taxiways are 180
10 degrees off the runway. So like even the guidelines that we were
11 just showing for -- there was a runway safety or something
12 relating to just this sort of thing that came out giving
13 guidelines for three two one. Well, if they're 90 degrees off the
14 runway maybe. 180 degrees is a little bit harder. The airport
15 would have a lot of trouble doing it, and I don't think they're
16 planning on it, but 90 degree turn-ons get them off into the air
17 faster. Having them nearly --

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

19 MR. PIATEK: -- takes a long time.

20 MR. KECK: It does. But I'm looking at where your other --
21 your RSA lines are --

22 MR. PIATEK: Yeah.

23 MR. KECK: -- for the other hold shorts --

24 MR. PIATEK: Um-hmm.

25 MR. KECK: -- you've still got to be -- where is it? It's

1 150 from the edge or something like that.

2 MR. PIATEK: Um-hmm, um-hmm.

3 MR. KECK: I don't, I don't think --

4 MR. PIATEK: They'd have to --

5 MR. KECK: -- they'll get it.

6 MR. PIATEK: -- widen it out, and they would probably have to
7 move facilities. It's never going to happen.

8 MR. TAYLOR: No.

9 MR. PIATEK: I accept. And the other side has the, the berm.
10 So, again, it's just --

11 MR. KECK: Yeah, I see it, but I don't know that you'd get
12 much out of it.

13 MR. PIATEK: Yeah.

14 MR. KECK: And still be -- because like I don't know where,
15 where's your glide slope antennas at? Are they on the inside or
16 the outside of the runway --

17 MR. PIATEK: This one glide slope is right there.

18 MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

19 MR. PIATEK: Or, no, it's not there. It's right around --
20 that should be it by the ASOS.

21 MR. KECK: That looks a little far away, but okay it's on the
22 far side.

23 MR. PIATEK: Oh, wait, I'm sorry.

24 MR. KECK: Yeah.

25 MR. PIATEK: That will be it, and that will be it.

1 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah, yeah.

2 MR. KECK: All right. So it wouldn't affect --

3 MR. TAYLOR: Wouldn't affect us.

4 MR. KECK: It wouldn't affect critical areas.

5 MR. PIATEK: It's the weird configuration with the, the ILS
6 critical area. This is also partly POFZ and --

7 MR. KECK: Yeah.

8 MR. PIATEK: -- other categories of things.

9 MR. KECK: Yeah. But I'm just looking at it wouldn't block -
10 - the main part with the critical area is blocking the glide scope
11 antenna.

12 MR. PIATEK: Um-hmm.

13 MR. KECK: So if it's on the outside moving those wouldn't
14 affect that. The localizer or critical area I mean that's right
15 down the center line.

16 MR. TAYLOR: That's what we were saying it slows -- they
17 really take that turn slowly. You're like, come on, get off the
18 runways.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Aren't they putting in angled the taxiways at
20 Kennedy?

21 MR. TAYLOR: Actually, they're trying to get away from the
22 angled taxiways which sucks.

23 MR. KECK: Yeah.

24 MR. PIATEK: Yeah.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: I know.

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1 MR. TAYLOR: Because I like them.

2 MR. KECK: They want 90s everywhere.

3 No straight routes from the ramp --

4 (Crosstalk)

5 MR. TAYLOR: Straight routes are actually a, yeah. I'm
6 fighting to keep ours at exact, and I'm going -- I think I'm going
7 to win that one because they're going to grandfather it
8 But --

9 MR. KECK: Good luck.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

11 MR. PIATEK: It was so nice having an angled -- the old
12 runway portion was --

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

14 MR. KECK: You had a crossing runway there?

15 MR. PIATEK: There was way before I got here.

16 MR. TAYLOR: That's what that looks like, that was the
17 runway, yeah?

18 MR. PIATEK: Yeah, that was the runway.

19 MR. TAYLOR: It is funny when you look at old -- you start
20 look at how they used to lay out, it's like, ah, I see where the
21 runway was. Okay.

22 MR. PIATEK: Yeah.

23 MR. KECK: Ours too. We had a bunch of them, and it's like
24 we could have saved that one please.

25 MR. PIATEK: Right, right.

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1 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So, well, any last questions?

2 All right then we're going to go ahead and stop the
3 interview. It's 9:39.

4 (Whereupon, at 9:39 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: AIR CANADA & AMERICAN AIRLINES
NEAR-MISS INCIDENT AT THE
SARASOTA-BRADENTON INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT IN SARASOTA, FLORIDA
ON FEBRUARY 16, 2023
Interview of Timothy Patrick Piatek

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23LA179

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber