

ERA23FA330

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

Group Chairman's Factual Report - Attachment 5

Interview Transcripts

June 22, 2025

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT *

NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: ERA23FA330

ON AUGUST 10, 2023 *

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Interview of: LUCAS KELSEY, Radar Controller Trainer
Federal Aviation Administration

Atlanta, Georgia

Wednesday,
October 11, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SARAH LEWIS, Air Traffic Control Investigator
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National Transportation Safety Board

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Representing Mr. Kelsey

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:41 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Time now is 11:41 Eastern time. Okay, so again, thanks for coming to let us talk to you, it's really going to help us out with the investigation. So as part of the process, I will be recording the interview and then I'll have a transcription made and that transcription will become part of the factual report, the audio will not. And do you have any questions about that?

MR. KELSEY: No.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So to start with, just state your name, please.

MR. KELSEY: Lucas Kelsey.

MS. KOSCHIG: Can you spell your last name?

MR. KELSEY: K-e-l-s-e-y.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And just to get you to know a little bit about us, my name is Betty Koschig and I work at the NTSB as an air traffic control investigator. With me today is a co-chair, who I will let you -- let her introduce herself.

MS. LEWIS: My name is Sarah Lewis, I was an air traffic controller for 23 years. I started out at N90 and then I finished out my career in Oklahoma City. I was a NATCA ASI prior to that and I also was on the CISM team.

MR. KELSEY: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: And additionally today, we have an honored

1 guest, that is to say, we have a meteorologist that's come with us
2 from the NTSB and I will let him introduce himself.

3 MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB meteorology, and I'm
4 probably the only non-controller in the room.

5 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

6 MR. RICHARDS: I want to make sure we're loud enough so we
7 can --

8 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

9 MR. RICHARDS: That can pick us up.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Hopefully, it will pick up. And as part of the
11 regulations -- oh, wait, first of all. Also, as part of our
12 process, we invite parties to participate in our investigation and
13 today we have two technical experts, our SMEs, we have the FAA SME
14 and we have NATCA, which is representing NATCA, but in this sense,
15 he is working as the NTSB group. All of us are the group. I know
16 it sounds -- you know, it's one of those situations where we all
17 come together and work for one cause and that's just for this
18 investigation. So I will let Dan introduce himself.

19 MR. MEYERS: I'm Dan Meyers, I work out of Philly now,
20 Detroit TRACON prior to that. ASI. And like she said, here
21 working with them. You still have your reps.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

23 MR. MEYERS: We're technical expert that still works traffic
24 to help them understand if anything is out of -- out of what
25 they're used to hearing, so that's -- I'll ask questions, too, on

1 the team, but it's to help out, make sure you don't have any
2 misunderstandings of what -- of what you said to the team.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

4 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

5 MS. BRANDT: Yeah, Rachel Brandt, I'm the air traffic manager
6 in Birmingham. Before that I was at Seattle TRACON and I'm just
7 here, you know, as a management SME, so --

8 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, all right. And as part of regulations,
10 this part, you're welcome to have a representative with you and is
11 this -- and I see that you do have a representative, is this the
12 person that you want to be your representative?

13 MR. KELSEY: Yes.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Yes. And could you please state your name?

15 MR. PHILLIPS: Chris Phillips.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: Chris Phillips. Can you spell your last name?

17 MR. PHILLIPS: P-h-i-l-l-i-p-s.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. Okay, just a little recap on
19 this. This interview is being conducted to -- as part of the
20 investigation concerning November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango that occurred
21 on August 10th. The purpose of this investigation is to determine
22 the probable cause. There's other moving parts in this
23 investigation, there's, you know, the airplane, you know, the
24 investigator has been on site, looking at the airplane, there's
25 other people involved in the NTSB that's doing it, and we're just

1 one group, so this isn't just focusing on this, you know, this
2 isn't the only part that's happening, it's happening at different
3 levels within the NTSB and we get together and we show all of our
4 findings. But the IIC will be coming up with the probable cause
5 of this based off all the facts that we get. So our role here is
6 not to assign fault, blame, or liability, anything like that. We
7 are on a fact-finding mission, that is our goal, so -- and we're
8 hoping to pick your brain so that you can teach us some stuff
9 about what happened that day.

10 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: But during this -- it shouldn't last more than
12 an hour, you know, max, during our investigation, so at any time
13 if you wanted to take a break, you are more than welcome to do it.
14 If you wanted to talk to your rep, you're more than welcome to
15 step outside and talk to your rep or you could talk to your rep
16 right there, but it's going to be recorded.

17 And any questions that we have, we will direct to you, so we
18 will not be asking the rep any questions and if you did have any
19 questions, we could talk off line or later. If you have any
20 questions to us at any time, please ask us. If we ask you a
21 question that you don't recollect what happened or don't remember,
22 anything, just say you don't recall. If you don't know the
23 answer, "I don't know" is a fine answer. So, you know, we're not
24 -- we don't want you to have to try to come up with something, if
25 you don't know it, you don't know it, so -- all right?

1 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: So what we're going to do, first of all, I'm
3 going to go over a little bit, find out a little bit more about
4 you, your history here, history within the FAA or your whole air
5 traffic control career. And then we will start going around the
6 room and Sarah will start asking questions and we'll just keep
7 going around the room for each person that they can -- they have
8 the opportunity to ask you some questions. And like I said,
9 again, if you have any question of us and we're not stating
10 something clearly, please say "What do you mean?"

11 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

12 MS. KOSCHIG: So you ready to get started on this part?

13 MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Yeah, and during some of this, you
15 know, we may ask you questions that you probably think well, you
16 should know the answer. We don't make any assumptions, so just
17 know that, so if it sounds like maybe it's a dumb question, it's
18 we don't want to -- we don't want to put any words in your mouth.

19 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

20 INTERVIEW OF LUCAS KELSEY

21 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

22 Q. Okay. What are your operating initials?

23 A. Lima Kilo.

24 Q. How old are you?

25 A. Thirty-nine.

1 Q. I was 39 a couple of times, I think.

2 (Laughter.)

3 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

4 Q. What is your -- tell us about your qualifications. Are you a
5 CIC?

6 A. I am a CIC. I'm an OJTI and I'm certified here at Atlanta
7 TRACON.

8 Q. In any certain area or --

9 A. I am a C liner.

10 Q. Okay. All right. Do you have any military experience?

11 A. I do.

12 Q. Tell us a little bit about that.

13 A. I was enlisted in -- or I joined in '03 and I believe I
14 served until somewhere around 2014, Air Force Reserve, cross-
15 trained into air traffic control, went to Air Guard to do so,
16 worked at St. Joseph, Missouri, that's where I was certified, in
17 the tower there, and deployed TDY and that's about it.

18 Q. Okay, great. Do you have any collateral duties that you work
19 on here, any --

20 A. No. No.

21 Q. All right. Have you been on any details?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Do you have any other aeronautical ratings, like pilot --

24 A. No.

25 Q. -- anything like that? So tell us a little bit, after you

1 got out of the Air Force, when did you start working for the FAA?

2 A. I got here June, I believe, of 2010.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. Certified in 2012, but I had left to Minneapolis and came
5 back here roughly 2 years ago, recertified, and currently
6 certified.

7 Q. Okay. And did you -- did you go to the academy?

8 A. I did.

9 Q. Okay. Was that in 2010?

10 A. I believe 2009.

11 Q. Two thousand --

12 A. End of 2009, 2010.

13 Q. Do you remember what years you were at Minneapolis?

14 A. I don't recall the exact dates.

15 Q. Right, but --

16 A. Two thousand nineteen to 2021.

17 Q. Right in the middle of COVID.

18 A. Right in the middle of COVID.

19 Q. Wow. All right. Do you have a current medical?

20 A. I do.

21 Q. Great. And do you have any restrictions?

22 A. I do not.

23 Q. Of glasses?

24 A. Is that -- oh.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. Yes, I wear glasses.

2 Q. Are you required to wear the glasses?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. Did you happen to have them on at the time of the
5 incident?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Did you file an ATSAP?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Do you know if any actions or recommendations were done on
10 that one?

11 A. I do not.

12 Q. Have you been interviewed about this event before now?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Have you had the opportunity to look at the replay?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. You saw the video and the audio?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Just making sure. How long were you on position before you
19 were relieved? You know, I mean, yeah, after the accident
20 occurred, were you relieved immediately or how long was that did
21 it take?

22 A. Shortly thereafter.

23 Q. Shortly, okay. Let's just say on a scale of 1 to 5, how --
24 how would you classify the complexity of traffic at that time?

25 A. Two.

1 Q. And how about the volume?

2 A. Two.

3 Q. Was that normal for about that time of night? Or time of
4 day, rather.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Were there any distractions going on in the room that you can
7 recall?

8 A. No. We were splitting the position at the time of.

9 Q. Okay. We'll talk a little bit about that later.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. Okay, so do you recall what the weather was at that point?

12 A. I recall what the weather was, precipitation depicted on the
13 scope, yes.

14 Q. Okay. And we'll talk a little bit more about that later,
15 too.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. But it was -- was an IFR in that area, or IMC, rather?

18 A. I depict, I recall where the depiction, precipitation was,
19 that I do recall.

20 Q. Okay. Did you do a pre-weather -- a pre-duty weather
21 briefing?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay. Anything stand out on that, do you recall?

24 A. There'd be weather in the area that day.

25 Q. What time did you come in that morning?

1 A. Six a.m. shift.

2 Q. Okay. Do you have a cell phone in the TRACON while you're
3 working?

4 A. No, we're not allowed cell phones in the TRACON.

5 Q. Okay. Did you notify the supervisor of the event?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. And who did you notify, do you recall?

8 A. Brian Brooks.

9 Q. And how long after it happened did you -- did you notify him?

10 A. He was there during the situation.

11 Q. Okay. Okay, so now those are all the basic questions we're
12 going to get. And now we want to really talk a lot about the --
13 the events leading up to the accident.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. You can start it at any time that you feel is appropriate.
16 How long had you been on position before this --

17 A. Not long.

18 Q. Not long, okay. So had you been in the TRACON, in the -- at
19 the sector or in the area prior to that?

20 A. I don't recall what positions we were prior to getting that
21 position, but we got our briefing and our weather, so on, so
22 forth, looking at the scope in our pre-brief.

23 Q. Okay, yeah, take us through all that and everything that
24 happened, that would be great.

25 A. In terms of the entire --

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. -- with Delta?

3 Q. Please.

4 A. All right. I recall we came in, got a relief briefing from a
5 team that was also training. We discussed the need to possibly
6 break it off, split the two sectors --

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. -- traffic or weather permitting. In doing so, we started
9 working standard. Weather increased, traffic increased. We then
10 called for it to be split and they were coming back, kind of on
11 standby with the assumption that that was probably going to
12 happen. They came back. During part of the incident, I was
13 passing, you know, even the strips.

14 While we were working, we were given a briefing and November
15 2-1-0 Juliet Tango had come over from the center DBA. Do you want
16 me to go into the idea of what happened throughout the entire
17 incident with November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango?

18 Q. Yes, please. And any other aircraft that you were talking
19 about that you were working, that you can recall, but specifically
20 about Juliet Tango.

21 A. Well, we were sitting at the Macon sector working that
22 combined with Columbus. On the Columbus side there were some
23 departures that had started calling for release, giving them, and
24 arrival coming in, weather increasing in the areas in which that
25 traffic was increasing. At that point is when we asked for it to

1 be split. November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango came over DBA. Tavar had
2 asked if, you know -- you know, had the weather at Thomaston-Upson
3 and his approach request, gave him the altimeter, tried to give
4 him a vector to the east. When he wanted to be on approach, tried
5 to give him a vector, heading 0-8-0 for a sequence. He, from what
6 I recall, had stated that he's deviated for buildup off to his
7 right and after, when able, fly heading 0-8-0, he said it would be
8 a couple of minutes and then he would -- Tavar then went back to
9 give the briefing to the other sector splitting off, 2-1-0 Juliet
10 Tango still not taking any turn eastbound to go away from the
11 weather.

12 I then came on frequency and, both in plain language and
13 phraseology, had stated that it would be severe in the area in
14 which he was going, suggested a turn, gave him the weather, and if
15 he wasn't going to make a left-hand turnout, I advised he started
16 to turn at that time.

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. No turn was started. And then he had continued towards the
19 weather. There was a CIC behind us, also, watching that and we
20 were -- he had seen what had happened, November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango
21 went into the weather and we tried to reach out to him, I had seen
22 what I thought to be a course reversal, I inquired about that, but
23 no response. Shortly thereafter, the scope had showed triple x's
24 and that's when we started the process of continuing to reach out
25 to him, inquiring if they need aircraft, there was an aircraft in

1 the area had received an ELT, he said he was not receiving one.
2 And then they had started the process to relieve us of our
3 positions.

4 Q. Okay. And when you signed on, you signed on with the trainee
5 at the same time, you guys both came on at the same time, do you
6 recall?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, so tell us a little bit about -- oh, is there anything
9 else you wanted to add? No?

10 A. No, not that I know.

11 Q. Tell us -- describe what the weather looked like, how it was
12 depicted on your scope, as far as painting us a picture of what it
13 appeared, to you, as you were seeing it.

14 A. It appeared to be moving, coming in from the west to the
15 east, a line of weather, a band, and the weather that was depicted
16 on my scope as being the heaviest precipitation was the weather
17 that November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango's track was going towards, which
18 was away from the Thomaston-Upson airport.

19 We had tried to get him away from what we had depicted there
20 as the worst weather, more of it over on the Columbus side, around
21 the Auburn airport, through the LaGrange airport running east
22 towards and over Thomaston-Upson and past that towards the
23 military airport. There were places in it with lighter intensity
24 precipitation, we had several aircraft fly through those, and then
25 the one with the -- which we were depicting as the heaviest

1 precipitation was the one that November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango was on
2 course and I believe that's all that I recall from that.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I still got some questions, but I am
4 going to -- I'm going to let Sarah start asking some.

5 BY MS. LEWIS:

6 Q. Okay. You were training somebody.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Is that a normal matchup, is that your trainee or --

9 A. Yes, I am on (indiscernible).

10 Q. Okay. How long had you been training him prior to this date?

11 A. Exact time, I do not recall. He was somewhere in the 40-50
12 percent hour range of his training.

13 Q. Okay. How did that matchup work for you guys, did you work
14 well together, there was a normal trainee/trainer type thing,
15 anything?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. I believe so, on my end, I guess, I believe.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. Can't speak for Owen (ph.), the relationship worked great
21 together, yes.

22 Q. Okay, perfect. So in your -- or in your experience, do you
23 -- how do you feel about the depiction of the weather on your
24 radar scope, do you feel that it's something that you feel is
25 pretty accurate, inaccurate? How do you -- how do you work when

1 you see weather on your radar scope, how do you work with, you
2 know, explaining to aircraft what do you see, do you feel that
3 they concur, that they kind of see what you see, too, or how do
4 you feel the accuracy of what you're depicting is?

5 A. I guess I'd have to say I feel 100 percent -- .65 says to
6 only, 500 says only take the position if you feel the equipment is
7 working into your information and your knowledge, I believe and
8 trust fully that the depiction of precipitation on my scope is
9 accurate. As for the lack of depiction, if you were seeing
10 something outside of the window, ours picks up precipitation. I
11 couldn't speak for what his was showing, I just knew that ours was
12 showing something bad, so I trusted it.

13 Q. Um-hum.

14 A. I called the weather I saw when it was becoming more of a
15 thing, yeah, I'd say I trusted it fully.

16 Q. Okay, that's -- when a pilot tells you that there's a
17 buildup, what does that mean to you?

18 A. To me it means that he sees something that he doesn't want to
19 fly through. As for what that is, I can't assume what exactly it
20 is in his eyes. I can, as a radar controller, I work off of
21 precipitation depicted weather, but I definitely -- he came over,
22 deviating for it.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. So when he says there's a buildup and he's already deviating
25 for it, he must have reason to, and I -- that means I have to

1 trust him, he's the pilot in command.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. So allow it, get a time frame, he said he's deviating a
4 couple minutes.

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. I didn't -- wasn't -- I didn't feel, if I -- I have to trust
7 his words, right, as it goes, I can't say "I do not see it, turn
8 right 0-8-0," it means he sees something, he, as a certified
9 pilot, doesn't want to fly through it, and I have to respect that.

10 Q. Right. Thinking back on the situation, describe to me where
11 a normal -- let me see. So was the routing that this aircraft was
12 taking a normal route? I mean, you said he was deviating, but --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- do they normally try to go in a different direction, like
15 direct to the airport, but he was deviating to the left because of
16 the weather?

17 A. He said there's buildup off to his right, correct.

18 Q. Okay. When they come over normally, what altitudes do you
19 usually get them descending out of?

20 A. Descending to 11,000.

21 Q. Okay. So as best as you can recall, his altitude of like, I
22 think, we may have seen him come over out of like 17,000 feet,
23 that's -- is that a normal altitude for him?

24 A. When there's weather in the area and pilots are deviating,
25 sometimes altitudes can be higher, can be lower. But in terms of

1 what altitude he was descending to was normal, he was descending
2 to 11,000.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. If he needed longer to get down, we were definitely going to
5 afford that with the AP heading --

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. -- and to give him much more time to get down, to give him
8 much more time to make a decision about the weather, to receive
9 the weather. He had yet to inform us that he had received the
10 weather --

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. -- at Thomaston-Upson, so he still had to receive that. We
13 had to give him the long line weather, we could've done that had
14 he needed --

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. -- but at the altitude descending to 11, it was absolutely
17 normal.

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. Being that high, that close to the airport still was not --
20 not normal, but --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- with weather, that's his decision.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. Maybe he was trying to stay above something, maybe there was
25 something we didn't see.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. But normally, doing an approach, being at 11,000 feet roughly
3 10 miles southwest of the airport is a higher altitude to be at,
4 yes.

5 Q. Okay. Do you recall any other aircraft that might've been
6 going into that airport at the time?

7 A. Yes, there was another aircraft that was going into that
8 airport that was also deviating for weather. That then changed
9 his arrival airport.

10 Q. Okay. And do you recall if that was an Execjet 558?

11 A. The exact call sign I do not recall.

12 Q. Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about how that aircraft
13 was -- tell me about that aircraft.

14 A. Execjet 558 or --

15 Q. Yes. Or whatever the Execjet was also going into that --

16 A. There was an aircraft that was going into the airport. I
17 believe he came over from the northeast, trying to land at
18 Thomaston-Upson, he was coming from the north of the weather --

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. -- he was picking up the weather, he wanted -- he asked and
21 got deviations several times due to the weather. Once he had
22 flown his way through that one part of the weather, he had to come
23 over and said that he's -- he wanted to deviate to an alternate
24 airport due to the weather at Thomaston-Upson, he wanted vectors
25 for that, and we deviated him to a different alternate airport,

1 yes.

2 Q. Okay, very good. So normally when something like that
3 happens, what happens if there's somebody else going into that
4 airport? Like would you -- would you let them know that hey --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- this is the experience of somebody else, how does that
7 work?

8 A. Yeah, so he was coming from an entirely different side than
9 November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango. In terms of the time lapse, which I
10 don't know if you're going to play it or not, I believe the time
11 lapse is when he came through it and he was deviating for weather,
12 but the time lapse of his wanting to change to his alternate, I
13 don't know if that -- I believe that happened after November 2-1-0
14 Juliet Tango stopped radio transmissions.

15 Q. Okay, okay.

16 A. So yeah, we were still waiting for November 2-1-0 Juliet
17 Tango to pick up the weather.

18 Q. Okay. There was a position relief briefing for the other
19 team that came in, so they were able to -- you asked for the
20 split.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Did they -- do you feel -- was there anything going on with
23 that, that was abnormal, when they first called for them versus
24 when they came in and when you started doing a briefing, do you
25 remember?

1 A. Was there anything --

2 Q. Like --

3 A. -- abnormal about them coming back?

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. They came back. I know it took a little bit of time to get
6 them back, I couldn't tell you the exact.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Once they got back, I and the other OJTI were discussing what
9 was going on in the area, I was giving him a clear picture of what
10 it was, a briefing between him and I --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- giving him everything while Tavar was continuing to
13 work and --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- but as for out of the norm, I don't recall --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- there being anything abnormal.

18 MS. LEWIS: That's perfect, thank you for your answers. I
19 think I'll pass it along to Michael.

20 MR. RICHARDS: Yeah, sure. Thanks.

21 BY MR. RICHARDS:

22 Q. So I just want to clarify the weather picture for a minute.
23 You said that the heaviest weather you had depicted was ahead of
24 Juliet Tango.

25 A. Yes. Was on the course that he was flying into.

1 Q. So when he came over from center, you said he was already
2 deviating?

3 A. Yes, for weather.

4 Q. You knew he was deviating for weather?

5 A. He said he was, I believe, deviating for buildups off his
6 right side.

7 Q. Okay, so he would've been -- you're saying he was deviating
8 for weather that was different than the heaviest weather that was
9 depicted directly ahead of -- directly on course?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Did you depict that weather that you believed he was
12 deviating for?

13 A. I did not depict any weather that he said was off his right
14 side.

15 Q. Okay. But you said he saw a buildup, he used the phrase
16 buildup.

17 A. I do believe so.

18 Q. Okay. How common is it that a pilot is deviating around
19 something or says they see something that you don't see on your
20 scope?

21 A. Common.

22 MR. RICHARDS: Pretty common, okay. I'm going to probably
23 have some other questions about that, but I'll come back to that.

24 Rachel.

25 BY MS. BRANDT:

1 Q. Can you clarify what being certified on the C line means?

2 A. We are certified on the Columbus-Macon departure wall north-
3 south I (ph.) and the approach wall.

4 Q. Columbus-Macon approach side and --

5 A. And departure wall.

6 Q. We got explained about it on our tour, but I forgot, so --
7 and then -- so you had said that the supervisor was notified at
8 the time of the incident, was he there during the situation?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And then there was also a CIC?

11 A. The CIC was there during -- the CIC was the one present
12 during the event.

13 Q. Okay, so not a supervisor.

14 A. A CIC.

15 Q. Okay, just wanted to clarify that.

16 A. The supervisor was present when I asked for it to be split --

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. -- and I believe he was then relieved by us, yes, he --

19 Q. Okay.

20 MR. MEYERS: Just for clarification, was that supervisor
21 Brian Brooks --

22 MR. KELSEY: No.

23 MR. MEYERS: -- or that's the CIC?

24 MR. KELSEY: The CIC was Brian Brooks.

25 MR. MEYERS: So I want to make sure everything is crystal

1 clear.

2 MR. KELSEY: James Van Eman was the supervisor.

3 MS. BRANDT: I don't have anything else right now.

4 BY MR. MEYERS:

5 Q. An aircraft such as 2-1-0 Juliet Tango, would you expect them
6 to have any kind of weather radar, do you ever ask that question?
7 Are you just expecting him to deviate based on what he sees?

8 A. No, he came over deviating for weather, we didn't ask him
9 what it was, he had seen a picture via either out the window or
10 via radar or something he did not want to fly through. We
11 continued to let him deviate, try to give him a course when able.
12 But no, we did not inquire if he -- how he had seen the buildups.

13 Q. Okay. In your experience, do you have any expectation that a
14 smaller aircraft like that would have any weather radar on board?

15 A. I have no expectation.

16 MR. MEYERS: Okay, cool. The other thing I was going to ask
17 was about the CIC or the OS, so that was -- go ahead.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Excuse me. Sorry. Sarah.

19 BY MS. LEWIS:

20 Q. Do you use flight progress strips?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. This is just a -- in your gee whiz opinion, so as a
23 controller, do -- so if we could have anything we want in the
24 world as information, given as a controller, kind of going on
25 along with Dan's information, do you feel it would be helpful, a

1 helpful tool to you, to have information on a flight progress
2 strip, whether an aircraft has weather radar on board?

3 A. Yeah, any time you can get more information about aircraft,
4 the better.

5 Q. Okay. Would it just be -- would it just be helpful and if it
6 was just like yes or no, or would -- as a controller, because, you
7 know, there's so many different pieces of information you're being
8 fed all the time, would it be advantageous to know different types
9 of weather radar or just more of just yes or no?

10 A. Unless you're going to train somebody on such a matter, a lot
11 of whom aren't pilots, myself included --

12 Q. Right. Um-hum.

13 A. -- I wouldn't, unless being trained on the different types of
14 weather radar that could be on airplanes, it wouldn't -- it
15 wouldn't be helpful to know the differences.

16 Q. Okay, right. Just for a safety thing --

17 A. Sure.

18 Q. -- it might be helpful --

19 A. Absolutely.

20 Q. -- to have something like that on a flight progress strip.

21 A. Yeah, any time you can give more information about your
22 aircraft, you could always end up with a safer situation.

23 MS. LEWIS: Okay, thanks.

24 BY MR. RICHARDS:

25 Q. So I want to be completely transparent, I'm a weather guy,

1 I'm not an air traffic controller, so I don't -- I don't know all
2 the ins and outs of your job, but I'm struggling with the idea
3 that a pilot can be seeing something and avoiding an area, acting
4 accordingly, let's say, and you don't see the same thing, there's
5 not that common picture. There's a question coming, it's in there
6 somewhere, I'm just speaking through here. How do you -- I'm
7 asking myself how do you plan ahead for what the pilot might do or
8 might ask for in a more complex, convective situation like this?

9 Or even if you're working en route, you know, somewhere over
10 the Midwest, you have storms that just pop kind of randomly out of
11 nowhere, so I guess my question is this, how do you, as a trainer,
12 how do you train controllers to handle the not common picture when
13 it comes to weather radar? How do you deal with that, how do you
14 plan ahead or -- I guess I'm asking you to talk to me about how
15 you train on situations where you guys aren't seeing the same
16 thing as what a pilot's talking about.

17 A. Yeah, PIREPs are obviously helpful in that situation. Any
18 time a pilot can give you information of what they see, even if
19 you're not seeing it, that paints us a picture, that can give us a
20 general understanding of where to advise other aircraft of things,
21 if it was a smooth ride, if there's turbulence, precipitation, all
22 of that, when we don't see it --

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. -- and it's not depicted, if it's building, a lot of times,
25 if something's building and hasn't reached a point where the radar

1 picks it up yet, we don't see it, and then we just use the pilot-
2 reported weather and we'll try to avoid an area and then we just
3 work off of that until something's depicted.

4 Q. Okay. So I guess the primary way to mitigate an issue like
5 that is to ask the pilot, is that what you're saying --

6 A. Yeah, a PIREP.

7 Q. -- is to talk to the pilots?

8 A. Yeah. If we can't see it and we can't depict it, the best
9 next knowledge source we have is the pilot to show us what they
10 see and what they're encountering.

11 Q. Okay. Is this ever -- does this ever cause problems? Does
12 the not common picture, weather picture, how -- I don't know how
13 to ask this. How often does it cause a -- I don't want to lead
14 you, I don't want to -- I'm trying to make this as not subjective.
15 Does this ever cause an issue? Don't ask me to define issue.

16 (Laughter.)

17 MR. KELSEY: In the situation in which I believe weather
18 moves and comes and goes, especially in an area like Atlanta --

19 MR. RICHARDS: Yes.

20 MR. KELSEY: -- it popped up, it goes down, it comes up and
21 it comes down, it's something that, in my experience I've seen, it
22 just -- it takes time to build, it takes time to see.

23 MR. RICHARDS: Okay.

24 MR. KELSEY: Is there issues with if a pilot sees something
25 that we don't? Sure. There can be -- we have a plan to put a

1 plane in a certain place, they're unable to fly through it, then
2 we have to deviate. And then we see it, we get a PIREP and we
3 keep -- we build a new plan. Never an issue that can't be to the
4 next plan, to the next plan, to the next plan.

5 MR. RICHARDS: Okay.

6 MR. KELSEY: So if this pilot sees something off his right
7 and there's many more coming from that, then we just go further to
8 the west, right, and then it's a plan that's ever changing --

9 MR. RICHARDS: Okay.

10 MR. KELSEY: -- based on pilot reports and a continuing
11 evolution of the weather, how it's coming and going.

12 BY MR. RICHARDS:

13 Q. Just curious, last question and then I'll pass on. Do you
14 ever see something that the pilot doesn't?

15 A. Sometimes radar scopes can have anomalous propagation.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. AP.

18 Q. Sure.

19 A. And we will ask, we'll inquire, like is this really
20 depicting, on a perfectly clear day --

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. -- something pops up, we will -- there can (indiscernible) on
23 a scope and then we'll call it, we'll ask them, we'll see if they
24 see it and if they don't, then we work off that PIREP, that that's
25 AP.

1 Q. Okay, I guess one more question. Do you have wind farms out
2 in this area? What's another word, wind farms --

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Wind mills.

4 BY MR. RICHARDS:

5 Q. You know, the wind turbines, those sections of wind turbines
6 that are causing --

7 A. I'm born and raised in Wisconsin, I don't --

8 (Laughter.)

9 MR. RICHARDS: Some of them have said -- okay, disregard.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

11 MR. RICHARDS: Sometimes those can cause AP.

12 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

13 MR. RICHARDS: So I was wondering if that was -- if that was
14 something that happened out in your airspace, but --

15 MR. KELSEY: Yeah, I --

16 MR. RICHARDS: Probably no, we're too close, two places.

17 MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

18 MR. RICHARDS: Thank you.

19 MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

20 MR. RICHARDS: Thank you.

21 MS. BRANDT: Yeah, this is a pretty populated area --

22 MR. RICHARDS: Yeah.

23 MS. BRANDT: -- around here.

24 MR. RICHARDS: Right.

25 BY MS. BRANDT:

1 Q. Did you have any other aircraft through that same area that
2 reported buildup? Prior to --

3 A. No.

4 Q. No, okay. And did you have any -- was there any dialogue
5 between you and the trainee about what was being reported that you
6 didn't see or what the -- what you were depicted and what he was
7 headed to before you keyed up and intervened?

8 A. Were Tavar and I discussing the weather that the pilot was
9 reporting before I said like the weather's 12 o'clock, 5 miles, is
10 that your question?

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. We were discussing why he wasn't turning, yes. And we were
13 continually discussing the next -- like, you know, 0-8-0, he was
14 unable to do it and we're like okay, and then -- so I was issuing
15 -- I was saying hey, turn up to an 80 because, as the trainer, I
16 told him, I gave him that heading.

17 Mine was for the sequence of the first aircraft, I don't
18 remember the call sign, though, but my 80 heading, the weather was
19 never -- the weather that he was going towards was -- was not the
20 weather that we ever thought would be an issue because he was
21 going to be behind the second aircraft, we needed him both for
22 spacing and for weather to turn to a 0-8-0 heading, so we were
23 discussing, to the best of my knowledge, you know, the sequence
24 and trying to get him over there without an exact replay of
25 playing it back and understanding each transmission we made, but

1 there was the conversation of get him over to this area where
2 there is not weather, vector him away from the weather, you know,
3 stuff like that, yes.

4 Q. And did the trainee have problems in this area where he
5 needed for you to coach him? I guess I -- how many hours did the
6 trainee have, do you --

7 A. I do not recall.

8 Q. You don't know. Do you know if he was new to air traffic
9 control, had he been here from -- oh, I guess we can probably ask
10 that trainee that, but I guess what I'm trying to ask is did he
11 have deficiencies in that area?

12 A. No, he was in training, all things, you know, still being
13 developed across the board. He was progressing, what seemed to be
14 a natural progression of training here.

15 MS. BRANDT: I don't have anything else.

16 BY MR. MEYERS:

17 Q. So when you gave him the depiction of the weather ahead,
18 which I agree with you, you used phraseology and plain language
19 that was very well done, and he says I'll turn to an 80 heading
20 now, did you -- what was your expectation as to when he would make
21 that turn?

22 A. Generally speaking, I would say a couple miles, 2 miles, if
23 he was going 200 knots across the ground, I would say roughly 2
24 miles he should be in that turn. I believe he had said he was
25 starting his turn, that was happening, so there was an expectation

1 on our side that we thought he was starting the turn.

2 Q. All right. And, you know, hindsight being 20/20, we now know
3 that he didn't. At what point did you actually notice that he had
4 not made the turn and he was still heading into the weather?

5 A. I do not recall.

6 MR. MEYERS: Okay, that's it.

7 MS. LEWIS: Can I clarify?

8 MS. KOSCHIG: Yes, please.

9 BY MS. LEWIS:

10 Q. Do you recall any other -- any other situations that may have
11 distracted you during that time of when Juliet Tango was getting
12 closer to the weather, that your priorities may have shifted to
13 something else, do you remember anything else?

14 A. In the timeline of events, I know that there was, as he was
15 approaching the weather, there was a briefing going on.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. That was an event that there was stuff happening, that --

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. Tavar was still working out the planes at the same time, we
20 had other ones that, you know -- so there -- like anything in air
21 traffic, it's always -- there's other parts moving and there's
22 other parts happening at the same time. I know there were other
23 things that were happening at that time, yes.

24 Q. Okay. When aircraft are getting closer to weather, how do
25 you -- how -- give me a second. So for example, priorities with

1 trainees, it's really hard to always have the same priorities as a
2 trainee might have, so there was a relief briefing going on that
3 -- that took up a certain amount of time --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- which is normal, and then the Execjet had started talking
6 about hey, the weather has closed up --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- we are not going to be able to do this, we want to go to
9 Macon. So my question is was there anything, if you can recall,
10 other than obviously there was a line of storms between where the
11 Execjet was and the airport that he did not want to go into
12 anymore, was there anything else that, like -- so the event
13 situation happened where the trainee started speaking to Execjet
14 for an extended period of time, got all the information about
15 where he wanted to go, gave him a heading, started vectoring him
16 out, at the same time Juliet Tango was getting pretty close to the
17 weather.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Do you feel that perhaps -- so where was your -- how did you
20 feel about Juliet Tango, like I know you went back and you were --
21 he's obviously probably -- what did you see on your scope at that
22 point where -- did you -- do you remember or do you recall, was he
23 into the weather or not yet into the weather, so --

24 A. He was not into the weather.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I believe my weather call was 5 miles --

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. -- away.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I believe that's when I made it.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I was trying to give him as much ample time as he was
8 requesting, we had given him, when able, fly heading 0-8-0 and I
9 allowed that to go to the part where I thought I need to
10 intervene, as well, again. He was then informed of the weather
11 and we tried to get him to turn and that's -- we tried to allow
12 him as much time as he needed to deviate for the weather as
13 possible and when I felt it was no longer safe on that heading, I
14 stepped in.

15 MS. LEWIS: Um-hum, okay.

16 Betty, Dan, do you have anything to follow up with that?

17 MR. MEYERS: No.

18 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

19 Q. I'd like to switch gears a little bit on -- talk to us about
20 the training team, how does this work, I mean, how many -- you
21 have a training team, Tavar was on your training team --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- and was there another training team that was coming in?
24 Tell us what was going on there, I'm trying to get that straight
25 on how things operate when you're doing team training.

1 A. We were at one position at the time.

2 Q. Uh-huh.

3 A. Tavar and I were training. There was another training team
4 and -- yeah. And a lot of times if there's multiple training
5 going on at a facility such as this where we're trying to get
6 people trained up, it will be common for those sectors to have one
7 after another of people coming and training, relieving a trainer
8 and a trainee and they just keep coming in and out, swapping in
9 and out of that position trying to get time amongst all trainees
10 in the building there, to somewhat split it equitably across the
11 board. In this position, they weren't relieving us, they were
12 splitting a position from our position and opening the other one.
13 But as for people training, they come in one after another, yeah,
14 it's common.

15 Q. How many trainees do you have? Do you train?

16 A. I have one trainee right now.

17 Q. Okay. How do you think the training program is here?

18 A. I think it's good.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, good. Any "oh, by the ways," more
20 questions?

21 BY MS. LEWIS:

22 Q. We noticed like within the amount of time that we had, we had
23 a snippet of like 61 minutes of time for audio. I believe we
24 counted that a position relief briefing or a change of controllers
25 happened five times in that 61-minute period of time. I believe

1 you've explained very well that some of those may have been
2 explained by new trainee teams, we need to get the equitable and
3 everybody training. Sometimes it may have been because, you know,
4 you needed to get relieved because of an event that happened.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What is the normal amount of time for a training team to be
7 on position and is it normal to kind of bounce around within that
8 short amount of time where there's a lot of position relief
9 briefings and --

10 A. I don't think we can -- I don't think there's a definition of
11 normal weather. If a certain trainee is at a certain place and he
12 needs to see weather, then he's going to sit on that scope and get
13 more of that time. If someone needs to see volume and there's the
14 volume, they'll sit on that scope. If it's just an overall,
15 someone's at the early stage of their training and they just need
16 to see everything, then we'll go in and help, and if that person
17 comes back from a break, if they would like to get that, then
18 they'll get that.

19 Overall a day, we try to achieve 3 hours of training across
20 the board as an end time, but it's for -- if it's 30 minutes on at
21 a time or 25, that's just whenever they come back from break. We
22 try not to say to another gentleman who wants to be certified, or
23 a lady, just as much as the other one, we don't want to say hey,
24 our time's more valuable than yours. If you're back from a break
25 and you feel you want to train, then it's only fair that you also

1 get a chance to train. You know, we don't -- there's one scope
2 and three people are training, you know, we --

3 Q. Right.

4 A. -- have to split it as much as possible to try to allow
5 everybody the same right to certify here.

6 Q. Right. So that's more of an explanation as to why this might
7 have happened versus that's normal where a supervisor, perhaps, or
8 a management official will be like okay, they're kind of just
9 bouncing you around from position to position.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. That's not --

12 A. No.

13 Q. -- normal.

14 A. No, they're not, they're not purposely doing anything like
15 bouncing us around or anything.

16 MS. LEWIS: Okay.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Rachel, any --

18 MS. BRANDT: No.

19 MR. MEYERS: I'm good.

20 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

21 Q. This is going to sound like a dumb question, but is there
22 anything that we didn't ask you that you thought we were going to
23 ask you?

24 A. I've never done one of these. I don't know if I even had an
25 expectation, this is -- this was my first time ever sitting here.

1 Q. Yeah, I hate that you have to be here for this, but --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- we definitely appreciate everything you've given us and
4 it's just knowing the facts, is great for us.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Is there anything you would change with the facility if you
7 had the opportunity, anything that can -- that would help increase
8 safety, that would help you?

9 A. No, I mean, our weather depicts radar, it's like -- yeah, I
10 can't think of anything.

11 Q. Any more displays or just more -- anything that --

12 A. Oh, of course.

13 Q. -- would help with situational awareness?

14 A. And the same thing is if you knew more about an airplane,
15 what they had, it could be helpful. The same thing is if there
16 was more weather than ITWS or more something that would give you
17 more input would always be helpful, always be, you know, much
18 appreciated.

19 MR. RICHARDS: Can I follow up on that?

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

21 MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

22 BY MR. RICHARDS:

23 Q. Do you ever, while you're on position, ever look at other
24 sources of information? Aside from what's depicted on the glass?

25 A. On other scopes, we do have other -- Columbus-Macon's very

1 tough.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. You guys went in the room, I believe.

4 Q. Right, right, right, yes.

5 A. And you saw the nature of where that was and how the weather
6 -- like on departure and on the approach wall we have -- you can
7 pull it up and we have other sources of weather and we look at
8 that quite common, especially on the approach wall, wind shear,
9 microburst, it gives us a much better picture than just what that
10 is depicted. Columbus-Macon does not and of course, that would be
11 -- would be helpful.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I wouldn't know how to -- how they'd go about that, how they
14 would install that or what more equipment would be needed to bring
15 back to the facility, that's -- but it would be helpful,
16 absolutely.

17 MR. RICHARDS: Thank you.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Trying think of some questions, give us
19 a minute to -- we don't want you to go and then have to say oh,
20 man, we didn't ask --

21 MR. KELSEY: I thought there would -- I thought we would've
22 looked at a live display, I thought that.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah. Oh, we can, definitely.

24 MR. KELSEY: No, I thought that's where, if there's an
25 expectation, I thought we'd be going over it --

1 MS. LEWIS: Uh-huh.

2 MR. KELSEY: -- in somewhat of a real time, more of a
3 display.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh. Oh, okay. I was trying to get your memory
5 of it because I know it's been such a long time --

6 MR. KELSEY: Yes.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: -- and I know you've already seen the replay
8 itself and so we were just trying to pick your brain --

9 MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: -- on what you could recall because sometimes
11 watching it and going over it at the same time, you'll -- you
12 know, we -- you're seeing what -- what you're seeing is what
13 you're recalling, so --

14 MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

15 MS. LEWIS: Um-hum.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: So what you gave us is exactly what we wanted,
17 so --

18 MR. KELSEY: Okay.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: But definitely, if you want to do it, we can.

20 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

21 MR. KELSEY: That was my only expectation, I thought that
22 that would be --

23 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

24 MR. KELSEY: -- a part of it.

25 BY MS. LEWIS:

1 Q. Do you feel, just -- you're just asking these general
2 questions now, do you feel that doing something like that would've
3 helped you answer the questions had we brought something like that
4 up?

5 A. I want to be as accurate as possible and as for recalling,
6 it's been a couple months.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. Even since last watching the replay, it's been a significant
9 amount of time. Yeah, it was -- you know, trying to recall to the
10 best of your ability --

11 Q. Right.

12 A. -- you know, but just, yeah, there's something else.

13 MR. RICHARDS: I don't have any other questions.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh.

15 MR. RICHARDS: No, the longer we sit around, the more things
16 connect.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, I know, that's why I said --

18 MR. RICHARDS: Never get out of here.

19 BY MS. BRANDT:

20 Q. So when you had turned the pilot to those airwaves that
21 second time after you'd issued him that second turn, what was your
22 mindset as he was getting closer to -- because I know weather
23 moves.

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. So when we look at Falcon, we see a different set of weather

1 than we actually see on the radar, so we just saw snippets. What
2 was your thought as far as him continuing straight ahead into that
3 weather versus like your set of priorities, as with the aircraft
4 that's now saying I can't get into Macon, I have to deviate versus
5 this pilot's not taking the turn, going, you know, what -- at one
6 point in time was directly into the heaviest precipitation, what
7 was your thought process on that and how you set your priorities
8 as far as with the trainees, who the trainee's talking to and
9 what's happening?

10 A. He was number one priority and the thought process was to
11 avoid it at all cost. As for him deviating, when he's on a
12 heading deviating and both painting the picture in plain language
13 and in phraseology, like I said, unless we pulled up the replay of
14 the actual audio, from what I recall, I said unless you're
15 planning a left-hand turn out to 0-8-0, I advise you, start your
16 right turn at this time because what I'm seeing is very bad.

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. And I -- I don't want to turn him into a thunderstorm or into
19 a buildup that he sees, that is -- that is an unsafe situation and
20 I don't want him to go into a situation which I see and at this
21 point, all I'm trying to do is to get him to understand the
22 severity of what I see and hope that he would take the heading
23 that I advised.

24 Q. So I guess I'm -- you know, this is my first NTSB interview.
25 So what I'm wondering is at the time, did you think that what the

1 pilot is deciding to do may be a better option than what you gave
2 him? You told the pilot to turn 0-8-0, he didn't.

3 A. He said he was starting his turn.

4 Q. Well, that's true.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And so what -- there wasn't any thought process in
7 there that would give you priority over the Execjet that's doing
8 his thing over there? What was your priority at that time
9 because, I mean --

10 A. Separate aircraft and issue safety alerts, as always. My
11 number one priority is to keep airplanes safe. I tried to convey
12 to him in such a way that I could to keep him safe. My priority
13 was for him not to fly into that weather, it was my number one
14 priority to stay away from it and I tried the best way I knew how
15 to both use .65 and on a more plain language human level, sort of
16 just looking back.

17 Q. Yeah. And then just one other thing, is the CIC oversight,
18 what did that look like to you at that time?

19 A. Excellent. He was right behind our position, right on top of
20 what was going -- going on at the time, yes.

21 Q. Okay. And did they -- did he bring your attention to the
22 aircraft that was continuing to not take your turn?

23 A. He did not discuss that, in terms of bringing my attention to
24 any other thing, no.

25 MS. BRANDT: I'm done.

1 MR. RICHARDS: Oh, I'm good.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: Do you have a question?

3 MR. RICHARDS: I think he answered it. I'm not a hundred
4 percent, but I think so. I'm ready to let it go.

5 BY MR. MEYERS:

6 Q. I do have one quick one, just as a -- since you are a CIC.
7 PIREP. How do they work for you in the room? How are you
8 soliciting and disseminating the PIREP information?

9 A. If a weather situation calls for it, we solicit PIREPs.
10 Hourly, we solicit PIREPs. As needed, we solicit PIREPs. We then
11 -- are you asking the full sequence of how we do them?

12 Q. Or how -- how are they getting from you, on the scope, to the
13 rest of the room? Or --

14 A. Yeah, so then we're handing them to our CIC or supervisor,
15 who's bringing them to the flight data position, who's putting
16 them in the system. The flight data controller then, after
17 putting them in position, puts them on the ops manager's desk.

18 Q. And you're filling out the normal PIREP form?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. All right. And it seemed to be a pretty smooth operation as
21 far as that's concerned?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. You feel like once you add them up, the process works,
24 generally?

25 A. Yes. They run through the same process every time.

1 MR. MEYERS: Okay.

2 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

3 Q. And I did think of a question. What do you think about the
4 pre-duty weather briefing? Do you think it's value added,
5 anything needs to be changed to it and --

6 A. Absolutely, it's value added. Any time you can know more
7 about the situation and what you're going to be working with that
8 day helps you be a better controller.

9 Q. Right. Is there anything that you would change or -- to make
10 it better, any suggestions?

11 A. I don't have any suggestions for that.

12 BY MS. LEWIS:

13 Q. Do you feel it's tailored pretty well to this facility?

14 A. I feel as if it provides us with a picture of what's
15 happening out there, yes.

16 Q. Okay. The reason why we ask that is because there are many
17 facilities out there that aren't as big as you guys and so the
18 center makes a big general --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- weather briefing, but somebody -- you know, like for
21 example, Oklahoma City gets theirs from Dallas, you know,
22 Ft. Worth Center.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Well, there's so much time talking about the metroplex that,
25 you know --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- Oke City is really -- it's like oh, my gosh.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. So we're kind of like it's not very helpful to smaller
5 facilities and so we were just wanting to see if your center was
6 covering your facility --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- in the way that you would hope it would be.

9 A. And it does a good job. I mean, weather by nature is fluid,
10 it's always changing and moving.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. It gives you a good idea that there is something out there,
13 be alert, and to continue on.

14 MS. LEWIS: Thank you.

15 BY MR. RICHARDS:

16 Q. All right, I'll ask. You may have answered this, so I'll
17 take a chance. You said that you and the -- your trainee were
18 discussing why he hadn't turned?

19 A. Not necessarily why he hadn't turned, I would say we were
20 discussing where we needed him to go. We were wondering, you
21 know, like that does -- you know, there's buildups, but that is
22 common for an airplane to see a buildup and you not see it, so we
23 would discuss that nature of the event.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. We were trying to get him to turn.

1 MR. RICHARDS: Okay, thanks. I heard that different. All
2 right.

3 MS. BRANDT: No, I don't.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: Mike, any last ones?

5 MR. RICHARDS: No, thank you.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Dan?

7 MR. MEYERS: No.

8 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, are you ready for us to let you go?

9 (Laughter.)

10 MR. KELSEY: Yeah.

11 MS. BRANDT: Yes, please.

12 MS. KOSCHIG: I am going to end the interview at 12:43.

13 (Whereupon, at 12:43 p.m., the interview concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT
NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA
ON AUGUST 10, 2023
Interview of Lucas Kelsey

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA23FA330

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: October 11, 2023

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



Karen D. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT *

NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: ERA23FA330

ON AUGUST 10, 2023 *

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Interview of: TAVAR ELLIS, Macon Sector Radar Controller Trainee
Federal Aviation Administration

Atlanta, Georgia

Thursday,
October 12, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SARAH LEWIS, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board

RACHEL BRANDT, Air Traffic Control Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

DANIEL MEYERS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

CHRIS PHILLIPS
Federal Aviation Administration
Representing Mr. Ellis

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:52 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: The time now is 8:52 Eastern time. So as part of the process of what we do, I'm going to audio record this and we'll have a transcription made and the transcription will become part of the -- of the report, the audio will not. And what we do, we'll send the report -- we'll send the audio off and get it transcribed. Once we get it back, then that will become part of our docket and public information, the audio never does, that's -- we're going to delete that. Do you have any questions about that?

MR. ELLIS: I don't.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. So please state your name.

MR. ELLIS: Tavar Ellis.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, can you spell your name, please?

MR. ELLIS: T-a-v-a-r. Last name, E-l-l-i-s.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. And first of all, good morning.

MR. ELLIS: Good morning.

MS. KOSCHIG: My name is Betty Koschig, I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm an air traffic control investigator here and my co-chair is Sarah and I'll let her introduce herself.

MS. LEWIS: Hi, my name is Sarah Lewis and I'm also with Betty as an air traffic control investigator, the NTSB. Prior to that, I had 23 years of FAA air traffic control experience at New York TRACON and Oklahoma City approach control.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: And joining us here today is also, we have a
2 meteorologist from the NTSB.

3 MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB. Nice to meet you.

4 MR. ELLIS: Good morning.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: And as part of the process, we also have
6 parties that participate and with subject matter expertise and
7 today we have NATCA and the FAA, and we're part of the -- it's
8 going to be the whole -- it's going to be an NTSB team even though
9 we do have different parties.

10 MR. ELLIS: Okay.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: But I'll let Dan introduce himself.

12 MR. MEYERS: I'm Dan Meyers, I work out of Philadelphia
13 TRACON and I'm here as an air safety investigator to help the NTSB
14 on this issue.

15 MS. BRANDT: Rachel Brandt, I'm the ATM at Birmingham.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: Great, so that's the NTSB team and what we'll
17 do is we're going to take all the information and put it in a
18 report so that the investigator-in-charge, who is the guy that's
19 in charge of all this investigation with -- dealing with the
20 airplane accident and all the different other groups, so there's a
21 lot of people that -- this is not the only part of the
22 investigation that's going on, there's a lot of different moving
23 parts, so this is just one portion of it. Okay. And as part of
24 the regulations, you are welcome to have a representative and it
25 does look like you have a representative here, is this the person

1 you want to be your representative?

2 MR. ELLIS: Yes.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: And could you please state your name?

4 MR. PHILLIPS: Chris Phillips.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. We already got your spelling, so --

6 MR. PHILLIPS: Um-hum.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So this interview is being conducted so
8 that we can find the probable cause of the accident that occurred
9 on August 10th with November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango. And the whole
10 purpose is to find all the facts, we're not here to blame, we're
11 not here to fault the controllers, we're not here to -- it's
12 nothing about liability, it's all about getting the information.

13 So as a safety team, we're concerned with the safety aspects
14 of it. So during this time if at any time that you wish to take a
15 break, you can, just say I need a break and --

16 MR. ELLIS: Okay.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: -- you're welcome to. Or if you want to talk
18 to your rep, you guys can step out, you know, so there's no
19 problem with that. So we're going to ask a bunch of questions and
20 if at any time you don't recall something, "I don't recall" is a
21 great answer. If you don't know something, you just -- you don't
22 know.

23 MR. ELLIS: Um-hum.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: We're not asking you to speculate on anything,
25 but if you have opinions on things, that's great, you know, we're

1 -- you know, you've got some expertise that we want to hear about,
2 so you're welcome to do that. So how this is going to work is
3 first, I'm going to start off asking questions, getting to know
4 you a little bit and then talking about the incident or the
5 accident, and then we'll go around the room and Sarah will ask
6 some questions, and Mike and Rachel and Dan, and we'll just -- all
7 just ask a lot of different questions, so that's the structure of
8 how this goes.

9 MR. ELLIS: All right.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: And you'll also see us taking some notes,
11 that's just so if we can -- you know, if we -- so we can have
12 that, if we need to reflect back to see what we can ask questions
13 on, but these notes that we take, they will be destroyed, so
14 they're not going to leave and be part of any of this. The audio
15 is what we're using. Okay. And there's something else I wanted
16 to say. Oh, yeah. If any time you have questions for us, please
17 ask.

18 MR. ELLIS: All right.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: If we're not clear on something, say hey, what
20 do you mean, okay? So are you ready to get started with the rest?

21 MR. ELLIS: I am ready.

22 INTERVIEW OF TAVAR ELLIS

23 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

24 Q. So like I said, we're going to ask a few questions about you.
25 Not hard stuff. Okay, so how old are you?

1 A. Twenty-eight.

2 Q. Okay. What are your operating initials?

3 A. Tango Echo.

4 Q. And what are your qualifications here?

5 A. I'm a developmental --

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. -- and I've been certified on the departure sector.

8 Q. Okay. And do you have any military?

9 A. No.

10 Q. No. Did you work in the FAA before this or --

11 A. No.

12 Q. So when did --

13 A. Before this facility?

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. Oh, yes.

16 Q. Tell me a little bit about that, when did you start with the

17 FAA?

18 A. I started -- I joined the Agency September of 2016 and I

19 reported to my first facility, which was New York Center, January

20 of 2017, and then I transferred here last year in April.

21 Q. Okay. So you went to the academy?

22 A. I did.

23 Q. Okay. Did you like that?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Was it hard?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Oh, okay. So do you do any collateral duties or anything
3 here that -- you know, outside of being a controller, like local
4 safety committee, anything like that?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. Do you have a pilot's license or anything --

7 A. No.

8 Q. No other aeronautical ratings, okay.

9 A. No.

10 Q. Do you have any other aviation background before you joined
11 the FAA?

12 A. I was CTI, I was studying down at Broward College in Fort
13 Lauderdale, that was back -- I started in 2014 and I got hired
14 while I was still completing the program.

15 Q. Okay, great. Did you graduate?

16 A. I did not.

17 Q. Oh, okay. Because you got hired.

18 A. Yeah, I got hired before --

19 (Laughter.)

20 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

21 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

22 Q. That's great, yeah. Do you have a medical certificate?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Are you current?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And do you have any restrictions?
2 A. No.
3 Q. Okay. No eyeglasses or anything at all?
4 A. No.
5 Q. Okay. All right. Did you file an ATSAP report after this?
6 A. No, but one was filed by my trainer on my behalf.
7 Q. Okay. Have you had the opportunity to watch the replay of
8 the accident?
9 A. Yes.
10 Q. And the audio, as well, and everything?
11 A. Yes.
12 Q. When was that?
13 A. The day of.
14 Q. Okay. Have you seen it since?
15 A. I have not.
16 Q. Okay. So based off your knowledge, working on that position,
17 what do you think the volume of traffic was that day, was it
18 heavy, I mean, based on 1 to 5, you know, how heavy was it?
19 A. I would say about a 3.
20 Q. Okay. And what about the complexity, 1 to 5?
21 A. I'd say about a 3, as well.
22 Q. Okay. Do you recall any distractions going on in the room in
23 the area at all, that night? Or day, daytime.
24 A. No distractions.
25 Q. Okay. Do you recall what the weather was at that time?

1 A. I don't recall.

2 Q. Okay. Yeah, I know it's been a while.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Do you recall if you had the -- got a pre-duty weather
5 briefing before getting on?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. What do you think about those things, are they -- do you
8 think they're valuable, helpful?

9 A. I think they're helpful as it pertains to, you know, what the
10 altimeter in the area may be or any forecasted turbulence or
11 icing. Definitely could use improvement.

12 Q. Okay. And how could -- what would be good for improving it?

13 A. Maybe more -- I guess more focus on the specific area, like
14 A80 itself.

15 Q. Oh. Yeah, we kind of hear that a lot. Did you happen to
16 have a cell phone with you in the room at the time?

17 A. I don't recall.

18 Q. Okay. All right. All right, so now that's done, those kind
19 of questions, now we just want to talk and find out what -- what
20 was going on that day, we want to hear your recollection and I
21 know it's been a while --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- so what you recall going on that -- I keep saying, I want
24 to say night, but it's day, you know, and you can start at any
25 point, when you got in the room or before, wherever you want to

1 start will be fine, we just want to hear your story for everything
2 leading up to the accident and what happened afterwards.

3 A. Okay. I just remember I was training, obviously, and I
4 remember the weather kind of building and moving east from the
5 area and I got November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango from the center on a
6 heading deviating and he checked on, I issued the altimeter and I
7 gave him a descent clearance.

8 And then from there, we were still kind of in the middle of
9 splitting the sector off at that time because prior to that, I had
10 both sectors, Macon and Columbus, and then once we did that, I
11 asked November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango if he had the weather at Upson
12 County and his approach request and he responded he wanted the
13 RNAV Runway 3-0 and he wanted the initial fix of SINFO. So then I
14 came back and I said -- after discussing it with my trainer, to
15 turn him to a 0-8-0 heading just to avoid the weather and to set
16 him up for the approach.

17 And he came back and he responded with he has buildups that
18 he was trying to avoid off his right side, so he would turn in the
19 next, I believe he said minute or two, so I said when able, turn
20 right heading 0-8-0 and then he responded. And he kept tracking
21 the heading that he was on, it was about a northwest setting, I
22 think like a 3-30, 3-40 or so, and at that point, once he started
23 getting closer to the precip that we were depicting, my trainer
24 stepped in and he called the weather out to him and gave him a
25 turn, that was the 0-8-0 heading, and he responded at that point

1 and after that, I think my trainer came back a second time and he
2 issued the heading again, whether it be left or right, just to,
3 you know, keep him away from the weather and he said he would
4 turn, make the heading or turn right to a 0-8-0 heading and then
5 all I remember after that is my trainer trying to reach out to him
6 to get a response and he wasn't responding.

7 Q. What happened after that?

8 A. So I remember continuing working the traffic I had, I believe
9 there was an Execjet from the northeast that was deviating, as
10 well. At that point, my trainer was talking to the CIC at that
11 point to let him know that, you know, this guy wasn't responding
12 and eventually, I mean, I forget at what point, but the target did
13 eventually fall off the scope.

14 Q. Do you recall what happened after that?

15 A. And then after that, I just continued to work. The Execjet
16 that was wanting to go to Upson County, as well, he said he
17 couldn't make it, so he ended going to Macon, instead. I remember
18 clearing him to Macon airport and then vectoring him for the
19 approach and then I believe it was maybe 5 to 10 minutes after, we
20 got off position and that was that.

21 Q. So both of you got off?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And where did you go after that?

24 A. We went to one of the debrief rooms and we sat with a couple
25 of the reps, Pesley (ph.) and Clay, Clayton (ph.).

1 Q. Okay. Those were the NATCA reps?

2 A. NATCA reps.

3 Q. What did you guys talk about?

4 A. We watched a replay and we just discussed basically what
5 happened after. We stayed for the remainder of the shift until we
6 were able to leave and we just sat in the room, essentially.

7 Q. Okay. Did you go home after that?

8 A. At the end of my shift.

9 Q. Okay. So what did you do from -- when did your shift end?

10 A. It was -- I was a 6:00 to 2:00 that day, so 2 o'clock, 2 --
11 2:00 p.m.

12 Q. All right. Did you get on position anymore the rest of that
13 day?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. Did you come to work the next day?

16 A. No, I was off the following 2 days and then I also took three
17 additional days off.

18 Q. Okay. Was that because of the accident?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. So how are you doing?

21 A. I'm fine.

22 Q. Yeah?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. I know, that's a -- it's something that you never want to go
25 through as a controller.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. Right, we totally get that. When this occurred, did you know
3 what was going on at that point, when he disappeared?

4 A. Yeah, I had a feeling, I wasn't sure exactly because I've
5 never experienced anything like that.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. But that was also the discussion in the debrief room, whether
8 -- you know, what exactly happened and I know on the control
9 before there was -- they were like actively working on, you know,
10 locating that aircraft and finding out exactly what happened, so
11 -- yeah, but when he -- initially, when he fell off the scope, I
12 wasn't exactly sure.

13 Q. Right. Yeah, because it's -- yeah, it doesn't happen every
14 day, thankfully.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. And that would be -- yeah. It's something that's hard to go
17 through as a controller.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. I get that, definitely. Do you happen to recall when the guy
20 -- when you had him heading 0-8-0, was there something in the room
21 going on like a relief briefing, anything that you can recall or
22 -- yeah.

23 A. No. I believe we split the sector prior to me issuing a
24 0-8-0 heading, so there was nothing else going on.

25 Q. Okay. And you and your trainer, did you -- did you have a

1 lot of communication going on between you during this time? Like
2 talking about the other airplanes or anything like that?

3 A. I don't really recall. I know he was talking to the CIC, but
4 I don't really recall any conversations between us.

5 Q. Do you recall if he was talking to the CIC before the
6 accident?

7 A. Yeah. Well, before -- well, when he wasn't responding.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. I do have more questions, but I'm
11 going to let Sarah ask you some.

12 BY MS. LEWIS:

13 Q. Okay. Describe your relationship with your trainer.

14 A. I have a great relationship. So after being in the Agency
15 for 7 years, I feel like the two trainers that I have, Luke and
16 Kelsey -- Luke Kelsey and Matt, I probably have the best
17 relationship with the two of them.

18 Q. That's always very helpful.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. It's not always the case.

21 A. I got lucky.

22 Q. So yeah, that is wonderful.

23 A. I got really lucky.

24 Q. Very good. I'm glad. That's actually really important.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. So that's good. So that day, I've been told that it's normal
2 at a certain point to split the sector and you remember that they
3 did split the sector. Do you remember anything that might've been
4 unusual about that split? Like maybe the timing or how did you
5 feel about the timing of the split?

6 A. I do recall my trainer requesting for the sector to be split
7 off before we even talked to November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. And it took about, I'd say roughly 10 minutes --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- for it to get split off.

12 Q. Yeah. Is that normal?

13 A. Yeah, because, you know, people are, you know, doing other
14 duties or --

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. -- they're coming back from break so it might take a while to
17 actually get there.

18 Q. Yeah, that makes sense. Do you remember if there was
19 discussion between the two trainers, kind of like a -- almost like
20 a pre-brief before the briefing or anything going on like that?

21 A. Between my trainer and --

22 Q. And the new trainer coming in with his trainee.

23 A. Yes, I remember them having a discussion because part of the
24 splitting off the sector is, you know, getting all the strips over
25 to the sector that's opening, so he was assisting me with that --

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. -- while I was working the traffic.

3 MS. LEWIS: Okay, very good. I think I'll pass to Mike.

4 BY MR. RICHARDS:

5 Q. So I'm not a controller, so I might ask a couple stupid
6 questions. Are you required to issue weather to an aircraft, to
7 every aircraft you talk to, I guess? Let me ask you it this way,
8 what are the rules regarding issuing weather to aircraft? It's
9 not a quiz, I just --

10 A. Well --

11 (Laughter.)

12 MR. ELLIS: I guess I'm not really understanding the
13 question.

14 BY MR. RICHARDS:

15 Q. So if an aircraft checks on, are you required to give them
16 weather if there's weather present?

17 A. I would say so, yes.

18 Q. Are you supposed to do that when they first check on? Is
19 there a time frame within which you're supposed to do that?

20 A. I think in a timely manner. I'm not --

21 Q. Okay. I'll look it up and see, too. I didn't know. So when
22 the aircraft checked on, you said they were deviating already?

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. What were they deviating for, do you remember?

25 A. For the weather.

1 Q. For the weather. And he had -- he said had buildups.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Did you see these buildups, do you recall seeing these
4 buildups depicted on the scope?

5 A. The one that he mentioned where his position was at the time,
6 it was not depicted.

7 Q. Did not.

8 A. I didn't see the buildups.

9 Q. Okay. Is that pretty common? Does that happen -- how often
10 does that happen where a pilot is talking about weather that you
11 don't see?

12 A. Pretty often, because we only depict precipitation, so he may
13 have saw something that doesn't necessarily have precipitation
14 associated with it.

15 Q. Okay. What does the phrase "buildup" mean to you?

16 A. To me, it means a cloud layer, you know, a certain volume of
17 clouds that he's trying to miss.

18 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. I'm going to pass for now but come
19 back. Thank you.

20 BY MS. BRANDT:

21 Q. I just wanted to clarify --

22 (Noise interference.)

23 BY MS. BRANDT:

24 Q. So when she asked you if you had your cell phone in the
25 TRACON, you said you didn't recall.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Is your cell phone something that you would normally have in
3 the TRACON?

4 A. Normally, no. But coming back off of a break, it's not
5 uncommon to forget that it's in your pocket, but I typically leave
6 it in my mailbox.

7 Q. During the time where the aircraft was on the -- issued the
8 0-8-0 heading and your trainer keyed up to tell him about that
9 weather, did he provide you any coaching in that time frame, did
10 you guys discuss why he was doing it, what he was doing?

11 A. I don't recall.

12 Q. Do you recall the trainer giving you prompts to issue
13 anything or do you -- did he just key up?

14 A. I remember when I initially gave the 0-8-0 heading, we spoke
15 about that and we came up with that heading together, but once he
16 keyed up, I don't recall any coaching that was going on between
17 us.

18 Q. And how long have you been training on that sector?

19 A. At that time, I believe I started training in June and it was
20 -- I know I was roughly around like 40, 50 percent of my hours,
21 somewhere around there.

22 Q. And were you certified at New York Center?

23 A. No.

24 MS. BRANDT: No. I don't have anything else right now.

25 BY MR. MEYERS:

1 Q. Can I clarify that question? Were you certified in anything
2 at New York before you left?

3 A. I had two D sides --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- and I was training on the radar.

6 Q. Okay. I thought I had seen that. You say you have a great
7 relationship with the trainer.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Sounds like you guys do. Did him stepping in and issuing the
10 traffic, did you feel like at any point you were being stepped on,
11 he gave you the opportunity to do it and then just chose to make
12 sure it was done? Just kind of talk me through where you felt you
13 were in that situation, like was it above where you were able to
14 take care of it yourself, was it something you would expect him to
15 step in and help you with?

16 A. I think I expected him to step in with it. Yeah, I don't
17 think he was stepping over me, I think it was expected at that
18 point.

19 Q. So you knew you were kind of right there at the level of
20 close to being over your head or whatever, you needed --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- you needed the help. Okay. The Execjet that diverted to
23 Macon, had you seen that situation before or is that something
24 fairly typical you've done in the past and you kind of -- somebody
25 diverting to a different airport because they couldn't make it in?

1 A. While I was working the radar, that was my first time I've
2 seen it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. My training at New York Center, that happened frequently
5 while I was --

6 Q. We never do it up there in the Northeast.

7 (Laughter.)

8 MR. ELLIS: So I have had situations where I was training on
9 Columbus and Macon and someone diverted to Columbus that was
10 initially going to Atlanta, but that was my first time working --
11 a plane that I was working on diverted due to weather.

12 MR. MEYERS: Great. I thought you handled that well.

13 MR. ELLIS: Thank you.

14 MR. MEYERS: I was wondering if it was one of those things
15 that you see regularly, there were a lot of transmissions to that
16 Execjet, but you guys seemed to be on top of getting that
17 accomplished.

18 MR. ELLIS: Thank you.

19 MR. MEYERS: I'll go back to Betty.

20 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

21 Q. Me again. Do you recall -- do you recall what the severity
22 of the weather was at that point on the -- on the display?

23 A. I would say the heaviest was probably extreme.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. If I remember correctly.

1 Q. And do you recall where the airplane was, I mean, can you
2 describe his path, was he going towards that or around it, how was
3 all that going on?

4 A. He was going towards it, like I said, he was, I would say
5 probably 3-30, 3-40 heading --

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. -- and he was definitely going towards, I would say, maybe
8 moderate to extreme precip.

9 Q. Okay. And so what were you thinking at that point, is that
10 -- yeah, what were you thinking at that point?

11 A. I was wondering why --

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. -- but I also was just concerned with like getting him away
14 from it, that's why we issued the 0-8-0 heading.

15 Q. Okay. And so when -- so when you discussed that with your
16 trainer, how did you come up with the 0-8-0?

17 A. Well, because he requested the RNAV 3-0, we figured, you
18 know, that heading would keep him away from the weather as well
19 as, you know, sequence him for the approach, especially because we
20 had the Execjet coming in, as well. So it just -- that heading
21 seemed to basically keep him clear of the weather and sequence him
22 for the approach.

23 Q. Okay. And when you saw he wasn't turning, do you recall if
24 you discussed, you know -- well, I know the instructor came up,
25 but --

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. -- what were you thinking about -- what was going through
3 your mind at that point, what would you do if you were the -- you
4 know.

5 A. Well, I mean, because he mentioned the buildup, so I kind of
6 was like okay, maybe, you know, it's something really bad out
7 there that we can't see, that's why he's still tracking that
8 heading, but I mean, I was, you know, in agreeance with my
9 trainer, like just basically get him away from it, you know.

10 I felt like he should've turned on that initial clearance
11 that we gave him, but again, he said he had buildups off the
12 right, so -- but I was -- I would say I definitely was confused as
13 to why he was tracking that.

14 Q. Right. Had you seen that type of weather before, had you
15 worked traffic with that?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Normally, what would you see them do, I mean, is -- had you
18 seen anything like that before at all?

19 A. Where they was tracking towards the weather in that manner,
20 no, I haven't seen that. Typically, they -- on the precip that
21 we're depicting, they'll request deviations around it and we'll
22 see, you know, the plane start turning away from it, so -- or we
23 would issue vectors around it.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I'm going to pass it on to Sarah, I
25 still think there's more questions.

1 BY MS. LEWIS:

2 Q. Yeah. Thank you for being so open with us, it's really
3 helpful. You know, a lot of the times, you know, we don't want
4 this to happen to another person --

5 A. Right.

6 Q. -- so you being able to be in here today is really helpful,
7 so thank you.

8 A. Thank you.

9 Q. When the aircraft was going towards the weather and then all
10 of a sudden the Execjet wanted to divert, and I know a lot of this
11 was your trainer was talking, you were talking, trainer talking,
12 which is completely normal --

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. -- did you -- so you had stated previously that the Execjet
15 diverting was something new, so when he said he wanted to divert,
16 you started talking to him. So tell me, when that happened, what
17 did you do with the Execjet and then what was going on with the
18 Centurion at the time?

19 A. So with the Execjet, I remember he got closer to the initial
20 approach fix, SINFO, and I asked, like, was he able to go direct
21 there and make the approach and he advised me that he was unable,
22 the gap that he was seeing had closed up. So at that point, I
23 asked him his intentions, he said stand by and eventually he came
24 back and said he wanted to go to Macon airport. So I remember
25 issuing the clearance to him, giving him vectors, at the time they

1 were landing on Runway 2-3, so I issued vectors to set him up for
2 the RNAV and eventually cleared him for the RNAV approach. And at
3 that point, I was thinking that might be what I would have to do
4 with Juliet Tango, as well --

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. -- but I think at that point that's when my trainer stepped
7 in --

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. -- and he was talking to the aircraft.

10 MS. LEWIS: Yeah, thank you. I appreciate that.

11 BY MR. RICHARDS:

12 Q. Yeah. How long ago were you at New York Center?

13 A. I got here April of last year, so --

14 Q. Okay. I'll ask, I'm just curious, from your perspective from
15 the training position, are there any notable differences to you
16 between how weather is depicted in the en route environment as
17 opposed to how it's depicted here in the TRACON environment?

18 A. I would say TRACON, they have the -- they get the updates a
19 lot sooner, but it's --

20 Q. You mean on the glass?

21 A. Yeah, the scope.

22 Q. And I know that we're only talking about two different
23 facilities here, but any notable differences in the way you were
24 trained on how to recognize weather or call weather or anything to
25 do with precip?

1 A. The difference is basically calling out the weather and
2 giving deviations as necessary. Headings, to avoid it.

3 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Maybe one more and -- Rachel.

4 MS. BRANDT: I don't have anything right now.

5 BY MR. MEYERS:

6 Q. Let's see. PIREPs. What do you -- what do you normally do
7 when you're on position as far as PIREPs in like this scenario,
8 you were working both positions, you had some things going on,
9 deviations in both spots, what are you doing with your PIREP
10 information?

11 A. I write it down on the form and I would give it to the CIC,
12 the CIC would then give it to flight data, flight data would put
13 it into the system and then give the form to the OM.

14 Q. All right. Do you keep any kind of reminder written down,
15 you just try to remember what you have as far as passing it on to
16 other aircraft, what do you do in that situation?

17 A. I normally write it down on a piece of paper like this, just
18 so I don't forget, as well as I'm able to relay it during my
19 briefing to the next controller.

20 Q. Speaking of relaying to the next controller, how does that
21 normally go down during a briefing, what are kind of the
22 highlights you shoot for when you're giving a briefing or even
23 receiving a briefing, what is the facility's kind of -- because I
24 know you're still in training, so you're seeing it from other
25 people, as well, what are the facility standards for passing PIREP

1 information during a briefing?

2 A. Just whatever precip is depicted, the direction it's moving,
3 how fast, turbulence reported, icing reports, all of that is
4 passed on, on a briefing.

5 Q. All right.

6 A. If anyone's actually deviating or not around the weather.

7 MR. MEYERS: Okay. Go ahead, Betty.

8 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

9 Q. Okay. Earlier you said that when the pilot checked in, was
10 he deviating when he checked in?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Oh, okay. And he had said something about some buildups.

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. Do you recall seeing anything on your display that would
15 indicate that there was a buildup out there?

16 A. Where he was when he reported it, there was nothing on my
17 display, but again, if it's no precip associated with it I
18 wouldn't see it, so whatever he was seeing out his window or on
19 his -- and I wasn't able to see it.

20 Q. Okay. So at that point, you depended on the pilot to
21 navigate around that.

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Okay. Was there any time that you had a thought of -- of
24 doing something different from what your -- you know. What were
25 your thoughts on should you -- did you have other options, like

1 Plan, you know, A, B, and C, just thinking in your mind, what did
2 you -- do you recall if you thought anything, if this didn't work,
3 what would you do?

4 A. I don't recall having discussions with my trainer about it, I
5 just remember thinking that the 0-8-0 heading was probably the
6 best course of action because --

7 Q. Oh.

8 A. -- again, it got him away from the weather --

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. -- and set him up for a sequence, so --

11 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. I don't think I have any more right now.

12 MR. MEYERS: Can I go back to mine real quick?

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

14 MS. LEWIS: Of course.

15 MR. MEYERS: It was written about PIREPs, so I forgot.

16 BY MR. MEYERS:

17 Q. Do you expect any aircraft to have weather radar on board, in
18 your expectations, like how do you feel about that as far as what
19 you've seen in the past?

20 A. Yeah, I expect most of them to have weather radar on board.

21 MR. MEYERS: Okay. That was all I had.

22 MS. LEWIS: Okay.

23 BY MS. LEWIS:

24 Q. What are your expectations, as a controller, when something
25 like this happens where there's lots of weather in the area, what

1 kind of expectations do you have regarding communication from that
2 pilot in that cockpit as to what he needs, what are some of your
3 expectations with that?

4 A. I guess just in a timely manner, like letting me know what
5 they think is the best route for them as far as like avoiding the
6 weather.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. You know, once I call the weather out to them. And then
9 also, maybe me issuing headings that I think may avoid it and then
10 concurring.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. If not, them coming back and saying no, we need something
13 else or we need --

14 Q. Right.

15 A. -- a harder turn or we need an altitude change or --

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. -- whatever it takes.

18 Q. Do you recall in that situation the pilot ever explaining to
19 you that he needed something different than what you had
20 suggested?

21 A. Other than him saying he had buildups off the right when I
22 issued the 0-8-0 heading, I don't recall anything else, it was
23 just he advised -- like I said, I believe it was 1 or 2 minutes he
24 said he would take the turn --

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. -- to avoid those buildups, but other than that, no.

2 MS. LEWIS: Thank you. That's it for me.

3 MR. RICHARDS: I think I'm good, thanks.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: You're good?

5 MR. RICHARDS: Yeah.

6 MS. BRANDT: Yeah, I'm good.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: You're good? Got to wait a minute there, I got
8 to think, I don't want to let you go.

9 (Laughter.)

10 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

11 Q. While you're here, we got to make sure we get everything.

12 One question is so, did we ask every question you thought we were
13 going to ask, is there something we didn't ask that you thought we
14 would?

15 A. I would say I didn't really have that many expectations, I
16 guess it was my first time dealing with this, so --

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. -- you know, I really wasn't -- I didn't know what to expect.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay, so is there anything that you could think that you
22 could -- if they did in the -- in your -- on your sector, in the
23 area anywhere, any extra tools that would help, be helpful for
24 you, any extra displays, information?

25 A. I'm sure more information would be useful.

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. As far as any ideas, I probably don't have any off the top of
3 my head.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Probably have to ask someone a lot smarter than I am, but I'm
6 sure there's like, you know, a lot of technological advances that,
7 you know, can improve the system overall, but --

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. -- I can't think of any.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: I can't think of any more questions here.

11 Someone asked those questions. You just want to get out of here.

12 (Laughter.)

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, I can't think of anything else, so we are
14 going to end the interview at 9:30 Eastern.

15 (Whereupon, at 9:30 a.m., the interview concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT
NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA
ON AUGUST 10, 2023
Interview of Tavar Ellis

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA23FA330

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: October 12, 2023

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



Karen D. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT *

NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: ERA23FA330

ON AUGUST 10, 2023 *

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Interview of: BRIAN L. BROOKS, Controller-in-Charge
Federal Aviation Administration

Atlanta, Georgia

Friday,
October 12, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SARAH LEWIS, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board

RACHEL BRANDT, Air Traffic Control Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

DANIEL MEYERS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

CHRIS PHILLIPS
Federal Aviation Administration
Representing Mr. Brooks

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:11 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: The time now is 11:11 Eastern time. All right, so as part of the investigation, we do an audio record of this and we will send the audio out to get it transcribed. Once that transcription comes back to us, it will be part of the factual report. The audio will not be part of the factual report, the audio, we will destroy it or either it will stay in my -- I'm the only one that will have it and it won't go out to anyone, but we're still trying to go through the process of getting them destroyed.

MR. BROOKS: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: But it won't, it's not FOIA-able.

MR. BROOKS: I don't like how I sound either, so --

MS. KOSCHIG: No.

MR. BROOKS: -- that works.

MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, okay.

(Laughter.)

MS. KOSCHIG: So as we get started, please state your name.

MR. BROOKS: Brian L. Brooks.

MS. KOSCHIG: Could you spell your last name?

MR. BROOKS: B-r-o-o-k-s.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So now we'll do the introduction part officially. I am Betty Koschig from the NTSB and I'm an air traffic control investigator. And here today is my co-chair and I

1 will let Sarah introduce herself.

2 MS. LEWIS: Hi, my name is Sarah Lewis, I am also an NTSB air
3 traffic control investigator. Prior to that, I had 23 years of
4 FAA controller experience, I was certified at the New York TRACON
5 and then Oklahoma City approach control.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

7 MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB meteorology.

8 MS. KOSCHIG: And then we have parties to the investigation,
9 we have FAA SME and then we have NATCA, which is our subject
10 matter expert, as well. And Dan.

11 MR. MEYERS: I'm Dan Meyers, I work out of Philly TRACON now
12 and Detroit TRACON prior to that, and like she said, an ASI to
13 assist them with the investigation.

14 MS. BRANDT: I'm Rachel Brandt, I'm an air traffic manager at
15 Birmingham.

16 MR. BROOKS: Um-hum. I used to work at Dover.

17 MR. MEYERS: Oh, yeah?

18 MR. BROOKS: Um-hum.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, cool.

20 MR. MEYERS: Very good. You probably know some of the
21 people, then.

22 MR. BROOKS: Yeah.

23 MR. MEYERS: I'm sure there's names.

24 (Laughter.)

25 MR. BROOKS: Initials, yeah.

1 MR. MEYERS: We definitely -- we still got some Dover guys
2 that work at Philly.

3 MR. BROOKS: You guys still, your airspaces still butt up
4 next together, yeah.

5 MR. MEYERS: Yeah.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: So as part of this investigation, we -- you are
7 -- as part of regulations, actually, you're welcome to have a
8 representative, I do see that you have a representative and is
9 this the person you want to be here?

10 MR. BROOKS: Yes, ma'am.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. Can you please state your name?

12 MR. PHILLIPS: Chris Phillips.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right. This interview is being
14 conducted as part of an investigation concerning November 2-1-0
15 Juliet Tango, an accident that occurred on August 10th. Okay.
16 And the purpose of this investigation is fact finding, we are here
17 just to find out what happened, we're not here to blame, we're not
18 here to assign fault or liability, anything like that.

19 We're just getting the facts so that we can bring that
20 information back to the investigator-in-charge because we're just
21 one of the groups that he has, there's all different other groups
22 under here, so we are just the air traffic control group, so he
23 can make that determination of a probable cause of what happened.
24 All right. So during this investigation, any time you need to
25 take a break, just say hey, I need a break and we can get out of

1 here for a few minutes, or if you need to talk to your rep --

2 MR. BROOKS: Um-hum.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: -- it's no problem at all. And so how is this
4 going to go? I'll ask some questions, first get to know you a
5 little bit better and your history here and everywhere else in
6 that, as far as air traffic. And then we'll go around the room,
7 each one of us asking questions and trying to fill in any holes or
8 questions that we may have.

9 So if we do ask questions and you don't know the answer, "I
10 don't know is a fine answer." If you don't recall something, you
11 don't recall it and we understand this was a couple of months ago,
12 so it's kind trying to get back into that mindset of recalling
13 what was there. But any of those is fine, we don't want you to
14 just try to fake a -- you know, make up something to fill in the
15 blanks.

16 So you will see us writing some notes and stuff, even though
17 we're doing the recording, it's just so we can help us to remember
18 if we had a question, to go back to see if you said it rather than
19 asking you the question over again, and those notes will be
20 destroyed, they're not going to be used in the investigation at
21 all because we do have the audio that's capturing everything. I
22 just wanted to let you know that. Any questions so far?

23 MR. BROOKS: No, ma'am.

24 INTERVIEW OF BRIAN L. BROOKS

25 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

1 Q. Okay. So I'm going to get into asking you some of the --
2 some questions about you. First of all, how old are you?

3 A. Exactly?

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 (Laughter.)

6 MR. BROOKS: Forty-four.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

8 MR. BROOKS: Yeah.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. So --

10 MR. BROOKS: Forty-three?

11 MR. PHILLIPS: What year?

12 MR. BROOKS: Seventy-nine.

13 MR. PHILLIPS: Forty-four.

14 MR. MEYERS: Yeah, that's 44.

15 MR. BROOKS: Forty-four. It's hard, that one year.

16 (Laughter.)

17 MS. LEWIS: Yeah, yeah.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great.

19 MR. BROOKS: Nobody celebrates my birthday.

20 MS. LEWIS: Oh.

21 MR. BROOKS: Just kidding.

22 (Laughter.)

23 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

24 Q. So what are your operating initials?

25 A. B.B., Bravo Bravo.

1 Q. Okay. And what's your -- what's your position here? What
2 are your certifications, CIC?

3 A. Currently, yeah, CIC, OJTI, CPC.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. And I held TMU for a little, but that doesn't matter, I
6 guess.

7 Q. Oh, it's good you did. How long did you do that?

8 A. It was a detail, a hundred and 80 days, maybe 120.

9 Q. Oh.

10 A. I can't remember.

11 Q. Oh, pretty cool.

12 A. Yeah, it was.

13 Q. Did you like that?

14 A. I did. Better than a controller.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Less work.

17 Q. And that's going on the other side of that.

18 A. In the center, I'd rather go to the center, it's closer to my
19 house.

20 Q. Oh, okay. Cool, cool.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Great.

23 A. I'm sick of the TRACON.

24 (Laughter.)

25 MS. KOSCHIG: So yeah, we'll talk a little about that, what

1 you did first.

2 (Laughter.)

3 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

4 Q. Have you have got any military?

5 A. I was, I did 4 years in the Air Force, Dover Air Force Base,
6 Delaware.

7 Q. Okay. What years were those?

8 A. Two thousand -- great, I'm getting old. Two thousand two to
9 two thousand six.

10 Q. Oh, right after -- yeah.

11 A. Yeah, right after 9/11.

12 Q. Yeah. All right, so we've got your little thing there. So
13 tell us where -- when did you get to the FAA?

14 A. September 2007.

15 Q. Okay. Was that the academy?

16 A. Well, actually, when I got hired, we came to the facility
17 first, so I came here first, we were here for a week or two and
18 then we went to the academy.

19 Q. Oh, okay. Were you a direct hire or --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- VRA?

22 A. For VRA, yes, ma'am.

23 Q. Okay. And then you went to the academy. Where did you go
24 from there?

25 A. Back here.

1 Q. Right here?

2 A. Yeah, because when I got hired, you came to the facility
3 first --

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. -- and then they would schedule your class in Oklahoma, then
6 you would go out to Oklahoma, get -- if you pass, you came back
7 and started working. Or training, rather.

8 Q. And you've been here ever since?

9 A. Yes, ma'am.

10 Q. Wow, that's great. Nowhere else?

11 A. No, ma'am.

12 Q. Until you go to the center --

13 (Crosstalk)

14 MR. BROOKS: There's a black hole here, you don't really have
15 a choice.

16 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

18 MR. BROOKS: But yeah, hopefully.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

20 MR. BROOKS: When I have 15 years CPC I'll try to get out
21 that way.

22 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

23 Q. Oh, cool. Nice. Do you have any aeronautical license other
24 than this, like a pilot's license?

25 A. I do not.

1 Q. All right. Did you file an ATSAP on this one?
2 A. No, ma'am.
3 Q. Can I ask why?
4 A. The controller was going to file one --
5 Q. Um-hum.
6 A. -- the one working the traffic and I just didn't have enough
7 information, really, I wasn't there very long.
8 Q. Okay. All right, we'll talk about that in a little bit, too.
9 Have you had the opportunity to review the event, like see --
10 A. No, ma'am.
11 Q. -- the replay, nothing?
12 A. No, ma'am.
13 Q. Did you want to? I mean, didn't they offer it?
14 A. Well, I didn't even know I was doing this until yesterday, I
15 didn't even hear --
16 Q. Oh.
17 A. -- about it until yesterday, so --
18 Q. Okay.
19 A. -- no, it hasn't been offered.
20 Q. Oh, okay. Oh, wow, okay. All right, you're throwing me for
21 a loop. All right.
22 A. Me, too.
23 (Laughter.)
24 BY MS. KOSCHIG:
25 Q. I bet. All right, so let me think. Do you recall, then --

1 let me -- I'm going to start switching gears because now I just
2 want to go straight into talking about what -- you know, what got
3 you here, you know you what I mean --

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. -- what you recall and how -- yeah, what you recall of the
6 event, when you came in, the picture --

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. -- and how you fit into that, so give us a little bit of
9 that.

10 A. Well, I don't remember very much because it was happening
11 when I got there, but I took CIC from -- I don't even remember who
12 it was, and at the time we had Macon and Columbus, which at the
13 time I think Macon was just by itself, they were trying to split
14 off into Columbus with another training team and we had departures
15 north and south.

16 So when I got to the position I was briefed, you know, north
17 and south, I don't remember what the details were, just typical
18 operation, and he said that Macon and Columbus were training, or
19 Macon was training, Columbus was trying to split it off into a new
20 training team, so after I got the briefing, I went down there just
21 to see if I could provide any assistance or what the traffic was
22 like or whatever and as soon as I walked up, Kelsey was saying
23 hey, we got this pilot, he's in some difficulty with the weather
24 and I was like okay, so I think -- I can't remember, but it's
25 something I normally do, I usually go down at that point and start

1 listening and -- but I can't remember if I did that or not or if I
2 went straight to the OM because as soon as Kelsey said he was
3 having problems, he was issuing the pilot a heading or I believe
4 he was issuing a heading and then a few seconds later, he went
5 triple x and started coasting and he made a couple of
6 transmissions, there was no answer, so I went over to the OM right
7 then and said hey, I think we just lost one, here's the call sign,
8 let me go over and see what else I can do.

9 And so when I get back, the guy's coasting, so I notice there
10 were a couple planes close by and I was like well, have him go in
11 the area, see if he can pick it up with the ELT and they had a
12 couple low-level VFRs around and I was like see if you can get one
13 of them to go over and see if they can see anything on the ground.

14 And then from that, at that point, now the OM is over there
15 with us and he's saying whatever he had to say and pretty much, he
16 kind of took over, and I went back down to the departure area
17 because there wasn't much more -- because at that point we knew
18 the guy was down, or the plane was down and there was no more that
19 I could give. They were getting out of position, they had split
20 it off now, so I just kind of meandered back down to departure and
21 got out of the way.

22 Q. Who made the decision to get the controllers off position,
23 was it you or the OM or do you recall?

24 A. I think it was a combination, like they were already getting
25 -- they were splitting the position and then once that happened, I

1 was like -- I don't know who said it first, I know I was like they
2 probably should get up and -- but Coste was there and he was like
3 yeah, yeah, let's get them up, too, so it was just kind of we both
4 said it.

5 Q. Okay. Do you recall how long it was after you were -- how
6 long you had been in the room when this happened, because --

7 A. In the room, I'm not sure.

8 Q. No?

9 A. In the position, not long, I mean maybe a minute, because as
10 soon as I got the briefing, I looked at departure and I see
11 they're flying and I go straight down because there was like four
12 or five people sitting down there, so I want to go down and just
13 make sure like --

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. -- you know, what's going on, they're -- you're splitting the
16 position, how busy is the traffic, blah, blah, blah, blah. And as
17 soon as I walked down, then Kelsey's like hey, this plane -- and
18 then -- I mean, I wasn't down there a total of 5 minutes, maybe.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. It happened and it was over.

21 Q. Right. Yeah. And sorry if I --

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. -- ask dumb questions, but I just want to make sure I got you
24 covered. Did you happen to see, at all, anything on the radar
25 display with the pilot, I mean, did you see the aircraft on there

1 at all? Besides you said --

2 A. Before --

3 Q. -- you saw it in coast, yeah, before.

4 A. Yes, yes. When I first walked over, he still had a solid
5 tag --

6 Q. Uh-huh.

7 A. -- and they were still talking to him. Now, I don't -- I
8 don't recall listening to the pilot, I don't recall him saying
9 anything. I may have been listening, I don't remember.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. But I remember Kelsey saying something to the effect of fly
12 heading and then he was like sir, you're not going -- he was
13 trying to turn the plane away, but the plane started turning
14 towards and he was like you're going the wrong way, sir, blah,
15 blah, blah, and then that pretty much is when he stopped talking
16 or at least Kelsey made it seem like he's not talking to me, he's
17 not answering, because Kelsey really -- he's the one that made me
18 realize how serious it was, because just walking up, hey, this
19 guy's not listening, well, that happens all the time, you know.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. But then he was like hey, he's turning the wrong way, he's
22 not listening, blah, blah, blah, turn left heading, can you hear
23 me, blah, blah, and then I'm kind of -- I'm going ooh, okay. So
24 that's what -- I think then I might have went and started to try
25 to listen, but I think it was just too late, the pilot was not

1 responding.

2 Q. Right. And do you recall, when you say toward and from, was
3 it weather that was on there?

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. Do you recall what it looked like on the -- on the display at
6 that point?

7 A. I remember there being a blob south of Upson County, like --

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. -- south of Upson County, right around Butler, maybe in
10 between the two or overlapping, but the plane was south of the
11 weather. Of course, there was residual. Like the heavier stuff,
12 the three, four, five, is in the middle. He's kind of out in the
13 five and six stuff --

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. -- on the edge of it southwest bound when I first saw him,
16 but then, like I said, he started to turn towards it and that's
17 when he started coasting in.

18 Q. Oh, okay. And did you get off position after that?

19 A. No, ma'am.

20 Q. Do you know how long you stayed in that --

21 A. I don't.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right, I know I still have some
23 questions, but I'm going to let Sarah ask some. Thank you.

24 MR. BROOKS: No problem.

25 BY MS. LEWIS:

1 Q. We're kind of asking everybody this question because we want
2 to get a clarity of what do you believe the definition of buildups
3 are. If a pilot said hey, there's a buildup off to my right, what
4 does that mean to you?

5 A. For me, it's just there's precipitation, adverse weather in
6 the area and it's random, it's -- there's some blooming here,
7 there's some blooming here, all of it is stuff they don't want to
8 go near or in.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. So it's, for us, we hear it all the time here because of the
11 heat in summertime, it's just -- it's stuff they don't want to go
12 near and it's a lot of it when it's usually out, you know.

13 Q. Okay. Can you see buildups on your radar?

14 A. Not necessarily. It depends on the buildup, really. I mean,
15 is there precipitation? We'll see it if it's got water in it, the
16 mass is enough for the radar, it's going to return, but most of
17 the time, when they -- when you first hear about a buildup --

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. -- no, it's usually the first time and then the next pilot,
20 hey, we got a buildup, too; oh, we got -- okay, we -- and then you
21 kind of know.

22 Q. So you're basically relying on those pilots to tell you so
23 that you can make a plan?

24 A. For the small stuff, yes, like the stuff that we're not
25 depicting, we're showing skies clear --

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. -- that stuff we are, yeah.

3 Q. Okay. Do you remember any of the conversations or -- that
4 you might have had with the training team, the original training
5 team that was working the accident aircraft, do you remember any
6 kind of assistance or any discussions you might have had with them
7 as to working this aircraft?

8 A. At the time?

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. No, the only -- like I said, the only thing was -- because
11 like I said, when I walked up, it was pretty much he might have
12 made one or two transmissions and then the pilot's not talking to
13 us anymore. So I mean, as I walk up, it's kind of already
14 happened.

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. So after the fact, I was like -- well, I guess after the
17 fact, I mean, as soon as we saw him coast, I ran over and said I
18 think we just lost this guy, I'll be right back. I go over and
19 I'm saying hey, have this 7,000-footer or whatever altitude he was
20 at, see if he can reach out to the guy or see if he hears an
21 ELT --

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. -- and then there was a couple of VFR guys up and I was like
24 hey, see if they'll swing over there and see if they can see any
25 wreckage or anything. Other than that, at this point they split

1 the position off, there's somebody coming in to get them out --

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. -- and so it's kind of over. You know, they do those things
4 and they get a VFR to go over there and it's like yeah, I think --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. -- I see some stuff and it's over.

7 Q. Do you remember if the position had already been -- and you
8 might have said this and I apologize, if the second position, the
9 Columbus position, was already split?

10 A. It was not.

11 Q. It was not. Do you remember any of the details as to when
12 that occurred? Was there anything unusual with the amount of time
13 that that training team took to get back or anything?

14 A. I mean, it probably took a little longer than it should, just
15 because that was going on.

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. When I first got to position, I could see the other training
18 team was sitting at Columbus --

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. -- and -- but they were kind of -- they were sitting at
21 Columbus but they were looking at Macon like this and that just
22 tells me like --

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. -- they're waiting on Macon to give them a briefing and to
25 give them the airspace.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. And at the same time I'm walking up --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. -- and he's like we got a problem with this airplane, and so
5 they just kind of just sat there until they could say hey, okay,
6 this is what he's doing, this is what blah, blah, blah, blah,
7 blah.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. But the plane was basically transitioning from Macon to
10 Columbus. I think he was actually in Columbus' airspace.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. So it was kind of par for them to give up the frequencies --

13 Q. Right.

14 A. -- and the airspace with that plane right there.

15 Q. Do you think, in your opinion, of being here for a long time,
16 do you feel that maybe that timing of that relief briefing
17 caused --

18 A. It wasn't a factor.

19 Q. You don't think it was a factor, okay.

20 A. Okay. That was going to happen either way.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. It appears like it was going to happen either way.

23 MS. LEWIS: Right, okay. Okay, Mike. Thank you.

24 MR. RICHARDS: You took all the good weather questions.

25 BY MR. RICHARDS:

1 Q. You showed up pretty late in the series of events here. What
2 level of precipitation did you say the aircraft, the accident
3 aircraft, ended up -- ending up in?

4 A. That one I don't know. I mean, for this one I wasn't
5 watching the weather and I mean, it changes --

6 Q. Right.

7 A. -- in minutes, seconds, as it's -- as the radar scope's
8 resetting or recycling or whatever you want to call it, you know,
9 those bubbles or colors are changing.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. So I wasn't there but a minute or two, so if I had to -- I
12 would be guessing if I gave an answer.

13 Q. No, that's fair. See, we weren't able to see the STARS
14 replay, so we don't --

15 A. I would say like -- you know, I don't want to say because he
16 was turning into the heavy stuff.

17 Q. No, let me ask -- let me ask, let me ask it this way. Were
18 you concerned with the aircraft's position given --

19 A. No.

20 Q. -- the precipitation presentation?

21 A. No, not when I first walked up, but then most of my emotion
22 or thoughts was based off of Kelsey's reactions, because when I
23 looked at the airplane, the heavier stuff was north of him and
24 he's south of it --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. -- and it looked like a decent heading, maybe a little
2 further left, because you don't know what the edge of those
3 thunderstorms are doing.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. But when the plane started doing that, I mean, I was just
6 like hey -- but like I said, at that point, Kelsey was already
7 voicing hey, this guy's not listening, he's not turning, he's not
8 blah, blah, blah. So --

9 Q. So you had concern with the pilot not responding to the
10 controller --

11 A. Exactly.

12 Q. -- as opposed to the weather being the primary concern?

13 A. Where he was in relation to the heavier stuff, yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Okay, that makes sense.

15 A. And the fact that he's turning towards and we gave him a
16 heading away.

17 Q. He's doing the opposite of what you told him.

18 A. Exactly.

19 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. I'm going to pass it on. Rachel.

20 BY MS. BRANDT:

21 Q. Where does the CIC briefing take place?

22 A. Are you familiar with the TRACON?

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. Behind departure position, as a supervisor, tag and headset
25 right there and the relief button and all that stuff's right

1 there, so departure north and south are sitting here, it's right
2 behind them. And Macon and Columbus --

3 Q. So in that desk --

4 A. -- is down here.

5 Q. -- kind of inner circle?

6 A. It's right by the door, where one of those circles starts.

7 Q. Okay. And is that recorded?

8 A. Yes, I believe so.

9 Q. Okay. So you had your CIC briefing there and once you get
10 all that information, then you head to the scope, too.

11 A. Exactly.

12 MS. BRANDT: Okay. That's all I've got.

13 BY MR. MEYERS:

14 Q. I was going kind of down that same path. So it's all the way
15 at departure. What are you responsible for in that CIC position,
16 just departures, Macon and Columbus?

17 A. It depends on the combination because they split positions
18 off. Like me being a CIC, I'm rated everywhere so I can watch
19 them all. So sometimes there will be a CIC who doesn't work Macon
20 and Columbus, so they're only watching departure. But in that
21 case, I'm not a hundred percent sure, but I'm pretty sure I was
22 probably watching Macon and Columbus and departure.

23 Q. Okay. But the actual position where you got the briefing and
24 -- is down at departures, is that typically more of a watch
25 departures type of CIC position or is it more of a --

1 A. Well, again, it depends on who you got over there. I mean,
2 this is Atlanta, so everybody tends to favor the Atlanta stuff and
3 all the satellite stuff just kind of gets pushed aside, but I work
4 them all and I know how busy those sectors get and I know that
5 they get overlooked sometimes, so I pay attention. I watch them
6 more so than departure because departure is just radar contact.

7 Q. Yeah. But you hadn't been there long enough to really
8 establish a picture of what was going on yet?

9 A. Exactly.

10 Q. When you did get to see where that aircraft was in relation
11 to the weather, was there any kind of PTL or a plow line or
12 anything on there? Like you said, it looked like he was heading
13 towards the weather instead. Was there a quick reference on there
14 to see this guy's going the wrong way or --

15 A. I don't recall.

16 Q. -- you kind of were able to get it at a glance? I mean --

17 A. Yeah, I don't recall.

18 Q. -- it's what we do, but I was just curious as to the weather
19 that was --

20 A. Well, there is usually always history, most people always
21 have a history on them.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. But as far as PTLs, some people consider those crutches, some
24 people, you know how people are.

25 MR. MEYERS: Okay. Yeah. I just know sometimes people

1 hitting that weather will throw something like on --

2 MR. BROOKS: Um-hum.

3 MR. MEYERS: -- just to see if the guy's made a turn or not.
4 It just crossed my mind as you were talking. I think that's all I
5 got for right now.

6 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

7 Q. Okay. Do you recall if there were any other -- were there
8 any distractions in the -- that area?

9 A. I mean, maybe trying to get a briefing to split the position,
10 but they weren't pestering them, so -- because they knew what was
11 going on, they were just letting them work, so --

12 Q. Right.

13 A. -- I don't believe so.

14 Q. All right. So how often do you do position reliefs, I mean,
15 is there -- do you have like a standard, you know, they're on for
16 an hour, off for a certain amount of time, or is there any
17 standard of how you would switch out the training teams or
18 anything on and off position?

19 A. I mean, do you mean like in that situation, like --

20 Q. Yeah. Um-hum.

21 A. There's nothing different, there's no -- you sit down and get
22 the briefing when you can.

23 Q. Um-hum. And how long would they -- how long do they usually
24 stay on position?

25 A. Trainees?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. It depends on our manning. I mean, we're very short staffed,
3 so you can spend some time on position. It depends if we're
4 running trips, PRMs, it sets up a few more bodies. So I mean, an
5 hour.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. At least.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Busier days, more.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: All right, I just had that.

11 MR. BROOKS: We work a lot.

12 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

13 MS. LEWIS: Um-hum.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Sarah, do you have some?

15 BY MS. LEWIS:

16 Q. Kind of just to follow up on that, we were noticing and we're
17 trying to see if it's a habit of the facility to have multiple
18 relief briefings over a short amount of time. So in the 61-minute
19 snippet of audio that we got, we had, I think, five relief
20 briefings --

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. -- and we kind of got some information, which makes sense,
23 you know, there was a training team coming in, you know, and then
24 there was a second training team splitting.

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. And of course, after an accident, it is expected and it was
2 really great that they got off the -- you know, the position. And
3 then, of course, you know, maybe something else happens, that
4 person that got them had been on for a while somewhere else and so
5 they got them again. So I'm just wondering, so I just want to
6 clarify that that would be an unusual situation versus that
7 happens a lot where there's just multiple briefings where that
8 person didn't necessarily have a lot of time on that position and
9 then they're being bumped over here or something like that.

10 A. I'm the wrong person to ask for this, I work every day, so
11 I'm always getting bumped, every day, two, three times per round,
12 I'm getting --

13 Q. Um-hum.

14 A. -- bumped because, you know, most everybody in there only
15 works two-thirds of the position.

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 A. So when you come in and this person and this person are the
18 first two to go, but you can't get them --

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. -- well, you're supposed to go to the bottom of the list to
21 get somebody who can get them, well, that's usually me or somebody
22 -- you know, so --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- it happens more often than it should, I think.

25 Q. Um-hum, um-hum.

1 A. But that's my opinion because I work everywhere and I'm
2 always --

3 Q. Right.

4 A. -- getting bumped.

5 Q. So are you familiar with maybe that's just because of your
6 special situation of being able to work everything or do you see
7 that happening elsewhere?

8 A. You still see it because you still have your A and B liners
9 or A and C liners.

10 Q. Um-hum.

11 A. And then you also have -- they do things like where a lot of
12 A liners are checked out on departure, which is a C line. So now
13 you kind of -- they're offset now, there aren't many C liners that
14 work Athens or satellite, to balance that offset. So it still
15 happens to the other people.

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. Maybe not as much, but like I said, it happens all the time
18 for me, so that's all I know.

19 Q. Right. Do you have any opinion on whether that's a good
20 thing, a bad thing or --

21 A. I think it's a bad thing giving too many briefs or you're
22 getting bumped around too much --

23 Q. Uh-huh.

24 A. -- because you're not getting continuity, like I do that all
25 the time.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. I will sit down and somebody will call and I'm like, I don't
3 know where I'm working because this is my third position, fourth
4 position. It only takes a second or two, you can figure it out.

5 Q. Yeah, of course.

6 A. But I think it's a good thing that everybody works everything
7 because you work everything. Like --

8 Q. Right.

9 A. -- there's no hidden secrets or whatever, everybody -- if
10 everybody worked everything, we'd be better off, I think.

11 MS. LEWIS: Yeah. Thank you.

12 MR. RICHARDS: No, I don't have any more questions.

13 BY MS. BRANDT:

14 Q. Who runs the rotation? Is it a break board, a supervisor?

15 A. It's a break board.

16 Q. Break board.

17 A. I mean, supervisors are different, I mean, every now and then
18 your OM might want to run it a little bit, but for the most part,
19 controllers come in, check the board and go. If we're going in
20 and out of trips and things like that and they need certain
21 bodies, then the OM, so like "you, you and you go over there,"
22 blah, blah, blah.

23 MS. BRANDT: I don't have anything else.

24 BY MR. MEYERS:

25 Q. A similar question. As that CIC, obviously, you weren't

1 there long enough, but as a typical how things work, those
2 training team setups, as a CIC, are you involved in that? Is that
3 it's always going to be the OS or the OM?

4 A. Yeah, the schedules are made and the trainers are training.

5 Q. So they schedule out training for the --

6 A. They try to.

7 Q. Yeah, yeah. Typically?

8 A. Try to. But usually, like a CIC wouldn't have -- like he
9 would go, the trainer would go to the OM, like, who am I training
10 with today, they would figure it out. Yeah, you're just part
11 time, you know.

12 Q. Yeah, keeping an eye on things.

13 A. Exactly.

14 Q. Which, as you should work.

15 A. Absolutely.

16 (Laughter.)

17 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

18 MR. MEYERS: That's not how it works everywhere.

19 MS. LEWIS: Uh-uh.

20 MR. MEYERS: That's all I got.

21 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

22 Q. I was going to ask you that, but one thing, did you want to
23 watch that replay?

24 A. Not particularly.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I didn't want to watch it before this, I felt like it
2 would've --

3 Q. Tainted your thoughts, yeah.

4 A. Yeah, exactly. My memory.

5 Q. I'm glad you didn't because it really helps that we get what
6 you remembered at the time. Oh, I remember what I wanted to ask
7 you. Did you have to fill out anything, after this happened, were
8 you involved in any phone calls, paperwork, anything like that?

9 A. No, ma'am. I think I filled out that initial checklist --

10 Q. Right.

11 A. -- that they have, but other than that, no, ma'am.

12 Q. Okay. And then they just let you know yesterday.

13 A. I mean, I was completely out of it, like I --

14 (Laughter.)

15 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

16 MR. BROOKS: Like, when they said something yesterday, I was
17 like for what? They said the call signs, I was like when? I
18 mean, it's --

19 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

21 MR. BROOKS: Even that day, like I said, I didn't -- from the
22 time I got to position and it all happened, it was like 5 or 6
23 minutes. It happened and it was over.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

25 MS. LEWIS: Um-hum.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Okay. I don't have anything else.

2 MS. LEWIS: No, thank you.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Last round.

4 MS. BRANDT: I'm good.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, so if we -- is there anything that we
6 didn't ask you, you thought you were going to ask?

7 MR. BROOKS: I didn't know what was going to happen.

8 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

9 MR. BROOKS: This is my first one, so --

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Yeah.

11 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

12 MS. KOSCHIG: I hope it wasn't as bad as you thought it was
13 going to be.

14 MR. BROOKS: No. I'm glad I wasn't the controller.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

16 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

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

18 MR. BROOKS: Not really.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Then I'm going to end the interview at 11:42
20 Eastern time.

21 (Whereupon, at 11:42 a.m., the interview concluded.)
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

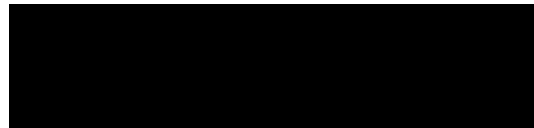
IN THE MATTER OF: CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT
 NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA
 ON AUGUST 10, 2023
 Interview of Brian L. Brooks

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA23FA330

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: October 12, 2023

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



David A. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT *

NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: ERA23FA330

ON AUGUST 10, 2023 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: JAMES VAN EMAN, Operations Supervisor
Federal Aviation Administration

Atlanta, Georgia

Wednesday,
October 12, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SARAH LEWIS, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board

RACHEL BRANDT, Air Traffic Control Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

DANIEL MEYERS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

MARK TOMICICH, Esq.
Federal Aviation Administration
Representing Mr. Van Eman

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I N T E R V I E W

(12:51 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: The time now is 12:51 Eastern time. Okay, so as part of our process, I will be recording this interview and I will have a transcription made.

MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

MS. KOSCHIG: And that transcription will become part of the factual report, the audio will not and that audio will -- there's only one audio made and I will be the holder of that, we send that off and the people that we send it off to are transcriptionists, they destroy it, we have an agreement with them, so no fear of that audio getting out, and we will be destroying the audio and we still have a timeline of when we need to do that, but I'm safekeeping that audio just until that's done.

MR. VAN EMAN: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So will you please state your name?

MR. VAN EMAN: James Van Eman.

MS. KOSCHIG: Can you please spell your last name?

MR. VAN EMAN: Yes, do you want it phonetically?

MS. KOSCHIG: Yes, please.

MR. VAN EMAN: Victor Alpha November Echo Mike Alpha November.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. So now we'll get into introductions. Glad to have you.

MR. VAN EMAN: Glad to be here.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: My name is Betty Koschig, and I am with the
2 NTSB, I'm an air traffic control investigator, and here with me
3 today is a co-chair and I will let Sarah introduce herself.

4 MS. LEWIS: Hi, I'm Sarah Lewis, I was -- I am an ATC
5 investigator.

6 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

7 MS. LEWIS: I was previously a 23-year air traffic
8 controller, starting out with New York TRACON and I then hardship
9 transferred out to Oklahoma City.

10 MR. VAN EMAN: Okay.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: And today we also have a meteorologist from the
12 NTSB with us and we'll let him introduce himself.

13 MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB meteorology.

14 MR. VAN EMAN: Good.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: And as part of the process, we have the parties
16 participating in the investigation and today we have NATCA and we
17 have FAA, which are both subject matter experts that we use and
18 rely on heavily for the -- you know, for especially information
19 about the TRACONs and stuff.

20 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

21 MS. KOSCHIG: So I'll let them introduce themselves.

22 MR. MEYERS: Dan Meyers, I work out of Philadelphia TRACON
23 now, Detroit TRACON prior to that.

24 MS. BRANDT: Rachel Brandt, I'm the air traffic manager at
25 Birmingham.

1 MR. VAN EMAN: Nice to meet you all.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: So in this setting, we are the ATS -- we are
3 the NTSB team, so -- and as part of our investigation, you are
4 welcome to have your representative and I do see you have a
5 representative.

6 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: Is this the person you'd like to be here with
8 you?

9 MR. VAN EMAN: Yes, Mr. Mark, I'm glad to have him here.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Great. And will you please state your name?

11 MR. TOMICICH: Sure. Mark Tomicich, spelled T like
12 Tango-o-m-i-c-i-c-h.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Great. Okay, and we are here conducting an
14 interview that involved the accident of November 2-1-0 Juliet
15 Tango on August the 10th, 2023. The purpose of this investigation
16 is to determine the probable cause of the accident and it's not to
17 blame, it's not to put blame or fault or liability on anyone,
18 we're here to find the facts and so we're basically in the fact-
19 finding phase of this investigation. We're not the only ones that
20 are looking at facts, there's several other NTSB investigators out
21 there looking at different aspects of this, so this is just one
22 part of it. And I do understand that it's been a couple of months
23 almost --

24 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: -- since this one occurred, but we did have

1 some questions that we needed to fill in some blanks with and so
2 far we've gotten a lot of, you know, good blanks filled in, but --

3 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: -- I think you have a couple more that will be
5 able to help us.

6 MR. VAN EMAN: Okay.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: So during this time, any time you need a break,
8 you are more than welcome to just say I need a break and go, but I
9 don't think you need -- you know, we're not going to be here more
10 than an hour. And if you want to talk to your rep, you're more
11 than welcome to talk to your rep or go out, you know, go out and
12 talk to the rep, just let me know.

13 MR. VAN EMAN: Okay.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Now, as far as questions, what we're going to
15 do is ask a bunch of questions --

16 MR. VAN EMAN: Uh-huh.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: -- so if you don't recall something, "I don't
18 recall" is a great answer.

19 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: If you don't know something, "I don't know" is
21 a great answer. You know, we may ask you some opinion questions
22 and -- but you know, like we're just looking for the facts. If
23 you have some information that you can provide us that will help
24 us, that's great, we're trying to find out, you know, what's going
25 on and how things operate here.

1 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: All right, so I'm going to start out asking a
3 bunch of questions, which I've already been talking to you.

4 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: And then we're going to go around the co-chair
6 and around the room and we'll go around as long as we have
7 questions, until we're just out of questions or you're ready to
8 leave. No, I'm kidding.

9 (Laughter.)

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Until we're out of questions. And you are more
11 than welcome to ask us questions and if we don't ask a question
12 that makes sense, ask "What do you mean?"

13 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: You know, make sure that we're asking it
15 clearly for you.

16 MR. VAN EMAN: All right.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. So that is the basic structure of how
18 we're going to run the interview. Oh, one last thing. We are
19 going to -- some of us will be taking notes, I like to type a few
20 notes just so if you say something, I could look back, you know,
21 during the interview and say oh, okay, I don't want to ask you
22 this question again because you've already answered it.

23 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: But those notes we will destroy. Those are
25 just for use for today and we're going to destroy those, those go

1 nowhere.

2 MR. VAN EMAN: Okay.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Just to let you know. All right. So let's get
4 started.

5 INTERVIEW OF JAMES VAN EMAN

6 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

7 Q. How old are you?

8 A. Forty-five.

9 Q. Okay, and your operating initials?

10 A. Juliet Victor.

11 Q. And what is your position here?

12 A. Operations supervisor.

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

14 A. October 2007.

15 Q. Was that the academy?

16 A. No, that was the first facility. Academy was August 2007, so
17 technically, probably August is the date, the FAA date.

18 Q. And where did you go?

19 A. DeKalb-Peachtree Tower.

20 Q. Oh. And where did you go after that?

21 A. Palm Beach Tower TRACON.

22 Q. How long were you there? When did you get there?

23 A. Okay, so I arrived at Palm Beach 2011.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. And I was there approximately 5 years. I think, from my

1 memory, early 2015 is when I transferred from there to this
2 facility.

3 Q. You transferred here. Have you been here the whole time?

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. All right. Did you have any military?

6 A. Yes. I was Coast Guard from '97 until FAA.

7 Q. And what was your job in the Coast Guard?

8 A. I was an avionics technician and a helicopter air crew.

9 Q. That's cool. Do you have any other ATC experience?

10 A. No, ma'am.

11 Q. Okay. Sometimes we might ask you questions that you're like
12 well, you should probably know that, but we have to ask them,
13 anyway.

14 A. Understood.

15 Q. All right. Do you -- oh, when you got here, where did you
16 certify or tell us what -- you came here as a CPC?

17 A. Yes, ma'am, I was a CPC in training, so I was in the training
18 program and eventually became fully certified and worked as an
19 ATCS for a few years until I got promoted to ops supervisor, which
20 was approximately March of 2022.

21 Q. How do you like that?

22 A. I like it. All things considered, it's -- it's been good.
23 Yeah.

24 Q. Oh, great. So have you gone on any details since you've been
25 here?

1 A. Not official details, I've been to some training, I've been
2 to a workshop in Oklahoma City, operation supervisor workshop.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I've been to other local facilities for various training, but
5 nothing for an extended term.

6 Q. Oh, okay. Do you have any collateral duties here, outside of
7 your major job?

8 A. One that I have is training, I'm the team lead on -- training
9 teams, you know, various training teams.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Aside from that, no official extra duties I can think of
12 right now, off hand.

13 Q. Okay. We'll probably ask you some more questions later on
14 the training.

15 A. Yeah, I mean, I will say they have me as cadre for other
16 certain classes that I can -- I act as a facilitator for. You
17 know, I guess that would be considered an extra duty or a
18 collateral duty or whatever you wanted to call it.

19 Q. Um-hum. Okay, great. So do you have any other aeronautical
20 ratings, like a pilot's license, anything like that?

21 A. I do, I have a private pilot rating for rotorcraft.

22 Q. Are you current?

23 A. No, ma'am.

24 Q. Okay. Do you have a current medical?

25 A. I do.

1 Q. Are you required to have one?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And do you have any restrictions?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Have you reviewed a replay of this accident?

6 A. Not entirely. I did review some of it on my own accord, but

7 only a very small portion of it. You know, I did that on my own

8 interest, you know, but it wasn't officially sent to me or made

9 available for my own review by anyone other than, you know, self-

10 initiated.

11 Q. Oh, okay. And when was that, do you recall?

12 A. The day of the incident.

13 Q. Okay. And let's see. We'll probably talk a little bit more

14 about this, but how long had you been on position as the OS?

15 A. Okay. During the time of the incident I was not the OS in

16 charge of that sector --

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. -- but prior to that, I was and the length of time I do not

19 recall.

20 Q. We'll probably ask a little bit more about that later.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. So do you recall the traffic, the volume of traffic at that

23 point?

24 A. I do.

25 Q. Was it like from -- rate it one to five, what would you say?

1 A. Are we talking one to five in the terms of the volume --
2 Q. Yeah, five being --
3 A. -- or complexity?
4 Q. As far as volume, we'll start out with volume --
5 A. Okay.
6 Q. -- and five being the heaviest.
7 A. Three.
8 Q. Okay. And what about complexity?
9 A. Also three.
10 Q. Okay. And so this happened during the daytime. Do you
11 recall what the weather was?
12 A. I do.
13 Q. Could you -- yeah.
14 A. We had precipitation throughout the airspace at varying
15 levels of intensity.
16 Q. Um-hum.
17 A. We had low ceilings and we were utilizing instrument
18 approaches at most locations.
19 Q. Okay. And we'll probably hit a little bit more on that
20 later.
21 A. Um-hum.
22 Q. I know our meteorologist will ask some questions. And we'll
23 ask you about advisories, weather advisories and all of that --
24 A. Um-hum.
25 Q. -- a little later, as well. Did you receive the pre-duty

1 weather briefing before you got on position?

2 A. Yes, ma'am.

3 Q. Did anything stick out to you?

4 A. I just recall what I said to you, that we were expecting rain
5 and low ceilings.

6 Q. And so what's your opinion on the pre-duty weather briefings,
7 are they a value, do you gather enough information, something that
8 could work differently with it that could make it more valuable?

9 A. I think it's a valuable thing to review the TAF and an
10 expected weather forecast before your shift.

11 Q. Did you have your cell phone in the area at the time?

12 A. No, ma'am.

13 Q. After the accident occurred were you relieved of your --
14 relieved from the position?

15 A. Well, the position that I was assigned to is not -- was not
16 in the vicinity of the accident.

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. So the position that I was assigned to, no, I was not
19 relieved of that one.

20 Q. Okay. All right. So now we want to get really into that,
21 that's all of those kinds of questions.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. Now we want to get into the good stuff so we can learn. Tell
24 us, starting -- whatever starting point you want, prior to the
25 accident, the events that led up to it and afterward, some of your

1 actions, what was going on in the room, whatever you can recall on
2 that would be good, would be great.

3 A. Okay. All right. That was in the morning and I remember
4 that, as I said, there was varying levels of precipitation
5 depicted moving through the airspace. You know, at that time I
6 was the OS in charge of the approach wall as well as the departure
7 and Macon and Columbus areas --

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. -- and volume was steadily increasing and it appeared that
10 flight progress strips were starting to print out and it was going
11 to be busier soon, so I decided it would be best to de-combine the
12 in charge for the departure in Macon and Columbus area, those
13 usually go together as one.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. So I coordinated with the OM and we brought a CIC back.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And then I do recall that the Macon and Columbus sector was
18 combined on about the time we made the decision to bring in the
19 CIC. As part of my briefing, I believe I stated that it's -- this
20 position is recommended to be split and in fact, you know, I
21 remember actually coordinating with Dave Coste as to recalling
22 somebody to do the split and it was a training team, they wanted
23 to see it for the value of training and, coincidentally, it was
24 time for it to be split and they were coming back off of break
25 soon, so we decided that a particular person was going to

1 de-combine. And I believe Dave made a page to recall them back to
2 the operation, or it might've been myself, one of us made a
3 page --

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. -- but I don't recall who did.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So you know, eventually they made it back to the room and
8 they -- you know, they split up the sector. But at this time I
9 was no longer in that area because I moved over towards the -- the
10 other wall that I was supervising.

11 Q. All right.

12 A. But yeah, other than that, I mean, it was -- you know, it was
13 a day that we've seen many times, I mean, weather comes through
14 and it's -- and things that we're familiar with and we're -- you
15 know, we -- we weren't expecting anything out of the ordinary
16 other than your typical weather day and all the procedures that go
17 along with it.

18 Q. Okay. So you're off the position. Did you have anything to
19 do with -- anything to do with the aircraft or that situation
20 after that?

21 A. Anything to do with the aircraft or that situation.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. I can't say that I was.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. So the answer would be no.

1 Q. Okay. Do you recall who was doing the ALNOT information and
2 stuff like that?

3 A. Dave Coste was at the desk and I believe he called the center
4 and initiated the ALNOT.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, great. I have been occupying your time,
6 so I am going to let Sarah ask some questions, thank you.

7 MR. VAN EMAN: Very good, thank you.

8 BY MS. LEWIS:

9 Q. Do you usually have any issues with controllers coming back
10 in a normal -- what a normal or a reasonable amount of time would
11 be?

12 A. Not usually, but it's -- it's expected that they may not be
13 available or within earshot of a page, so --

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. -- you know, if you page someone, it's only likely that they
16 received it, but it's not guaranteed.

17 Q. Do you remember anything out of the ordinary about that type
18 of situation happening during this accident sequence that time?

19 A. Nothing was out of the ordinary that I can recall.

20 MS. LEWIS: Okay. I think that's it for right now, thanks.

21 MR. VAN EMAN: Okay.

22 MR. RICHARDS: I don't have any questions right now.

23 BY MS. BRANDT:

24 Q. Yeah, I want just to clarify. So you were working, you were
25 providing oversight to another wall, so what does that look like?

1 A. Okay, so you know, when you're providing oversight, usually
2 you're -- you know, it's a handful of things, but you know, for
3 the example of the approach wall, I am in communication with the
4 TMC, we are monitoring each position and, you know, staying
5 engaged. I usually pace back and forth and listen to controllers
6 talking to pilots and just try to stay aware of any kind of
7 situation that may be developing or any kind of needs that they
8 may have.

9 Usually looking ahead at volume and preplanning when it's
10 time to split sectors or initiate traffic management initiatives;
11 keeping the OM apprised of staffing need; keeping up to speed on
12 weather trends, anything that's changed with that; usually
13 ensuring that everybody is getting their PIREPs as required and
14 relaying those PIREPs, and actually delivering the sheet down to
15 that flight data person so they could put them in the AISR.

16 Q. And sorry, where is that, the approach wall, where is that in
17 -- this would be toward the room --

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. -- in reference to where Macon/Columbus --

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. -- or the satellite wall is. Or the other.

22 A. So if you were referencing Macon/Columbus and you were to
23 walk clockwise from there around the circular room, it would be
24 about, you know, one-third to a half of the distance around as a
25 hundred-and-eighty-degree clock. I'm trying to describe it in

1 words.

2 Q. Um-hum, um-hum.

3 A. But you know -- you know, it's probably 60 feet in distance.
4 That's a rough guess.

5 Q. So you were quite a bit away and busy with that sector, so
6 you probably didn't hear a lot of what was going on once you put a
7 CIC in charge.

8 A. That's correct. And you know, when I de-combine the
9 departure and Macon/Columbus sector, I believe I still have the
10 approach wall. I'm saying that from my memory. It's a chance
11 that I would've also had the -- that I would've been on the
12 satellite wall at that particular moment, but I'm saying that I
13 believe I had the approach wall that day.

14 But 2 months ago, it may very well have been a different
15 sector that I was looking at, but I'm going to say with most
16 certainty it was the approach wall that I was on during that
17 incident.

18 MS. BRANDT: Okay. I don't have anything else.

19 BY MR. MEYERS:

20 Q. Obviously understanding that certainty is not great because
21 it's so long, if you -- I was kind of going to clarify the same
22 situation. You say you had the approach wall and Macon/Columbus
23 and --

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. -- departures together.

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. When you do that, where are you typically doing that from,
3 the approach side?

4 A. You spend a lot more time on the approach side because
5 there's usually more activity, but you have to make it part of
6 your scan and part of your, you know, oversight to pace back and
7 forth and be available and just keep apprised of, you know, any of
8 the happenings. So yeah, I mean, it varies. You know, if there's
9 more attention needed in one side or the other, you'll shift
10 gears.

11 Q. So you're saying it's a much more general overview than the
12 more concentrated overview when you're just on that approach wall
13 or just on the satellite departure area?

14 A. Yes, I'd say when departure and approach are combined up, you
15 know, when we say, you know, like the departure wall, if you say
16 that, it usually includes Macon and Columbus.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. You know, our TRACON, we usually have three walls. I know we
19 think of a wall as a flat surface, but this is a round room.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. So anyway, so you know, the times when you are combined up
22 with approach and departure, which includes Macon and Columbus,
23 it's definitely not the focused oversight because it's a broad
24 area. So it's a lot of pacing back and forth and kind of keeping
25 within earshot of, you know, wherever you think the attention

1 deserves, warrants the most attention.

2 Q. So on that same subject, are there times where you would also
3 be in charge of the sat wall at that point?

4 A. It's very rare, but very early in the morning or very late at
5 night, yeah, there's times when you have the entire room.

6 Q. Okay. In other words, it can be split up in any direction,
7 like you could have kept the approach wall and gave whoever was in
8 charge of the sat wall the departure wall as well, if it became
9 necessary, that's how you guys can split it up, if necessary?

10 A. Yes, there is a split that we do sometimes when there's two
11 supervisors in the room, that the one will be on the approach wall
12 combined with departure, and one will be on the satellite wall
13 combined with Macon and Columbus.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So in that case, what I said is the departure wall, that gets
16 split up --

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. -- just to kind of break up the workload.

19 Q. Yeah. All right.

20 A. But on this particular day there was a CI in charge of
21 departure, Macon and Columbus, I was a supe on the approach wall
22 and on satellite wall, I don't recall who it was, but you know,
23 whether it was a supe or a CI, I don't recall.

24 Q. Okay. Yeah, I just wanted to get a feel for how that --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- could be split up and how that works.

2 A. On a busy day, everything is normally split up, so you'll
3 have three, you know, three, supervisors and/or a CIC.

4 Q. In each area?

5 A. Yeah.

6 MR. MEYERS: All right, sounds good. I think that's all I've
7 got for right now.

8 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

9 Q. Okay, when you were over when you -- before you signed on as
10 -- again, off the position and gave it to the CIC. Do you recall
11 the 2-1-0 Juliet Tango checking in?

12 A. I do not recall.

13 Q. Okay. We talked a little bit about the weather. Do you
14 recall what you saw on the display that night?

15 A. I remember seeing bands of precip, some areas showed no
16 precip, some areas showed a moderate degree --

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. -- and I do remember an easterly direction, I think it was
19 the weather was moving from west to east.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. You know, and as far as weather, that's mostly what I recall.
22 You know, I would assume that controllers were using their weather
23 tools to, you know, work their air traffic around or through or
24 whatever they needed to do to keep the aviators safe.

25 Q. Okay. So where do you usually stand when you're in that

1 area?

2 A. Behind, you know, behind the controllers working the
3 positions. There is an audio panel that we sometimes stand near
4 to, you know, make calls, landline calls to other facilities and
5 that's located behind departure north and south. But that doesn't
6 mean that you're affixed to that, to that spot. It's just one
7 that you're oftentimes at.

8 Q. Do you recall if you were plugged in and listening to a
9 certain frequency or --

10 A. I was not listening to any particular frequency.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. At that time.

13 Q. Oh, okay. And how did you learn about the accident?

14 A. Well, I saw -- I saw some activity across the room and -- and
15 I overheard Mr. Coste talking about calling for an ALNOT, so I
16 assumed there must've been an accident.

17 Q. Okay. You said you were -- you were -- you had some --
18 you're a part of the training team?

19 A. Yes, ma'am.

20 Q. Talk a little bit about your teams, how many people do you
21 have and --

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. -- and were the controllers involved in this accident part of
24 your training team?

25 A. The controllers involved with this accident were not on my

1 team.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. I know they were in training with another supervisor, I'm not
4 sure who that is.

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. But I have trainees assigned to me and instructors.
7 Currently, I have -- well, I had two teams. I technically do
8 still have two teams, although one recently became certified, so
9 he's in the back for the next phase of training, but basically,
10 you know, it's -- when you have a trainee you have two or three
11 instructors.

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. And then in the case of one of my trainees, I have three
14 instructors assigned to him and then another trainee I have two
15 instructors assigned to him as part of the team, you know, and
16 they -- yeah, they train, you know, as much as we can to meet the
17 national training initiative, and we hold meetings and we do
18 performance assessments and things that we need to do according
19 to, you know, everything you find in the .4.

20 Q. Um-hum. All right. Do you recall anything unusual at the
21 time of the accident going on in the room? Any distractions?

22 A. Well, I do not recall any distractions.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: Do you recall -- well, never mind, you didn't
24 see the airplane, so I'll pass it back to Sarah.

25 BY MS. LEWIS:

1 Q. Do you have any like -- there are certain weather equipment
2 that you have spread out around the room.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Is there anything that you wish you either had more of or
5 perhaps relocated that would possibly help you or the controllers
6 be able to see weather better?

7 A. The tools that we have, I think, are placed in a usable
8 fashion. There's one piece of equipment that is always available,
9 I think it's called the -- I actually can't remember the acronym.
10 Is it the ITWS?

11 MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

12 MS. LEWIS: Um-hum.

13 MR. VAN EMAN: It's a piece of equipment that we use that has
14 a lot of information such as wind shear, microbursts, and it shows
15 the weather moving through, but I will say that I have never had
16 formal training on that piece of equipment. I don't believe
17 anyone has.

18 MS. LEWIS: Okay.

19 MR. VAN EMAN: And I think that would be useful.

20 BY MS. LEWIS:

21 Q. Okay, that's great. Are you familiar with the -- I think
22 it's called the traffic situation display.

23 A. The TSD?

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. Yeah, I'm familiar with it, it's usually on display at a

1 couple different locations and it's useful for, you know, traffic
2 and weather. It's another piece of equipment I never had training
3 on. I kind of clicked around and figured it out a little bit over
4 the years. But I think it's -- you know, it's within eyeshot for
5 anyone in the room to look up and see and it's useful to predict
6 weather and/or volume of traffic.

7 MS. LEWIS: Great, thank you.

8 BY MR. RICHARDS:

9 Q. So I want to step back just real quick. When you talk about
10 weather tools, what are all the different tools here that
11 controllers can use to help keep aircraft safe? I want to talk, I
12 want to ask you about ITWS, but before that --

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. -- what are all the -- what's all the stuff you got? That
15 you guys use. Text or pictures, whatever.

16 A. Yeah, I mean, you know, STARS presents weather for us, I
17 mean, that's the first --

18 Q. Right.

19 A. -- and the one that's looked at the most. We do have the
20 ITWS display. Usually every position has it within eyeshot.
21 TSDs, you see weather on those. IDS has weather information.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And of course, you can access TAFs and they have a couple
24 other forecasts they put up, the Georgia discussion and the
25 Atlanta zone.

- 1 Q. Um-hum.
- 2 A. Those are there. Of course, the pre-duty weather brief is
3 something you look at once before your shift.
- 4 Q. Right.
- 5 A. I'm trying to think of any others.
- 6 Q. So all the text information is -- that's outside every
7 position in the screen that's above the STARS display, above the
8 scope.
- 9 A. Yeah, the IDS, the information display system.
- 10 Q. Yeah.
- 11 A. And then, of course, as information comes across the flight
12 data position, like center weather advisories or convective
13 SIGMETs, AIRMETs, any of those, they get delivered to the OM and
14 then the OM basically types them out and has them sent to show up
15 and display on everybody's screen --
- 16 Q. Yeah.
- 17 A. -- so they can communicate to the pilots.
- 18 Q. So it's interesting you say about the ITWS, you've never
19 received formal training, is that correct?
- 20 A. Yeah. Yeah, I don't recall ever being trained on how to use
21 that equipment.
- 22 Q. So was that equipment here when you came to this facility?
23 Was it already here?
- 24 A. It was.
- 25 Q. If you guys haven't been -- how is ITWS utilized here?

1 A. It's usually displayed with the weather history --

2 Q. Uh-huh.

3 A. -- and predicted track of, you know, forecasted weather --

4 Q. Right.

5 A. -- and it's on a constant loop. And we do see the
6 microbursts, like I said, they'll show up, so you know, it's
7 useful for that. Now, when I say I haven't been trained on it, it
8 doesn't mean I can't interpret what I'm looking at, it's just that
9 I don't know the interface well, if I needed to make adjustments
10 to the way it's displayed.

11 Q. Is there any guidance available or has there been any
12 guidance issued on when and when not -- any guidance issued on the
13 use of ITWS at all?

14 A. If there was any guidance, I don't recall seeing it.

15 Q. Okay. I think you're the first person who has ever said that
16 they've never received guidance on ITWS, so it's interesting. I
17 don't --

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. I don't know if that's unique to this facility or unique to
20 you or unique to -- but that's interesting.

21 A. Did others -- I was curious if others said that yes, they did
22 receive guidance.

23 Q. I don't think it's ever --

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. I don't think, honestly, frankly, I don't think it's ever

1 come up.

2 A. Yeah, I mean, I don't know. The question wasn't asked to me,
3 I know I volunteered --

4 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

5 MR. VAN EMAN: -- that on my own, but if you were asked the
6 question, I would think you would get -- I don't know, maybe you'd
7 get different answers.

8 MR. RICHARDS: Most of the discussions I've had about ITWS
9 have been in the en route environment, speaking with the TMU --

10 MS. LEWIS: Yeah.

11 MR. RICHARDS: -- which has its own fit, very different than
12 what you're doing here, so --

13 MS. LEWIS: Yeah. We've had a history of another weather
14 issue at a big TRACON --

15 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

16 MS. LEWIS: -- and they also did not have any training on it.
17 So I don't necessarily know if it's -- that's not necessarily
18 uncommon.

19 BY MR. RICHARDS:

20 Q. Yeah, so let me ask you this, have you seen a situation where
21 a controller is -- I mean, they have STARS in front of them, but
22 they're also utilizing ITWS tactically. Tactically's not the
23 right word, but they're using it in real time, you know, to, I
24 guess, obtain situational awareness or help out a pilot. Has
25 there been any sort of situations --

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. -- where ITWS has been an active --

3 A. Yeah, I think it's used by many in forecasting because, you

4 know, the ITWS shows what's expected in the future and it helps us

5 plan for --

6 Q. As far as like fronts and --

7 A. Well, movement of areas of precip. Yeah, fronts, as well, if

8 that's -- if it's a frontal system, but --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- you know, we have to try to move our arrivals and move our

11 departures away from weather, so if we see that it's moving over a

12 particular transition area --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- we'll try to get ahead of it and make the change before

15 the weather arrives.

16 Q. That's for more of a strategic type of intention, I guess.

17 A. Yeah, I think that's what it's mostly used for, I mean --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- from what I can tell, because no one's ever clicking

20 around on it and adjusting anything and dabbling further into it.

21 It's more just a loop that's constantly on and --

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. -- you can look at it and --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- I don't ever see anyone making adjustments to it or doing

1 anything, clicking on it. That loop just constantly plays and --

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. -- honestly, you know, it's helpful for the microbursts.

4 Q. Do you see the band aids pop up red?

5 A. Yes, we see those and they interpret -- you know, like I
6 said, I have come to learn what they mean, but I don't -- I've
7 never been trained on it, that I can recall. I mean, you know,
8 when we see a wind shear alert, just through talking to coworkers
9 and --

10 Q. Um-hum.

11 A. -- people eventually -- you share information and somebody
12 maybe trained with it and I'm sure there were others and just kind
13 of pick up on it.

14 Q. So let me just ask you the obvious question, do you think
15 that the other folks who work on the floor here would benefit from
16 some type of formalized training on ITWS?

17 A. Yes, I do.

18 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Do you have any questions?

19 MS. BRANDT: I do.

20 MR. MEYERS: Can I piggyback on that right away, just
21 because --

22 MS. BRANDT: Yeah, I have the same questions as you.

23 MR. MEYERS: Very well, then.

24 BY MR. MEYERS:

25 Q. I didn't notice when we were in there, do you have the same

1 weather forecast going on the TSD? Does it project out the same
2 way the ITWS is or is that -- they're only going up to current
3 time?

4 A. TSD is current time --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- from what I've seen. If it has the ability to go forward,
7 I never see it that way.

8 Q. I think it does, but --

9 BY MR. RICHARDS:

10 Q. And I'm sorry, let me just, real quick -- you said the ITWS
11 is available from every position. I forget what you said, but
12 when we were on the floor, when we were at the Macon and Columbus
13 seats, they had to walk us around quite a ways to get to the
14 nearest ITWS display --

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. -- because we asked about that, so I just wanted to come back
17 and --

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. -- clarify with you, is there --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Is there an ITWS display that is --

22 A. Not every position, but every area.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So some may have to get up from the chair and walk a little
25 ways or --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- look from a distance.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. You really shouldn't be moving away from the position that

5 you're working.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. But the supervisor or others that are not assigned to a

8 position can use it and there are some positions, though, that you

9 can reach with your hand and push a button and it lights up the

10 ITWS display without having to get up from your control position.

11 Q. Oh, I didn't see that.

12 A. But that's not consistent around the room.

13 MR. RICHARDS: Okay, thank you.

14 BY MS. BRANDT:

15 Q. All right, just a follow-up on that stuff. So ITWS, do you

16 know, is that just piped in for informational purposes only from

17 the tower, let's say? Because I did notice you had -- and I don't

18 know if it's the same as the ADS-B, but you have that display

19 that's in the room and the ADS-B from the tower.

20 A. Are we talking about the Aerobahn with the runways?

21 Q. Oh, yeah, the Aerobahn. Yeah.

22 A. Yeah, the Aerobahn, I don't think, does weather information.

23 The Aerobahn is usually up there on the big screen right next to

24 the TSD.

25 Q. Um-hum. But that is not for -- you don't work traffic based

1 on the Aerobahn?

2 A. No, ma'am, it's more of a prediction tool.

3 Q. It's -- yeah, informational purposes only?

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. So where does the ITWS come from? Is that from the tower?

6 A. Am I --

7 MR. TOMICICH: I'm not going to answer for you.

8 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah, I don't know where it's derived from,
9 it's a weather -- it's a weather product that's available for us
10 to look at. I don't know where the radar facility is, the Doppler
11 radar or what the source of the ITWS information is.

12 BY MS. BRANDT:

13 Q. And then also, the -- so the TSD, so the -- no training on
14 the ITWS and then you talked about the TSD. The TSD is typically
15 a TM unit function, right?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. So every controller doesn't do TM functions. There's a
18 specific TM unit that does that?

19 A. Yes, you have designated TMCs.

20 Q. Yeah, okay. Yeah, that's just the only questions I had. I
21 just wanted to know about the -- because I was at Seattle TRACON
22 and we had the Aerobahn and that was for informational purposes
23 only.

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. It wasn't used to control traffic and some of the equipment

1 that we had was piped in from somewhere, maybe from the tower, and
2 then depending on where you would switch aircraft on final, you
3 may read micro-shear or a microburst and all that or you might not
4 because you ship them too far out. So it is just like
5 informational purposes.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. But I just didn't know if you knew where these things were
8 piped in from.

9 A. Yeah, I don't know that. One other product I didn't mention
10 was the ribbon displays, we have those, as well. And there's
11 probably another term for that, other than ribbon display.

12 Q. Yeah, the WSB.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Yeah. And then, so do you guys read microbursts to aircrafts
15 on final? When do you guys --

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. -- ship those to the tower?

18 A. Usually at the transfer control point, which is the final
19 approach fix. If we're talking about Atlanta.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. That would be in visual approach conditions, final approach
22 fix, but if it was an instrument like ILS, PRM or monitored ILSs,
23 you would ship them further out.

24 Q. Yeah. Is that like what, maybe 7 miles?

25 A. It can be 22 miles or it can be 8 or 9 miles, it depends

1 which final and what the conditions are. But, of course, in those
2 scenarios, you're shipping the aircraft to the tower, but we have
3 monitor positions that actually are -- override the tower
4 frequency, so they're not gone from our communication when we say
5 contact tower.

6 Q. So who would read those microburst alerts to the aircraft, is
7 it the tower or you guys? Or both?

8 A. I believe both, whoever receives them and, you know, if we
9 saw one and then we had the communication with that aircraft, we
10 would read it.

11 Q. Does the monitor ever like over-key the tower and they both
12 issue them?

13 A. It's possible, but the monitor -- you know, the monitor does
14 have override capability, yes. But in that scenario, the tower is
15 in communication with the arrival and I would assume they would be
16 issuing them because I do hear the tower issuing them when we're
17 monitoring their frequency.

18 Q. Yeah. There's probably something in the SOP, I'll have to
19 look.

20 A. Yeah, I would think if the monitor position didn't hear the
21 tower saying anything about the microburst or the wind shear
22 alert, that they have an opportunity to either issue it or ask the
23 tower to issue it.

24 MS. BRANDT: Okay, I don't have anything else, thank you.

25 MR. MEYERS: Nothing.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: Do you have any? I don't have any more
2 questions.

3 BY MS. LEWIS:

4 Q. I just wanted to clarify one thing for the TSD.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. I understand that's a TMU function, I mean, because it
7 predicts the traffic inflow and out, but as a controller, other
8 than hey, what's coming at me, do you believe it would be helpful
9 if they could see the weather that is depicted on that screen?

10 A. I do believe it's helpful and in fact, it usually is, you
11 know, the settings are usually such that it has the weather. You
12 know, somebody that understands how to use that equipment has to
13 go in and do it.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. But when there's weather in the area, I typically see the
16 overhead display on the TSD showing the weather. So it's helpful,
17 I believe.

18 MS. LEWIS: Thank you, that's all I have.

19 BY MR. RICHARDS:

20 Q. I'm just curious, you have the ribbons for Hartsfield, right?
21 And then do you have ribbons for any other airports? It's not a
22 quiz, I'm just curious if it's just --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. -- one airport or if you've got 10.

25 A. Yeah, I --

1 Q. That's all right.

2 A. I don't believe we have them for other airports.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I would have to --

5 Q. They show up on the ITWS display, too, we could check there.

6 A. Yeah. So -- yeah. So I don't believe there are any for
7 other than Hartsfield.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But you know, I'll walk around the room and maybe see one and
10 realize that I wasn't correct. I just don't believe so.

11 MR. RICHARDS: No, it's okay, it was curiosity. Thank you,
12 thanks for your help.

13 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah, certainly.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Rachel, any more?

15 MS. BRANDT: No, I don't.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: I think I don't have any more. So do you have
17 questions for us?

18 MR. VAN EMAN: No, ma'am.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, come on. Is there any question you thought
20 we were going to ask that we didn't ask? It's not a loaded
21 question.

22 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah. I was assuming you would ask about our
23 schedules that we work --

24 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

25 MR. VAN EMAN: -- and how they impact on fatigue, but -- but

1 that's okay, we don't need to talk about it. I know that the NTSB
2 has already released reports previous on that.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

4 MR. VAN EMAN: And I have opinions on the negative effect of
5 our schedule and the fatigue that it places upon supervisors and
6 controllers.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

8 MR. VAN EMAN: But you know, as far as this accident is
9 concerned, I don't have any -- I can't say that that was a factor
10 at all, one way or the other.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. So are you guys shorthanded on
12 controllers?

13 MR. VAN EMAN: Sometimes. I mean, our staffing numbers, I
14 believe, are below where they should be, but you know, the same
15 with supervisors, so we work a lot of overtime.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

17 MR. VAN EMAN: But, you know, I don't need to talk about a
18 topic that's not pertinent to the accident, I just -- I was
19 expecting --

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

21 MR. VAN EMAN: -- that question and it didn't come, but
22 that's okay.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, we didn't talk about fatigue issues.
24 Since it was a couple of months ago --

25 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: -- it would be hard if somebody remembered if
2 they were tired, so --

3 MR. VAN EMAN: Oh, well, the schedule creates a situation
4 where you're often tired.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

6 MR. VAN EMAN: So that's something I don't think is the best,
7 but we won't talk about it if we don't need to.

8 MS. KOSCHIG: No plans on changing it?

9 MR. VAN EMAN: I wish I could change it.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

11 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah, it's -- the schedule is -- causes
12 fatigue all the time.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

14 MR. VAN EMAN: And you know, any of the factors that come
15 along with being fatigued could be in play any given day, any
16 given shift.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

18 MR. VAN EMAN: So you know, that's something I'm really --
19 really one of the things I don't like about this career is the
20 schedule, but you know, we'll see. Hopefully, they can find
21 something else because it's brutal.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

23 MS. BRANDT: Are you guys on mandatory six day work weeks?

24 MR. VAN EMAN: I don't know if it's mandatory, but you know,
25 I'm on a non-vol list, which means I do not desire OT. I'm

1 assigned overtime almost every week. So you know, the overtime
2 doesn't hurt as bad as the midnight shift once a week, every week.
3 And I know that the controllers union, you know, they -- if you
4 wanted to change the schedule, you have to go through them for
5 controllers, but for management, we don't have that situation.

6 If it's possible to get away from doing that, you know,
7 counterclockwise, rotating shift every week, that just tears you
8 down, I think that it should be done, but I don't have the
9 authority to get it done. So it's just one, it's just one of
10 those things.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: And that schedule's been going on like that for
12 years here, right?

13 MR. VAN EMAN: It has. And it's in compliance with the
14 rules, we're not doing anything --

15 MS. KOSCHIG: Right.

16 MR. VAN EMAN: -- that's illegal, it's just -- it's very
17 difficult on human factors.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah.

19 MR. VAN EMAN: But I didn't mean to go off on that.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, no, it's -- no, I know that, you know, a
21 long time ago it was like that here and at a lot of facilities --

22 MR. VAN EMAN: Um-hum.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: -- working 6-day weeks.

24 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: It's not good.

1 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah, I've seen the NTSB reports --

2 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

3 MR. VAN EMAN: -- where it was recommended against it.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

5 MR. VAN EMAN: And there was some fatigue negation protocols
6 put in place, but I don't believe that they are effective enough.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: Right. And we do have all the schedules, so it
8 is some fairly -- you know, we're looking at it and --

9 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah.

10 MS. KOSCHIG: -- so that we have the history of it and --
11 yeah. So it's not like we just ignored it.

12 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah, yeah, it's -- it's not a good situation.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: No.

14 MR. VAN EMAN: But anyway, I didn't mean to be negative
15 there.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, no, no. It's good to know.

17 MS. LEWIS: Yeah. And this is a good platform to use, you
18 know, because that's kind of --

19 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah, I mean -- yes.

20 MS. LEWIS: -- it's a safety issue and if it really is
21 important to you, then it's important to us.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: Yes.

23 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah. Well --

24 MS. KOSCHIG: Because we do look at this at all the
25 investigations we go on, what the work schedules are, how many

1 hours and days a week people are working and in this case, we just
2 didn't bring it up because it was a couple of months later.

3 MR. VAN EMAN: Sure.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: We usually will ask how -- did you feel rested
5 and all these other human factor type questions, so --

6 MR. VAN EMAN: Yeah. I've seen reports from the NTSB where
7 the controller involved had either a mid or a quick turn or
8 somehow was fatigued and it was considered a contributing factor.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah.

10 MR. VAN EMAN: But yeah, it has not been change, so I'm not
11 -- I don't know, you know, that it will be ever, but --

12 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

13 MR. VAN EMAN: -- it's just something I definitely don't like
14 doing and I don't think it's got the aviation community safety in
15 the best interest, but we continue to do it.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

17 Did anybody think of any questions before we let go?

18 MR. RICHARDS: Uh-uh.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Are you ready to get out of here?

20 MR. VAN EMAN: Sure, whenever you all are ready.

21 (Laughter.)

22 MS. KOSCHIG: So let's end the interview at 13:45 Eastern.

23 (Whereupon, at 1:45 p.m., the interview concluded.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT
NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA
ON AUGUST 10, 2023
Interview of James Van Eman

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA23FA330

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: October 12, 2023

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



David A. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT *

NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: ERA23FA330

ON AUGUST 10, 2023 *

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Interview of: DAVID COSTE, Operations Manager
Federal Aviation Administration

Atlanta, Georgia

Wednesday,
October 11, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SARAH LEWIS, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board

RACHEL BRANDT, Air Traffic Control Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

DANIEL MEYERS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

MARK TOMICICH, Esq.
Federal Aviation Administration
Representing Mr. Coste

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:13 p.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, the time now is 14:13 Eastern time. All right, welcome. Thank you for being here. As far as a part of the process, I will be recording the interview and then I will have a transcription made. Actually, we send them off to a transcriptionist company and they -- which we have an agreement with them, they won't share this information, they destroy the audio and we just get the transcript and once we get the transcription back, we won't give out the audio and I believe we have started destroying those, as well.

MR. COSTE: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: But the audio will go nowhere, I will be the only person with the audio, so just wanted to let you know that.

MR. COSTE: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: So we'll get started. Let's get to know each other a little bit. Please state your name.

MR. COSTE: David Coste.

MS. KOSCHIG: And can you spell your last name?

MR. COSTE: C-o-s-t-e.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And I'm Betty Koschig from the -- I'm an air traffic controller from the National Transportation Safety Board. With me here today is my co-chair and I will let her introduce herself.

MS. LEWIS: I'm Sarah Lewis. I started out at N90, then

1 Oklahoma City, and now I have transferred to NTSB.

2 MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB meteorology.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And as part of the process, we also
4 invite parties to the investigation to the process and today we
5 have NATCA here and we have an FAA SME.

6 MR. COSTE: Okay.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: So I will let them introduce themselves.

8 MS. BRANDT: Rachel Brandt, Birmingham ATM.

9 MR. MEYERS: Dan Meyers, NATCA, ASI from Philadelphia right
10 now.

11 MR. COSTE: Okay.

12 MS. KOSCHIG: So we rely heavily on our subject matter
13 experts and I think we got a good bunch that will help with this
14 investigation. And as part of our regulations, you are welcome to
15 have a representative and I see that someone is here with you
16 today. Is this the person you would like to be your
17 representative?

18 MR. COSTE: Yes, ma'am.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And will you please state your name?

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

21 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, would you spell your last name?

22 MR. TOMICICH: I will. T as in Tango-o-m-i-c-i-c-h.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: Great. Okay, and this interview is being
24 conducted regarding the accident that happened on August 10th with
25 November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango, and the purpose of this investigation

1 is to determine -- to help the investigator-in-charge to determine
2 the probable cause of this accident and to prevent a recurrence or
3 finding safety issues that may -- that may come up during the
4 investigation. And he's got other parties out there that are --
5 and groups that are doing some work with this, so we're just part
6 of the big picture, and as our role as the NTSB, we're here to --
7 we're on a fact-finding mission, we're not here to place blame,
8 fault, or liability on the controllers. We're here to find out
9 what happened that day, that's our main goal.

10 So a little bit about some of the stuff we're going to do
11 today. So if at any time during this interview that you would
12 like to take a break, just say I need a break, I need some water
13 or what have you. If you need to talk to your representative,
14 you're more than welcome to step out and we'll stop the interview
15 until you get back.

16 And as far as the questioning goes, if we ask you something
17 that is not clear, ask us to clearly state it. If there's
18 something you don't know, just say you don't know it. If there's
19 something you don't recall, you don't recall it. You know, we
20 can't -- you know, we don't want you to just make up something.
21 You are more than welcome to give your advice or speculate on
22 something, just do the things that you may know, but that's -- you
23 know, that's if you want to do it --

24 MR. COSTE: Okay.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: -- because we do -- we do want to hear a little

1 bit about the experience and common and normal procedures here.
2 So what we're going to do is, of course, I'm going to start out
3 asking some questions and then we'll get down to the heart of what
4 happened the day of the accident. I'll ask questions, then we'll
5 go around and Sarah, Mike, Rachel, and Dan will start asking you
6 questions and then we'll go around again and we may have some "oh,
7 by the ways" so that we can make sure we got everything covered.

8 And doing this, you're going to see some of us typing or
9 writing notes and that's just for -- I like to take notes so that
10 I can make sure that I'm capturing everything, if I were to go
11 back and look and see if I need to ask you a question, but those
12 notes will be destroyed, absolutely destroyed before we go home,
13 so you don't have to worry about them resurfacing.

14 MR. COSTE: Okay.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: And that's with everybody, because what we're
16 going to rely on is the audio. I'll make sure it's still working.
17 Yeah, okay. So without further ado, are you ready to get started?

18 MR. COSTE: Yes, ma'am.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: All right. I'll get my list of questions out.

20 INTERVIEW OF DAVID COSTE

21 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

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

23 A. Delta Charlie.

24 Q. How old are you?

25 A. Forty-five.

- 1 Q. And what is your position here?
- 2 A. Operations manager.
- 3 Q. Did you work here as a controller?
- 4 A. No.
- 5 Q. Do you have any military background?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Tell me a little bit about that.
- 8 A. I spent 4 years in the U.S. Air Force.
- 9 Q. What years were those?
- 10 A. Nineteen ninety-seven to two thousand one.
- 11 Q. Did you go to the FAA right after that?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. Was that the academy?
- 14 A. No.
- 15 Q. You went direct hire?
- 16 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 17 Q. VRA?
- 18 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 19 Q. Okay. And so that was 2001. Where did you go?
- 20 A. Roswell, New Mexico.
- 21 Q. And where did you go after that?
- 22 A. Oklahoma City.
- 23 Q. And where after that?
- 24 A. Columbia, South Carolina.
- 25 Q. What year did you go to Oklahoma, though? Sorry.

- 1 A. So I think, I believe it was 2005 --
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. -- to 2009. Maybe 2010.
- 4 Q. Okay.
- 5 A. The years get fuzzy, it's been a while.
- 6 Q. Yeah, it does. And that's about when you went to Columbia?
- 7 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 8 Q. And then where did you go?
- 9 A. Boston Center.
- 10 Q. What year was that? Out.
- 11 A. Two thousand twelve to probably two thousand fourteen or
- 12 fifteen.
- 13 Q. And then where did you go?
- 14 A. Atlanta Center.
- 15 Q. Wow. And how long were you there?
- 16 A. Two thousand fourteen or fifteen to two thousand seventeen.
- 17 Q. Then where did you go?
- 18 A. Columbia, South Carolina.
- 19 Q. And you were there until what year?
- 20 A. I want to say 2019.
- 21 Q. Okay, then where did you go?
- 22 A. Then I went to Greer, South Carolina.
- 23 Q. Where was that?
- 24 A. Greer, GSP.
- 25 Q. Oh, okay. And how long were you there?

- 1 A. I think I was there from 2019, I would say, to 2021.
- 2 Q. And then where?
- 3 A. Back to Atlanta Center.
- 4 Q. Um-hum.
- 5 A. I was there until January of 2023, this year.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. And that's when I started here, in January 2023.
- 8 Q. Okay. Great. So where did you work when you were in the Air
9 Force?
- 10 A. Cannon Air Force Base.
- 11 Q. Oh, okay.
- 12 A. New Mexico.
- 13 Q. So here, do you hold any collateral duties or --
- 14 A. Yeah, collateral duties, I -- I assist with time and
15 attendance, controller -- controller flight physicals, and VA
16 benefits.
- 17 Q. Okay, great. Have you been on any details since you've been
18 here?
- 19 A. No, ma'am.
- 20 Q. Okay. Do you hold any other aeronautical ratings, pilot
21 ratings, anything like that?
- 22 A. No, ma'am.
- 23 Q. Okay. Do you have a current medical?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Are you required to?

1 A. No.

2 Q. All right. And some of the questions I might -- I may ask or
3 we may ask, may sound a little bit dumb, but we just have to ask
4 them, okay?

5 A. Okay. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. Did you have the opportunity to review the replay?

7 A. I haven't reviewed the replay since the event.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I was one of the -- I was the operations manager on duty, so
10 I was investigating it from the beginning to make sure we could
11 conduct search and rescue.

12 Q. Oh, okay. All right, we'll ask you some more detailed
13 questions later about some of this stuff. All right. That's all
14 I'm going to ask about that right now. So now what I'd like to do
15 is just get a little bit into the detail of what you recall that
16 happened that night and you can start wherever you want to, you
17 know, at the starting point. I don't know where that would be for
18 you, but just give us a description of what was going on that
19 night, some of the events leading up to the accident and some of
20 the things you did afterward.

21 A. So I don't even recall the time, but --

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. -- was it a day or --

24 MS. LEWIS: It was morning.

25 MR. COSTE: It was morning, okay.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: Morning, yeah.

2 MS. LEWIS: Um-hum.

3 MR. COSTE: So a standard day, weather coming in, not
4 unusual, especially that time of year. Normal, normal every day,
5 going through the -- you know, what we do during the days. I
6 don't even remember the staffing supervisors, but there was a CIC
7 in the wall on a CI departure and they recently took the position
8 from the supervisor and he came over to me and reported that they
9 thought they lost an aircraft. And what I meant -- I think I
10 remember asking him, you lost radar and communications and he said
11 yes. At that time I walked over there, grabbed the strip and
12 immediately went back and issued an ALNOT with Atlanta Center.

13 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

14 Q. Okay, then what did you do?

15 A. So the standard protocol after issuing the ALNOT is just
16 grabbing the 8020-3, trying to find the location and start --
17 start trying to locate the aircraft.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. The 8020-3 is going to have a list of -- list of people to
20 call and --

21 Q. Okay. Did the controller get taken off the position, do you
22 recall?

23 A. I don't recall.

24 Q. Okay. Would you have done that?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And so after you started doing that, what else do you
2 recall happened after that?

3 A. Not much.

4 Q. No?

5 A. It's been a little while and --

6 Q. Yeah, and I do understand.

7 A. -- just recently, I would say prior to that, we had another
8 event where, you know, a similar situation, so at that point, I
9 just --

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. I can't recall. You do it awhile and some time passes, they
12 all just kind of blend together.

13 Q. Exactly. And we know that coming here, you know, a few weeks
14 later doesn't -- it doesn't help, but -- yeah. As far as the
15 weather, do you happen to recall how -- you know, the intensity of
16 weather that night, was it some storms coming through? And I'll
17 probably let Mike ask some of his in a little bit, but he'll want
18 to -- and we will want to know what you recall about the weather.

19 A. So not particularly, I wasn't behind the scope, so I didn't
20 see exactly what they saw. I just knew it's very typical,
21 especially being in the Southeast that time of the year, so it was
22 -- that's the best I can speak to that. There was weather in the
23 area and, you know, it was observed, I think, when I was doing a
24 replay. But Falcon weather is not necessarily accurate.

25 Q. Right. So you never saw the maintenance, STARS maintenance

1 replay?

2 A. No, ma'am, that was all made for the SRT.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right. I know Sarah has got some
4 questions, so I'm going to pass it on to her.

5 BY MS. LEWIS:

6 Q. Okay. I have a couple questions regarding the training team
7 that was going to come and open up the other position.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. Were you involved in trying to find them?

10 A. Um-hum. Yes, ma'am.

11 Q. Okay. Can you talk to me a little about what happened there?

12 A. So typically, there's a variety of things that are going to
13 implicate whether or not there's going to be a need for a split.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. Especially during IFR conditions, just because you have
16 strips doesn't necessarily mean planes get delayed because of
17 their refusal to take off, that type of thing, you know, the time
18 and all that type of thing. That's one indicator of why you would
19 want to split it.

20 Also taking into consideration the people that are training,
21 that type of thing, their experience, and regardless of sometimes
22 the volume will get taken into consideration, the complexities of
23 the weather being involved, that type of thing. So I remember
24 walking over to the people who were going to split it, actually,
25 and I wanted to check with them and asked them hey, you guys good,

1 is that all good? It's pretty typical walking around their areas
2 and making sure everybody's good and they don't need anything.
3 They said no, it's fine. It was dead, didn't have a lot of -- you
4 know, they had proposals, but that's really it. So I believe --
5 this is just -- I don't want to say something I didn't.

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. Typically, I would communicate with the person on the wall
8 and say listen, keep an eye on this and make sure, because I'm the
9 one, the operations manager is the one that's going to go and find
10 the bodies, you know, so we're going to make sure that we're the
11 ones providing additional resources in a timely manner.

12 So at that point another training team came in and relieved
13 them, Mr. Kelsey and Mr. Tavar. During the relief briefing,
14 because I would've -- they asked if -- they wanted to be called
15 back to one display because two different training teams, they
16 both work on those two particular positions and it's good training
17 for relief briefings and so forth. So what happened at that point
18 is he talked to the CPC and he said as soon as you guys are ready,
19 I'm just going to take a quick one, I'll page you back.

20 Well, we started to see some, I think -- I can't remember
21 exactly why, but I think the supervisor came over to me and
22 triggered, hey, we're going ahead and split this, so we paged them
23 back. Well, at that point the OJTI did not come back right away.
24 I didn't know why and we couldn't find him. So it would've been
25 less, I think there would've been less a delay if he would've

1 answered the page because that's what we were trying to do, is
2 make sure it was them, but my personal opinion, I don't think it's
3 a contributing factor. And I want them, as you can -- you could
4 tell sometimes when people -- especially developmentals and
5 briefing each other, they have a tough time getting through and
6 they need to have -- you know, we want to make sure they get that
7 experience.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. That's pretty much what I remember.

10 Q. Thank you. Once you were notified of the accident and you
11 started going through with the 8020-3, did you call in for
12 additional assistance to help you?

13 A. So the first phone call I usually make is to the support
14 manager -- I mean, I'm sorry, is to the chief. And yes, they were
15 helping from the back. I'm pretty experienced and if I need help,
16 and I've been through this a couple times and -- so I did not need
17 any additional help on the floor at that time, going through the
18 process I was going through. You know, I can't recall exactly
19 because again, we just had this happen not too long ago and I
20 actually --

21 Q. Um-hum. Sure.

22 A. -- brought a supervisor in and had him walk through this with
23 me --

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. -- so he could assist, I mean, for his experience benefit.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. So I can't recall, I mean, I will say the QC department and
3 my boss, you know, so they were helping behind the scenes. I just
4 can't recall if somebody was -- was on the floor helping me at
5 that time. Sometimes when you -- too many hands in the cookie
6 jar, for lack --

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. -- of a better term, can complicate things.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. Sometimes it's easier to have one person collecting all the
11 information so you're not repeating or --

12 Q. Yeah, right.

13 A. -- you're not getting confused on timelines and that type of
14 thing.

15 MS. LEWIS: Yeah. From after reviewing some of the audio,
16 because they were able to give us, you know, your position or, you
17 know, the phones and whatnot, just some feedback because I know
18 this is kind of a hot topic with the ALNOTs with the FAA and, you
19 know, not doing them in a timely manner, I just wanted to let you
20 know, from our review, top notch work.

21 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

22 MR. COSTE: Thank you.

23 MS. LEWIS: It appeared that you may have asked somebody else
24 because one of you guys were working with local fire and rescue
25 and the other person was doing a lot of the other -- other types

1 of notifications.

2 MR. COSTE: Yeah, they all just kind of run together --

3 MS. LEWIS: Yeah, but --

4 MR. COSTE:-- so it's kind of hard to tell.

5 MS. LEWIS: Yeah, but I really wanted to take the opportunity
6 to let you guys know that that was one of the first things we
7 noticed was you guys were on top of it, both the controllers,
8 everybody involved really worked hard, so the recovery from after
9 the event was really remarkable. So we just wanted to put that
10 out there that, you know, we were impressed with that.

11 MR. COSTE: Thank you.

12 MS. LEWIS: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, and it continued afterwards,
13 multiple controllers coordinating, trying to find, asking for
14 ELTs, every -- it was on par.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

16 MR. RICHARDS: I don't have any questions.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, come on. Okay.

18 MS. BRANDT: I don't have anything, either.

19 MR. MEYERS: I guess it's us, then.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

21 BY MR. MEYERS:

22 Q. You said you walk around the room --

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. -- just checking in with -- nothing out of the ordinary on
25 the day that you can recall?

1 A. No, not that I can recall.

2 Q. All right. Is that typically when you pick up the things
3 that are happening, like you know you need to go get something
4 split off --

5 A. Yeah, there's always --

6 Q. -- and find somebody?

7 A. I mean, it's a -- again, because I don't monitor, the
8 operations manager is generally not monitoring, I don't think they
9 would necessarily have the ability to, just because of all the
10 different -- especially in this TRACON, there's so many different
11 moving parts and some controllers share a wall and some people
12 don't and so it can be like a puzzle piece sometimes.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. And so you're listening to everything, you're listening to
15 the people behind me and where our desk is, not that it's -- it
16 takes a little bit more of a priority because satellite's a very
17 complex and busy wall, so that's where a lot of that goes to and
18 that's why -- that's why I tend to keep the supervisors, because
19 there are going to be times, if you haven't known we are lower
20 staffed, we do have -- it's very unusual for us to have a full
21 complement of supervisors, so I do make sure that the supervisors
22 are always on the approach wall because that's the most -- I mean,
23 that's the big house and that's the -- if somebody's going to
24 overshoot final and you're running trips and you're doing this,
25 it's important and one thing can happen and the next thing you

1 know, you got a call for five people on break, so it's very
2 important to make sure I have a full complement and I know what's
3 happening on that wall because that's generally where the demand
4 is.

5 Q. Totally makes sense. In your normal workspace, your desk,
6 you don't have a scope of any kind, correct?

7 A. No, no. So we're watching TSDs, there's a TSD on both walls,
8 actually all three walls there's a TSD and then there's also one,
9 I could walk behind satellite so I can set up certain airports to
10 make sure and see what that demand's going to be, or a forecast
11 demand, and then paying attention to the strips, you know. And
12 then at that point I'm also having conversations with the CICs and
13 the supervisors saying hey, make sure we're getting the PIREPs and
14 make sure we're doing that, that whole piece. Again, it's a whole
15 -- it's a team effort, right, so --

16 MR. MEYERS: Okay.

17 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

18 Q. Okay. So talking about different kind of tools, do you feel
19 that -- I'm just kind of switching the subject, you were talking
20 about the TSDs and the different displays. Do you feel like the
21 TRACON, the controllers have enough tools to -- available to them,
22 like being able to see the ITWS displays or more TSDs or anything
23 that could be helpful to them? I mean --

24 A. I think an ITWS could be helpful, possibly, and I don't know
25 necessarily, I can't recall what they have on that wall.

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. But it has been suggested that they add -- they have an ITWS
3 on the satellite, on the satellite wall --

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. -- but that is tied to a display that's on the TMU wall, so
6 sometimes it's kind of like well, I need this and it's more
7 beneficial, but --

8 Q. Right.

9 A. -- you know, resources are resources and it's what we have.

10 Q. Exactly.

11 A. Now, I'm sure there's a lot better products that the FAA
12 doesn't have, but I wouldn't know, I wouldn't know of them
13 because, you know, we don't have them.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Sarah?

15 BY MS. LEWIS:

16 Q. If you could think about tools that you know about, and it's
17 kind of what she already asked, but is there anything that you
18 wish you guys had, whether it be at your desk or somewhere else,
19 that you wish you could have that would help you with your job,
20 that you just don't have right now?

21 A. I don't know.

22 Q. Yeah, yeah.

23 A. I don't know what I don't know, you know what I mean?

24 Q. Right, right.

25 A. So I don't know the different products that are out there.

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. I mean, yes, IDSs would be helpful, but you know, we've been
3 dealing with that for --

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. -- you know, however long. So there are better things to
6 process, but it's also a process and how that goes about and how
7 those things are made.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. So I can't really recall. I mean, I do spend time at the
10 scope, too, but when you look at -- there is a scope near the --
11 near our -- but sometimes the settings, and sometimes I would say
12 that that's a lot of airspace, looking at the whole entire
13 approach's airspace.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. So it's hard to focus on a certain section, so you find some
16 changing things around and you do the best you can by helping the
17 people that are in charge of those walls and just work as a team.
18 So I don't know of anything that I don't know of, so --

19 MS. LEWIS: Um-hum. That's great, thanks.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Rachel?

21 MS. BRANDT: Yeah. Just because you don't recall a lot of
22 things and I understand why, I mean, there really is no point in
23 asking other questions because I feel like that's, you know -- you
24 don't recall.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

1 MR. MEYERS: No.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: No.

3 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

4 Q. One question I do have, what do you think about the pre-duty
5 weather briefing, do you think it's -- do you think it gives
6 valuable information? Is there something you'd change about it if
7 you could? How are the controllers taking it, I mean --

8 A. I think it's a check the bar and check the box exercise.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. I think it's a way how you can -- it's not real-time
11 information, it's all forecasted.

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. So I mean, sure, I mean, the better information they're going
14 to get is during those relief briefings, you know, and through the
15 PIREPs, that thing, because, you know, all you're going to
16 basically get -- and this is just my opinion -- is this forecasted
17 "you can expect this" and it's made at the center, so the same
18 briefing the center gets is the same briefing every underlying
19 facility gets.

20 So it's not particularly detailed, which I understand the
21 complications in that, that would be probably difficult, but all
22 you're basically looking at is hey, how a ride's going to be and
23 how is -- any precip we're going to be talking about. So we see
24 that precip coming.

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. You know, I rely more or less on like weather.com to be able
2 to find out a daily outlook of what actually that weather's going
3 to be versus that. I know it's still a requirement and it's still
4 done and it's you still make sure it gets done.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. But at the same time, I don't think it's -- it has the
7 intended purposes, especially from being in the center, it was a
8 lot more valuable in the center, knowing that, so I could -- I
9 could have those conversations with a supervisor about what they
10 can expect in certain areas. I could know how certain -- what is
11 forecast so I can -- I would have a certain expectation of what
12 should be split up, what shouldn't be split up, because the added
13 complexities with, you know, the forecast and all that. But at
14 the terminal, I don't really see it as pertinent.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. That's just my opinion.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, no, that was great to have.

18 Anything?

19 (No response.)

20 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

21 Q. Is there any questions you thought we were going to ask that
22 we haven't asked?

23 A. No.

24 Q. It's not a trick question.

25 A. No, not really. Nothing I can think of.

1 Q. Is there anything that you would like to add that would help
2 us?

3 A. Well, I think the controllers did a good job --

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. -- and I think that especially locating the aircraft, that
6 was something they all worked with together and were able to --
7 and if my memory serves me correctly, I mean, we got lat and longs
8 and found -- you know, we were able to -- through what we saw on
9 the ground, able to direct, and we were talking to the sheriff
10 real time and while he was on the phone walking up to there, I
11 mean, it's a lot of -- so I think everyone did a good job.

12 Now, it's an unfortunate event and I think that it's good --
13 I think that while this is a horrible event, it can hit home with
14 a point of why we say it doesn't matter about volume, it doesn't
15 matter about this, lets it -- let them open those eyes. Sometimes
16 when people are like well, let's combine this up, you know, like
17 no, you know, or -- you know, it just hits home and just that
18 added experience is going to be overall better for the employees,
19 even though it is a tough -- it's tough to get into and different
20 people will handle that differently, but at least -- at least
21 other people will maybe open their eyes to why some things are
22 done.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: Absolutely. Last chance.

24 (No response.)

25 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, I can't think of anything else to ask, so

1 let's go ahead and end the interview at 14:44 Eastern time.

2 (Whereupon, at 2:44 p.m., the interview concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

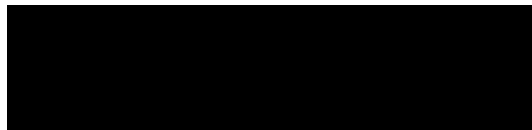
IN THE MATTER OF: CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT
NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA
ON AUGUST 10, 2023
Interview of David Coste

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA23FA330

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: October 11, 2023

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



David A. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT *

NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA *

Accident No.: ERA23FA330

ON AUGUST 10, 2023 *

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Interview of: STEVEN PROFFITT, Acting Air Traffic Manager
Federal Aviation Administration

Atlanta, Georgia

Friday,
October 13, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SARAH LEWIS, Air Traffic Control Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board

RACHEL BRANDT, Air Traffic Control Subject Matter Expert
Federal Aviation Administration

DANIEL MEYERS, Air Safety Investigator
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

MARK TOMICICH, Esq.
Federal Aviation Administration
Representing Mr. Proffitt

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:34 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: The time now is 8:34 Eastern time. All right.
So good morning, again.

MR. PROFFITT: Good morning.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, as part of this process, I'll be recording the interview and I'll have a transcription made. The transcription will become part of the factual report, the audio will not. And what we're doing with the audio, what we do with this, we send the audio to a transcriptionist that we have a contract with, they will destroy the audio after we get all the -- the transcription and get all the corrections made.

That goes away. And as well with us, we will just be destroying the audio. I will keep it until I can destroy it, but I will be the only person that will have that audio and it will not go into any public place at all, until I can get it destroyed.

MR. PROFFITT: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: Just to let you know.

MR. PROFFITT: Thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, so again, my name is Betty Koschig and I am an air traffic control investigator at the NTSB. We're here today to -- to discuss the -- well, to discuss just this case, this accident that happened in August of -- August 10th with November 2-1-0 Juliet Tango. But before we get into that, I would like to introduce my co-chair and then we'll -- I'll introduce

1 Mike, which is our meteorologist, or he'll introduce himself,
2 rather.

3 MS. LEWIS: My name is Sarah Lewis, I am an NTSB air traffic
4 control investigator. Prior to that, I had 23 years of air
5 traffic control experience, both at the New York TRACON and
6 Oklahoma City approach control.

7 MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB, I'm one of the Agency's
8 meteorologists.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: And as part of our process, we also have
10 parties to the investigation and in this instance, we have NATCA,
11 that party, and of course, the FAA, which is -- was party. So
12 Dan, if you'll introduce yourself.

13 MR. MEYERS: Dan Meyers out of Philadelphia TRACON.

14 MS. BRANDT: Rachel Brandt, Birmingham.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: So and as part of the regulations, you are
16 welcome to have a representative and it does look like you have a
17 representative here --

18 MR. PROFFITT: Yes.

19 (Crosstalk)

20 MS. KOSCHIG: -- is this the person you would like to have as
21 your representative?

22 MR. PROFFITT: Yes, yes.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Would you please state your name?

24 MR. TOMICICH: Yes, Mark Tomicich, spelled T like Tango-o-m-
25 i-c-i-c-h.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And so please state your name for the
2 record.

3 MR. PROFFITT: Steven Proffitt.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum. Can you spell your last name?

5 MR. PROFFITT: Sure. It's P-r-o-f-f-i-t-t.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right, so like I said earlier, the
7 reason we're here is just because of that accident and we really
8 had the opportunity to talk to the controllers and fill in a lot
9 of holes that I think now we can go back and be able to give to
10 the IIC, the investigator-in-charge, and so he can take all the
11 information and come up with some -- a probable cause, and that
12 was our whole reason to come here, is fact find.

13 We're not here to blame, to assign fault or anything like
14 that. It's all fact finding. And your guys here were great about
15 giving us -- being open and giving us great information.

16 (Crosstalk)

17 MR. PROFFITT: Okay.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: So during this, I'm going to -- we're just
19 going to have like, conversation with you, but during this
20 interview, any time you would like to take a break, you're more
21 than welcome --

22 MR. PROFFITT: Thank you.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: -- to take a break. I don't think it's going
24 to be that long, but just in case. And if we do ask you any
25 questions, which we'll ask you a few questions, but if there's

1 anything we -- that you don't know, "I don't know" is a good
2 answer. I don't think you have anything you don't recall, --

3 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: -- but if not and you couldn't recall it,
5 that's a good answer.

6 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

7 MS. KOSCHIG: If we're asking something that's not clear --

8 MR. PROFFITT: Um-hum.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: -- ask us to clarify and --

10 MR. PROFFITT: Okay.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: You know, and we'll probably be just typing a
12 few notes, anything that we type or write down, that is going to
13 be destroyed.

14 MR. PROFFITT: Okay.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: It's just so that we can -- if it's something
16 that you said, we want to come back and ask you a question --

17 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: -- about it, so -- and that's the basic
19 structure --

20 MR. PROFFITT: Okay.

21 MS. KOSCHIG: -- of what we're going to do and -- but I'll
22 start out, I'm going to ask you a few questions to get to know a
23 little bit about you.

24 MR. PROFFITT: Okay.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: And then we'll -- I'll ask you some different

1 questions and then go around the room and more of a conversation.

2 MR. PROFFITT: Very good.

3 INTERVIEW OF STEVEN PROFFITT

4 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

5 Q. Okay. So first, let's get to know you a little bit better.

6 Let me get my form up so I don't miss anything.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Okay, so how long have you been at the -- tell us a little
9 bit about your history, your air traffic control history.

10 A. Okay. I was hired into the Agency -- in 2001 is when the
11 paperwork started.

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. It was June of 2001. September 11th hit, which pushed it
14 back a little bit and I reported to Oklahoma City in January of
15 2002. Went to initial tower cab training out there and reported
16 to Fort Myers Tower in Florida in April of 2002.

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. I then transferred up to here, A80, in April of 2005 and I
19 stayed a controller here, and in 2012, beginning of 2012, it
20 could've been the end of 2011, but somewhere in that range, either
21 December of 2011 or beginning of 2012 I was selected as a
22 supervisor down in Fort Myers again, so I went back to Fort Myers,
23 stayed there for 2 years and then came back here to A80 as a
24 supervisor in 2014. And I've been here ever since and held a few
25 different positions.

1 I went from a supervisor to an OM to a support manager, back
2 to an OM and an acting manager, back to an OM and I went on a
3 detail for a year up at the director's offices in ETR and then
4 came back here in 2022 as the XO. And then in February of this
5 year I was the acting air traffic manager. Now, officially, as of
6 September, I went back to the XO position because the detail ended
7 and I am officially the XO at A80. However, we don't have a
8 permanent manager, so I'm doing both, I'm the air traffic manager,
9 acting, and officially the XO.

10 Q. Oh, okay.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. That's a lot of jumping around.

13 A. I've been in every office in this building, with the
14 exception of one, right?

15 (Laughter.)

16 MS. KOSCHIG: That's great, you know why.

17 MR. PROFFITT: At least the offices, I know the offices well.

18 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

19 Q. Yep. So do you have any military -- were you in the
20 military?

21 A. I do not. No, no.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I was not in the military, no.

24 Q. Oh, okay. Do you have any pilot's license or anything like
25 that?

1 A. I do. I went to -- I have a commercial -- hold on, I'll get
2 it right. It's a complex engine instrument commercial rating. I
3 think that's how you say it.

4 Q. Wow.

5 A. I think that's how it is, yeah.

6 Q. Cool.

7 A. And not current.

8 Q. Not current.

9 A. Not current.

10 (Laughter.)

11 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

12 Q. Cool, that sounds like fun. What did you fly? Just curious.

13 A. I flew Cherokees to start with and then Seminole -- or excuse
14 me, not Seminoles, Cherokees, Mooneys for the complex engine
15 piece, and then we transitioned into Cessnas and such. I went to
16 Embry-Riddle down in Daytona, so --

17 Q. Oh, cool.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Yeah. You got a degree there?

20 A. Yes, uh-huh.

21 Q. You got --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- a bachelor's, master's?

24 A. Yeah, a bachelor's. Uh-huh.

25 Q. Great. What was it in?

1 A. Aeronautical science.

2 Q. Great. I got my master's from there.

3 A. Oh, nice.

4 Q. Several of them.

5 A. Nice.

6 Q. Okay, so -- let me think. I think that's the basic that -- I

7 think that's what we need just to get that basic from you, so got

8 to get to know you a little bit better.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. So I'd like to talk a little bit now about, you know, the

11 investigation and --

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. -- things that were going on. And I'm taking it from a

14 different angle because I know you weren't in the room anywhere

15 there, so I'm not going to ask you really anything about, you

16 know, particulars. But I'd like to know, just give us -- I know

17 that you've given us some paperwork on some of the things that

18 you've done here --

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. -- and actions that you've taken since then. I'd like you to

21 just tell us some of those things that has occurred since the --

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. -- accident.

24 A. And you mean specific to this accident?

25 Q. Yes, please.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. Or if anything is, you know, tangentially --

3 A. Right, right.

4 Q. -- to this one, so --

5 A. Got you. Well, specific to this accident, we conducted --
6 afterwards, obviously, we conducted a SSR where we had a staff
7 manager and some staff support specialists review the incident.
8 They looked for any kind of systemic trends that they could find.
9 As a part of their review they reviewed the tapes, they reviewed
10 the data, the audio, looked at the -- looked at the different
11 actions that were taken by the controllers, and they completed
12 their review and did not -- did not find any systemic issues that
13 they could see through that, as the report says. And so we took
14 that, that was reported back to me, the final report was reported
15 back to me, and then what we did from there was we took -- we took
16 the data that we were given, we forwarded that to our local safety
17 council so that they have it and they can review it and look at
18 it, see if maybe they could find anything that they -- that they
19 could see that maybe we weren't seeing, you know, from the
20 outside, and they have that data to look at and report back on and
21 see if they could see something.

22 One of the things that we did notice, that we did take away
23 from our services rendered TELCON that we had immediately
24 following the accident, was the -- was the picture, what we call
25 it, the picture painting, and we took that and realized that while

1 we did a lot of good things and we did a lot of right things, we
2 had the opportunity to present maybe a better picture, maybe a
3 more timely picture of the weather and the presentation that we
4 had.

5 So we took that, I took the actual still photos of the replay
6 and I used that as the basis of painting a picture for my team.
7 So I went to my operations manager team and the operation
8 supervisors team, I had face-to-face briefings with both of those
9 teams and explained to them, showing them the picture and saying
10 here is what we -- we need to take and present and paint in all
11 sectors that we work, and I briefed that out to them, it was
12 receptive well. We've also continued that same briefing and we
13 are now briefing this as a point during our end-of-the-year and
14 beginning of the new performance year cycles at -- with our
15 supervisors, taking that to the actual workforce and stressing the
16 importance of painting that picture to everybody as soon as we
17 can, right, and we took those actions there.

18 I believe, specific to this incident, that's all at this
19 point I can recall that we've done. There may have been some
20 other things that we -- that we sprinkled in here and there, but
21 for the most part we have -- those are the things that we've done.

22 Q. Okay, great, great. And there -- do you have anything else,
23 any initiatives that -- that you've got planned to increase the
24 safety in there or is this --

25 A. We have an ongoing -- we have an ongoing focus on PIREP

1 solicitation and dissemination and it is one of those -- the
2 PIREPs, the solicitation and dissemination piece has been -- we
3 have recently closed a CAP on that and we have CAPs --

4 MR. TOMICICH: (Indiscernible).

5 A. -- correction, I can explain. Okay, very good. Okay, sorry.

6 But we recently -- we recently closed one of those and then
7 this accident had happened, but even though we had closed that CAP
8 officially, we continued every day, every day at stand-ups, we
9 have a daily stand-up at 7:00 -- between 7:30 and 7:45 every
10 morning in the operation, the management team comes out, the
11 manager will be out there, the XO, support managers will all meet
12 at the watch desk and discuss the different things of the day. In
13 there we discuss staffing, we discuss the weather, we discuss all
14 those different things. So what we do is that we make it a point
15 to stress the solicitation and dissemination of PIREPs, especially
16 on days where we know that the conditions are favorable for it or
17 may require them. We specifically stress that out there. It's
18 just a reminder to let folks know that -- keep that fresh in our
19 minds, because sometimes it can get -- you know, sometimes our
20 jobs get mundane and so we like to keep that as fresh as we can.

21 Q. Great. Yeah, we did notice that the PIREP process -- now, I
22 don't want to step on anything that Mike would talk --

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. It seemed like it ran very smoothly.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Really, I liked the way that that ran, because sometimes it's
2 bumpy, but this was like wow, seeing it grow.

3 A. We've seen success with it --

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. -- you know, and it's -- so far, as far as we know and as far
6 as we've been -- the feedback, any feedback that we've received on
7 that process has been -- has been positive, so --

8 Q. That's great. Cool, yeah, it's pretty, pretty good and it
9 seemed like everybody knew the process, it was very crystal clear
10 that they've been trained very well. Are there any weather
11 products or -- any weather products that you feel that would be
12 more helpful here, that you don't have? Any type of equipment,
13 anything like that?

14 A. We have a lot more, I mean, coming to a larger facility, you
15 do have -- just the fact that you're a larger facility, you
16 typically do have more, more technological equipment than you
17 would maybe at a smaller facility, which is understandable, and I
18 think the equipment that we have out there, the weather products
19 that we do have, I think they're very good. I have used them for
20 years here, I think that they are very good products.

21 I do know that there are -- there are plans to enhance those,
22 some of those products, anyway, and I know that we were -- we are
23 actually on the waterfall for a new program, the National Weather
24 Product, I believe it's called, and I know that it's -- the
25 acronym is NWP and I think it's Product, it may be Product or

1 Program, but National Weather Program, I'm going to go with that.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. And they've got the hardware installed for that already and
4 now we're just waiting for the software updates to come and turn
5 that on. And my understanding, from what I've been briefed, is
6 that this is supposed to be an enhancement, an additional aid
7 with, I guess, some more bells and whistles to the ITWS, so it's
8 supposed to provide us a little more functionality. From what
9 I've -- what I've been briefed on, it's supposed to provide us
10 that functionality there, so more capabilities that we -- that we
11 could use there. But as far as the products that we have in place
12 now, I think they're very good.

13 Q. Great. And speaking of ITWS, how is training conducted with
14 the ITWS?

15 A. There's no official training that I'm aware of that we have
16 in place here at the facility for it. I'm not aware of any actual
17 official training from either the Agency or from the National
18 Weather Service and quite honestly, I'm not even sure whose
19 product that is. Sometimes the different products that we have,
20 some are fed via National Weather Service links, some are fed via,
21 you know, products that they have at the center.

22 So as far as the ITWS goes, I'm not really sure who owns that
23 product and who would actually be responsible for, you know,
24 training somebody on that product. But the point with the ITWS
25 that I wanted to bring out is that it's just an -- it's an aid,

1 it's not one of our normal working tools, as a controller, that I
2 would necessarily be using on a regular basis, right? It's more
3 there for a reference, it's there to provide any kind of extra
4 help that I have, but as a controller, I'm looking at that radar
5 scope and I'm looking at the product that's presented on there.

6 We have provided other aids, right, than can assist and give
7 a better picture of what is actually happening out there with the
8 big screens up above that display the weather, kind of give a
9 bigger picture of where things are moving, what things are going,
10 those are more aids to help people understand and help us control
11 the flow of traffic coming in and out, when we need to, you know,
12 back off aircraft, when we need to -- you know, how we need to
13 adjust the efficiency of the airspace, so -- but as far as the
14 actual product that controllers use, that's specific to the scope
15 itself. So I kind of went maybe on a dirt road, I'm sorry.

16 Q. Oh, no, no.

17 A. But the ITWS piece is no official training that I'm aware of
18 on that.

19 MS. KOSCHIG: Did you want to --

20 MR. PROFFITT: Sorry.

21 MS. KOSCHIG: -- say something? Okay. Being the weather
22 guy.

23 MR. RICHARDS: No, no, I'm just changing position here.

24 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah.

25 MR. RICHARDS: No, no, no.

1 (Laughter.)

2 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, because we were -- we were talking --

3 MR. RICHARDS: I'm just squirming.

4 (Laughter.)

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, we were talking about the ITWS, too, and
6 about the training, because it's in the facilities --

7 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

8 MS. KOSCHIG: -- and it's --

9 (Crosstalk)

10 MR. PROFFITT: Now, we do have -- we do have -- sorry.

11 MR. RICHARDS: Go ahead.

12 MR. PROFFITT: We do have what we call a little shortcut, you
13 know --

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Um-hum.

15 MR. PROFFITT: -- little laminated books of the information
16 about it, you know, to where here's some of the functionality that
17 you can use and all. And a lot of times, me, personally, I
18 learned all that I did about the ITWS on mid-shifts, just kind of
19 playing around with it, honestly, and seeing what it could do and
20 couldn't do, this and that, so -- but we do have reference cards
21 that we can go to if we want to adjust certain things and such
22 like that.

23 But that's reserved for -- you know, a controller would not
24 be, you know, adjusting the ITWS or something like that, that
25 would be reserved for management and if they needed to adjust

1 something or not. And if there's an issue with it, we refer that
2 issue maintenance-wise or if there's something that doesn't look
3 right, we refer that to tech ops and then they handle the
4 notification processes.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: They work their magic on it.

6 MR. PROFFITT: Yeah, they do whatever it is they do and make
7 it magically appear again.

8 (Laughter.)

9 MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly.

10 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: I know you want to say something.

12 BY MR. RICHARDS:

13 Q. No, I will jump in with a question real quick and maybe
14 answer this, but with the new bells and whistles anticipated with
15 ITWS from the NWP --

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. -- how do you anticipate, you or your staff --

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. -- knowing what those bells and whistles are or how to use
20 them?

21 A. That I don't know.

22 Q. If there's something that --

23 A. Right, right. And I have -- all I have been given is a
24 briefing that says we're getting this product and from what I
25 understand, the staff specialist that's in charge of the program

1 hasn't even been briefed on the software piece of it yet. I
2 believe that's still forthcoming from what I understand, so --

3 Q. Got you.

4 A. So once I -- now, I can only assume that when they're ready
5 to push that software out, that there will be associated training
6 with it. I'm sure my counterparts would love for that to happen,
7 as well, because we do -- I mean, it's important to be able to
8 know how to use that --

9 Q. But --

10 A. -- equipment.

11 Q. -- to be clear, that would be the first training that you
12 would have seen for ITWS?

13 A. Me, personally? Yes.

14 Q. If that --

15 A. That would be the first training that I would have seen. If
16 I were to get that training, yes, that would be the first training
17 I would see. And my understanding is -- and I can be wrong, but
18 my understanding is that the NWP is not a part of ITWS, it is just
19 something to aid ITWS, so my understanding is ITWS isn't going
20 away.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. National Weather -- NWP is just coming there to be as an
23 additional aid, I guess.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. That's my understanding so far.

1 Q. Just one other quick follow-up just for my clarity. Who
2 within your facility would be using ITWS as a -- my words here --
3 primary tool for there? So controllers --

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. Let me -- yeah, who uses ITWS here in this facility and in
6 what capacity?

7 A. The majority of the decisions, when we look at the ITWS --
8 now, we have the ITWS available for viewing --

9 Q. Right.

10 A. -- at different areas around the TRACON, right, so it's on a
11 little switch button that they can push and view the ITWS up on
12 the -- on all three of our walls, on the departure wall, on the
13 approach wall, and on the satellite wall, there's options where
14 you can pull up the ITWS and look at what it's doing.

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. For the controllers, it's more just a reference thing, that's
17 it, just to see what's going on. But the main people who use it
18 would be a our TMU folks and the supervisor, generally, of the
19 approach wall, because that's essentially where most of that
20 product is really focused, is on Hartsfield, just because of the
21 volume and just because of the amount of traffic that would need
22 to be adjusted --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- based on the weather that would be moving through.

25 MR. RICHARDS: I actually have some more, but I'll wait.

1 MS. KOSCHIG: Go ahead. No, go.

2 BY MR. RICHARDS:

3 Q. Is there an expectation, given this -- I don't want to say
4 lack of training, given -- we're not really clear on what the
5 training picture is for ITWS. Is there an expectation for the TMU
6 and the supervisor of the approach wall to be proficient with
7 ITWS?

8 A. To be proficient? No, I don't have an expectation for them
9 to be proficient, especially since I know of no formal training
10 that they've received.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Again, I view that -- and my expectation is that it's a
13 reference tool, just like anything else would be. If I'm watching
14 the weather report on the TV, that's essentially the tool that
15 ITWS is. I mean, it does provide a lot of great information, I
16 won't discount that, but as far as my expectation of what the
17 managers do or they TMCs use it for, it's reference and reference
18 only.

19 MR. RICHARDS: Okay, thank you.

20 MR. PROFFITT: Um-hum.

21 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

22 Q. Okay, cool. All right. I want to switch, I forgot to ask,
23 I'm flipping here, going back to how many controllers do you have
24 here at the facility?

25 A. Controllers, I've got between -- fully certified

1 controllers --

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. -- I've got between 68 and 70.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And that's because I just had a recent retirement and I'm not
6 really sure at which -- which number I'm at right now, but I know
7 for sure it's between 68 and 70, which puts us at 68 percent
8 staffed.

9 Q. Okay. How many -- 68 percent. How about how many
10 developmentals or trainees?

11 A. We have 18 developmentals and trainees.

12 Q. So you expect some controllers coming in, new CPCs?

13 A. Right now I have two more coming this year and two more
14 slated, I believe, for next year. As of now.

15 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah. Great. Hopefully you get some more.
16 I'm going to let Sarah ask some questions.

17 BY MS. LEWIS:

18 Q. I'm super excited to ask you about those screenshots --

19 A. Oh, the screenshots, okay.

20 Q. -- because the screenshots were like gold to us.

21 A. Oh, good, good.

22 Q. What made you think to take the screenshots?

23 A. Past history, we had -- I believe it was -- I believe it was
24 the accident that we had before this one. We had another accident
25 and we were reviewing everything on the Falcon, and the Falcon

1 weather showed that the aircraft that was involved with the
2 accident was right literally in the middle of extreme
3 precipitation and we didn't say a thing about it.

4 And what really triggered me there was, is that the
5 controller who was working the position had been issuing weather
6 and issuing vectors around it and PIREPs like crazy and then when
7 it came to this, it was he didn't say a word, which didn't make
8 sense. So that's what triggered me to go all right, let me pull
9 the actual data to see what it actually looks like, because this
10 just isn't making sense. And then when we pulled the data and we
11 looked at it from that radar scope, it was completely different,
12 he was in the clear, it wasn't -- it wasn't even close to where
13 what the Falcon had showed. So from that point forward, what I
14 did from that previous accident, moving forward I instructed the
15 support manager that this will now be a part of our every -- every
16 accident that we have, that we have to do anything with
17 whatsoever, we're going to pull that data and we're going to watch
18 it back there just to see, and that way we've got that information
19 there and that we can look at it, we can see it and we can get the
20 accurate -- you know, the accurate true picture of what the
21 controller actually saw on that scope. So that was the trigger.

22 We had had a couple incidents a few years back where we
23 needed to look at what the controllers actually saw on the scope
24 and I had just kind of unofficially started doing that myself,
25 when we had pulled stuff, but this last one or the previous one

1 prior to this one is when I instructed that this is now going to
2 be part of what we do on every package, we're going to pull that
3 we're going to view it back there to see if we could see
4 something, because -- not necessarily just with weather, you get
5 to see everything that the controller was actually doing, so the
6 keystrokes, the mouse moves, all that kind of stuff, so -- which a
7 lot of times will not be represented on Falcon. So I wanted to
8 get the truest -- the truest view of what that controller saw.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: Absolutely.

10 MS. LEWIS: Yeah, I feel that it's extremely helpful to see
11 the most accurate picture --

12 MR. PROFFITT: For sure.

13 MS. LEWIS: -- of what actually happened and that helps not
14 only, you know, fact finding, it helps the facility, it helps the
15 controller, and I wish there was a way that what you're doing
16 would be across the NAS --

17 MR. PROFFITT: Yeah.

18 MS. LEWIS: -- because most of the times that I've seen
19 someone capture that is -- all the times, it's extremely valuable
20 information.

21 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

22 MS. LEWIS: So thank you --

23 MR. PROFFITT: Yeah.

24 MS. LEWIS: -- for doing that. If you want to take a video
25 of it next time, too --

1 MR. PROFFITT: Yeah, okay.

2 (Laughter.)

3 MS. LEWIS: -- you can keep that. I mean, even if it's
4 just --

5 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

6 MS. LEWIS: -- you know, like 10 minutes or something --

7 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

8 MS. LEWIS: -- because that would help see exactly where that
9 weather was moving.

10 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

11 MS. LEWIS: But yeah, thanks.

12 MR. PROFFITT: That's good to know.

13 MS. LEWIS: Yeah, that was -- we were -- one of the reasons
14 why we came was to see that actual --

15 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

16 MS. LEWIS: -- video.

17 MR. PROFFITT: Footage.

18 MS. LEWIS: Yeah. And so they're like, unfortunately this
19 has happened, but we have these pictures and it was --

20 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

21 MS. LEWIS: -- like -- yeah. So thank you.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly.

23 MS. LEWIS: Mike?

24 MR. RICHARDS: No.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: All questioned out.

1 MR. RICHARDS: Maybe in a minute.

2 MS. BRANDT: I don't have any right now.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

4 MR. MEYERS: I do.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

6 BY MR. MEYERS:

7 Q. SSR, you said on this SSR your staff people put that
8 together.

9 A. I believe it was two staff support specialists and a support
10 manager, if I recall correctly.

11 Q. Do you guys not collaborate on SSRs normally?

12 A. We do collaborate --

13 Q. With any NATCA representation or --

14 A. Yeah, to the -- yeah, we had the staff support specialists
15 and one of them is the NATCA staff support specialist rep.

16 Q. Cool.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. And then I just wanted to -- the SSR thing came up because we
19 had several SSRs in the data and they have the names at the end of
20 who completed them and some of them didn't have a name.

21 A. Oh, okay.

22 Q. So I'm like who did these?

23 (Laughter.)

24 MR. MEYERS: This one had three names at the end, so --

25 MR. PROFFITT: Got you. Okay, good.

1 MR. MEYERS: But there were some -- there was one name and
2 that was --

3 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

4 MR. MEYERS: It kind of hit me like are we --

5 MR. PROFFITT: Typically, that's not the case. I think if
6 there's one name, it was not -- one person does not do our SSRs.

7 MR. MEYERS: All right, cool.

8 MR. PROFFITT: Let's put it that way.

9 MR. MEYERS: That's just what I wanted to clarify.

10 MR. PROFFITT: Okay. Correct.

11 MR. MEYERS: It seems that things were being done --

12 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

13 MR. MEYERS: -- above board. Well, I just --

14 MR. PROFFITT: Right.

15 MR. MEYERS: -- wanted to ask the question.

16 MR. PROFFITT: Yeah.

17 BY MR. MEYERS:

18 Q. Local safety council.

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Yeah, obviously you guys are a big facility.

21 A. Big facility.

22 Q. Things seem to be going well. How is the safety council
23 working for you?

24 A. I wish we could do a lot more meetings than we do, staffing
25 obviously is an issue, but what we've been doing recently is we've

1 been readjusting different things. Our refresher training that's
2 required every month for all controllers, a lot of times what
3 we'll do is we will adjust those schedules and adjust that to be
4 able to accommodate the local safety council.

5 We've tried to -- as strategically as we can, tried to align
6 the safety council as close to the same amounts of days off as we
7 can to help us with, you know, getting those meetings together and
8 being able to meet so we're not skipping a month here or this or
9 that. We are doing our absolute best schedule-wise to try and get
10 one done every single month, if not more than that. We actually
11 have one this afternoon, so -- and it's a joint one between us and
12 the tower, actually. So we try to do those between us, us and the
13 tower and us and the center, we try to do those as -- I would do
14 them as often as we can, but again, it's a scheduling thing more
15 than really anything else, but -- but yeah. So it works great, it
16 does do good, they provide a lot of good information to us. They
17 give us that outside-the-box view. Even though they're inside the
18 box, if you will, inside the big box, they're still outside of
19 that administrative box, you know, and it helps, it helps us be
20 able to really check ourselves, honestly, to make sure that what
21 we're pushing out from the administrative side is going to fly
22 with the operational side, so --

23 Q. There's a lot of straddling line there when you've got --

24 A. Yeah, it's difficult, yeah.

25 Q. -- reps on those things.

1 A. Yeah, it's difficult.

2 Q. What is your composition of that team? Because you have
3 separate areas in there, you're just in building, not counting at
4 the tower or the center.

5 A. So what we do, we do our best to balance out the -- we have
6 basically two different areas, right, and two different lines. We
7 have an A line and a C line, one works the approach wall and
8 satellite, and the other works the approach wall and then the
9 departures and Macon and Columbus. So we do our best to balance
10 those out so the participants -- we try to get two controllers
11 from each line on the safety council and then when we're putting
12 together the supes, a lot of our supes have been previous
13 controllers here, so they would be an A line or a C line
14 themselves. So we try to balance that out as much as we can, too,
15 and have an A line supe and a C line supe on there, as well, to
16 keep that balance so that when issues come up that I may not be
17 familiar with on the A line, we've got some C line people over
18 here that can give some valuable input to that, too, and we
19 balance it out as best we can.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. And just one more follow-up --

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. -- because you say normally you're trying to get two to --

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. Do you have set personnel that go to every meeting until
2 obviously there's a changeover at some point?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Or is it we're trying to grab two people --

5 A. No, no.

6 Q. So they're designees --

7 A. It's set personnel, yes, sir.

8 Q. All right.

9 A. There's set personnel on both sides, the management and the
10 controller side. We also have representatives from the staff
11 units in the back who come in and they attend the meetings,
12 they're there just basically to answer questions, this and that,
13 especially when ideas come up, yeah, especially when ideas come
14 up, you know, it kind of works in reverse. Sometimes those ideas
15 come from the floor and then the administrative side comes in and
16 goes well, you can't do that because -- well, why? Well, because
17 this rule here that nobody knows about, this one here or this one
18 there. So we try to keep that checks and balances as even as we
19 can.

20 MR. MEYERS: Okay, okay.

21 MR. PROFFITT: Yes, sir.

22 MR. MEYERS: I'm good.

23 MS. KOSCHIG: I don't have any more questions. Sarah?

24 MS. LEWIS: Uh-uh.

25 MS. KOSCHIG: Steven, do you have any questions for us?

1 MR. PROFFITT: No, ma'am, I don't think so. No.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: I'm really excited to hear about the NWP and
3 how that's going to create some training for that.

4 MR. PROFFITT: Yeah, I'd like to see it, too. I haven't seen
5 any -- I haven't seen any previews of it. I really don't even
6 know what it is other than just kind of what, you know, I've been
7 loosely told, so I'd be -- I'm a tech nerd when it comes to that
8 stuff, so I like seeing that stuff, so it's good stuff.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: That sounds great.

10 MR. PROFFITT: Yeah. Yeah.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: Well, I will go ahead and end the interview at
12 9:11.

13 (Whereupon, at 9:11 a.m., the interview concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

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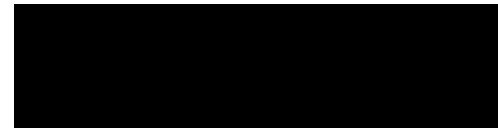
IN THE MATTER OF: CESSNA P210N FATAL ACCIDENT
 NEAR JUNCTION CITY, GEORGIA
 ON AUGUST 10, 2023
 Interview of Steven Proffitt

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA23FA330

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: October 13, 2023

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



David A. Martini
Transcriber