

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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ISRAEL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES FATAL *

ACCIDENT AT THE INGALLS FIELD * Accident No.: ERA24FA136

AIRPORT IN HOT SPRINGS, VIRGINIA *

ON MARCH 10, 2024 *

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Interview of: MARK LANDHOLT

Federal Aviation Administration

March 10, 2024

APPEARANCES:

WARRANT ABRAMS, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ROCKY STONE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ADAM GERHARDT, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JAY VENABLE, FAA Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:05 a.m.)

MR. ABRAMS: All right. I show the time is 8:05 a.m.

Mark, I'm Warran Abrams, I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. Thank you for allowing us to come down here and talk to you today. And what we're trying to do, this is just a normal investigation. And we want to hear your side of the story of what contact you may have had with Sky Jet Elite, their pilot, and things that go on from there.

As I said, we'll record the interview today. They'll be -- the recording will be sent out to be transcribed. And we typically go 20 days to have the transcripts back in our hands and takes about a week, so -- it can be -- it'll be about a month before we get them in your hands.

As I said Mark -- or Mark, you're entitled to have somebody represent you today and do you have a representative?

MR. LANDOLT: Yes, I do.

MR. ABRAMS: And who is that?

MR. LANDOLT: Camille.

MS. CASTILLO: Camille Castillo.

MR. ABRAMS: Good to see you, Camille.

MS. CASTILLO: Nice to meet you.

MR. ABRAMS: Glad to have you today.

Mark, the way we do this is I'm going to start off with a series of questions. I focus more on admin, your admin, what --

1 the role of -- as the POI, what you do. And Rocky, and Adam, and
2 Jay will drill down -- more of the flight of what you flew with --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Colomornarez.

4 MR. ABRAMS: Colomoranez. Yes.

5 MR. LANDOLT: Claudio. Claudios.

6 MR. ABRAMS: Did you call him Claudio or did you call him --

7 MR. LANDOLT: Claudio.

8 MR. ABRAMS: You did?

9 MR. LANDOLT: Yes, sir.

10 MR. ABRAMS: All right. Some people called him Jose?

11 MR. LANDOLT: I'm not familiar with that.

12 MR. ABRAMS: Okay. So if you ever need to take a break in
13 the middle of this, just -- we'll take a break. If there's a
14 question we ask you that you don't know the answer to or you need
15 it rephrased, please ask because, you know, we're just here to
16 gather the information.

17 MR. LANDOLT: Okay. No problem.

18 MR. ABRAMS: All right. You ready to rock and roll?

19 MR. LANDOLT: Rock and roll.

20 MR. ABRAMS: Good deal, Mark. Thank you.

21 INTERVIEW OF MARK LANDOLT

22 BY MR. ABRAMS:

23 Q. If you would, state your name, full name, and spell your last
24 name.

25 A. Yeah. Mark Landolt. That's L-a-n-d-o-l-t.

1 Q. Thank you. And Mark, how old are you?

2 A. I'm 70 years old.

3 Q. All right. And what is your position here at the FAA?

4 A. Presently, I'm in transition. I was formally a POI and I'm a
5 ASI. I was a POI assigned to certificates. I'm now transitioned
6 to the 142 side of the house, that would be oversight of training
7 centers.

8 Q. Good. Excellent. How long have you been a POI?

9 A. I was for a POI from approximately 2016 through this previous
10 May. May 5th or 10th was the transition date for the 142.

11 Q. How many operators did you have under your control?

12 A. At one point, it varied between 13 and 15.

13 Q. Did you have an assistant POI at any time?

14 A. I had an assistant all the time that I was a POI.

15 Q. Good. And just one assistant?

16 A. Just one assistant, correct.

17 Q. Were these 13 to 15 operators, were they all 135, or was any
18 -- are any of the operators 121?

19 A. No. No, 121. All a part of 135 except I had oversight over
20 a crop duster, 137.

21 Q. Okay. Were any of those 135s operating under DOT 380?

22 A. No. None of them were.

23 Q. The scheduled operations?

24 A. Yeah. I'm very familiar with 380.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I'm sure.

2 Q. All right. Point to a -- through a typical day of a POI.
3 What was your typical day like with all these operators?

4 A. Well, for the most part, of the 13 to 15 operators, several
5 of them were single pilot operators.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Some of them were dormant through COVID period. Very limited
8 operations or no operations at all. The -- for the majority of
9 them, they were existing certificate holders that I inherited, you
10 know, when I became a POI that had already been established in the
11 office. Some of them were certifications that I had been a
12 certification program manager on. So those you really get to
13 know. But that's about the size of that.

14 I mean, on a typical day, we'd handle requests for check
15 pilots constantly, revisions to training programs. Just every
16 day, day in day out, FSDO activity. Besides that, of course, we'd
17 have, you know, occasionally an operator would have a pilot
18 deviation, or something like that, which would be directed to the
19 POI that was -- had oversight over that certificate holder.

20 Q. Certainly. Did you ever get out of the office much and fly
21 with these operators?

22 A. Well, some of them, yes. The less sophisticated ones, yes.
23 However, you know, we're limited in scope. I -- here I had been a
24 Turboprop pilot for 20 years before I came to the FAA. But I
25 didn't get through the FAA Turboprop School for five and half

1 years in the FAA. So there was -- within the scope of what I
2 could do, I did, which was an excellent way to see the quality of
3 what was going on there.

4 Q. Do you hold a current medical certificate?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. And what class is that?

7 A. Second class.

8 Q. And are you still an active pilot?

9 A. Yes, I am. I'm in the EBC Program, Event Base Currency.

10 Q. Tell me EBC. I'm not sure -- familiar with that.

11 A. Okay. ASIs that are in the flight program, we call it the
12 flight program, attend Event Base Currency flying every 90 days.
13 So every 90 days I fly to Dallas, go to the Alliance airport. I
14 fly a single engine aircraft, do a complete basically, like a
15 check ride. It maneuvers emergencies, approaches, holding, all
16 that stuff. Do that in a Piston Twin, as well, including VMC
17 demonstration every 90 days. The same routine basically, for each
18 type of airplane, and the King Air, as well. So, generally, I fly
19 about, six hours every 90 days. Somewhere in that neighborhood.

20 Q. And you get three take off and landings?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Good.

23 A. Although, we never act as piloting command, as you are
24 probably well aware.

25 Q. I understand. I understand. Other than going to Dallas for

1 your recency every 90-days, do you have a travel budget? Or did
2 you?

3 A. Not that I'm aware of.

4 Q. Okay. So if you requested overtime -- or did you ever
5 request overtime?

6 A. Well, sometimes I request overtime to fulfill the FSDO's
7 needs for checks.

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. Of course, I'd like -- I would dedicate my required 40-hours
10 to the office in my direct oversight situation. But we have a lot
11 of operators, and they need line checks primarily.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. So, I would do that. The office would approve that for
14 weekends if that's what was required to get the job done.

15 Q. Were most of your operators Piston operators or were there a
16 mix of jets in there?

17 A. Mostly jets, I'm going to say. I got to actually think about
18 that. I had some Piston operators, but they were primarily jet
19 operators.

20 Q. Right. And when I say Turbine -- I say jet, I'm including
21 Turbine, King Airs, and things like that.

22 A. Oh, okay. Yeah. Yeah, primarily they were.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Maybe five of those were Piston operators.

25 Q. When the -- when you go out and do a 299 ride.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. Would you be in a control seat? Would you be in the --

3 A. In a Piston engine aircraft I would, generally.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And I had very few, in fact, any single pilot Turbine
6 operators. Although, I'm trying to think if -- yeah, I mean,
7 occasionally. But not in a -- obviously, in a two-crew aircraft,
8 I would be in the back of the airplane. Either in the jump seat
9 in between them, or they'd have the speaker turned up, or they
10 could accommodate a headset, if they had a jumper wire. They
11 would do that so I could hear the CRM aspects of the operation.

12 Q. Boy, Mark, thank you. Your answer -- you're answering my
13 questions before I ever get them out so, very good.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Next question was where do you sit but you just answered
16 that, so.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Thank you. Are you -- tell me about your flying background.
19 What are you rated in? Where -- give me the Reader's Digest
20 version of when you started. You've been in this business
21 probably, 50 years.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And --

24 A. Nudging up there.

25 Q. Yeah, so.

1 A. Yeah. I started flying in Colorado. I had some -- met some
2 buddies. Always want to be -- to get my pilot certificate and
3 they all helped me with that endeavor, get my ratings. Got my
4 first -- my first commercial job was flight instructing. I did
5 that for about a year or so and then I got an opportunity to fly
6 an aerial mapping aircraft. A Turbo 206 Cessna. Flew around,
7 basically the western states doing aerial mapping. Very
8 interesting work. Good part was, there was never -- you couldn't
9 take pictures when its cloudy so it was -- it was kind of a fun
10 job. But then I got my first 135, shortly thereafter. And at one
11 point, I was doing both, you know, as little as I could to stay
12 within the confines of the flight duty regulations. And that
13 operation went to Tango Uniform. That's not a good thing to say.
14 But, you know what I mean.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

16 MR. LANDOLT: It did. And then I moved because they're very
17 limited opportunist in Colorado. But the nature of South Florida
18 with approximately to the islands, it's a job-rich environment
19 versus Colorado. So I moved here in 1989. I already had my ATP,
20 multi-engine ATP. It's very tough to find a job. It's when the
21 Eastern went on strike. I got a job flying a Navajo. And flew
22 that for this company. I was the -- I started out as just regular
23 line pilot. Very challenging, my very first flight was from South
24 Florida to Cap-Haitien, Haiti which is about, 7.8 hours roundtrip.
25 Did that -- stayed with that company for nine years. I became the

1 Chief Pilot in year two. I was a check airman. Became the check
2 airman. They got a Turboprop in 1990. And I flew that for about
3 four or five years, as well as the Navajo, intermixing between the
4 two platforms there. And Navajo flying gets kind of old after a
5 while. We lost the Turbine and I went to fly for a company called
6 IBC Airways out of Miami.

7 I got hired as the Chief Pilot. They flew Metroliners. So I
8 got checked out in Metro II. Then got my type rating in December
9 of '98 in the Metro III which was, of course, they required a
10 type. I was typed in the Bandeiranti as well, it was a 12 -- over
11 12-5 aircraft. 13-007, gross weight. I flew for IBC, was the --
12 became a check airman in the Metroliner. We got a Shorts aircraft
13 after that. Shorts 360-200. I flew that, became the check pilot
14 in that, as well.

15 Then -- well, somewhere in between that we had an old 402B,
16 which very difficult to keep pilots in, but I was also a pilot and
17 check airman in that, as well. We then transitioned to a SAAB
18 Aircraft. I got my type and I -- I'm thinking, '05? And became a
19 check airman, as well. Flew that till I left the company in 2014
20 and came to the FAA.

21 Q. Wow, Mark. How many type ratings do you have?

22 A. I have four Turboprop type ratings. No Turbojet.

23 Q. No Turbojet, okay. Going back to the Metroliner, which one
24 had the long wing?

25 A. The Metro III.

1 Q. Metro III. Okay.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. The other ones had the shorter wing and --

4 A. Yeah. And these were all single pilot, no autopilot, except
5 that we finally got a passenger, couple of passenger airplanes
6 which required a crew of two.

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. Because it was 10 or more passenger seats.

9 Q. Okay. I grew up all -- in the 121 world. Tell me what is a
10 299 ride?

11 A. It's a line check. It's an observation of normal line
12 operations.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Where we look at, you know, a variety of factors. But it's
15 also a good opportunity to review the training records, as well.

16 Q. All right.

17 A. Almost always require them to bring them to make sure that
18 we're not furthering something that was not fulfilled beforehand.

19 Q. On a 299, I realize it's not a rating ride, but do they --
20 does the pilot -- is he required, or she required, to fill out a
21 weight and balance?

22 A. Well, it's part 91 operation, right?

23 Q. Right.

24 A. So technically, no. But we're simulating part 135, so
25 normally they would do a weight a balance.

1 Q. Okay. There's a 293 ride and 297 ride. What's the
2 difference between all of these?

3 A. Well, 293 is generally, a -- well, there's a lot of elements
4 to 293. There's -- all the elements of 293 include the 293 A1,
5 which is the appropriate portions of part 61, 91, 135 operations
6 specifications in the manual of the certificate holder. It goes
7 on to talk about meteorology, in general, and some other things
8 including, windshear, that kind of stuff, as well. Normally, when
9 a pilot flying a less -- an airplane that they don't go to 142
10 training center for, we do the complete 293.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Which is essentially, when you're given the competency check,
13 is the same as a 297 proficiency. Missing some of the elements of
14 that.

15 Q. Okay. Thank you for that explanation. That help clear up
16 some of the, in my mind, help clear up what that is. Have you
17 ever had to conduct a 709 ride?

18 A. Yes, I have.

19 Q. Since it's been in the past, can you tell me the outcome,
20 good or bad? Did the pilot pass or was the pilot --

21 A. The pilot passed.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. It was a Turboprop aircraft. If I recall, the last one that
24 I did. I think I've done another one too where we had a situation
25 where airman needed to be re-examined for his competency, but I

1 only had to do a portion of that.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Some of it was missed.

4 Q. Mark, I'm going to transition a little bit into Claudio and
5 his flight. I'm not going to ask a whole lot of questions. I'm
6 not going to drill down like these guys will drill into it. But
7 anyway, did Sky Jet Elite use iPads?

8 A. Yes, they did.

9 Q. Okay. And when Claudio -- when you -- you flew with Claudio;
10 is that correct?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. And that was a 299 ride?

13 A. That is correct.

14 Q. And who would -- do you recall who was in the right seat?

15 A. I don't remember the young man's name. I believe, it was
16 Roberto, if I'm not mistaken though.

17 Q. Was Roberto an employee of Sky Jet Elite?

18 A. I believe he was, yes.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. In fact, I believe that they -- it was -- apparently an
21 outstanding airman and they had great hopes for him to eventually
22 get into the management, into a Chief Pilot. But he did not have
23 the experience.

24 Q. When you flew with Claudio, I'm not familiar with South
25 Florida, there's got to be a training area down near the training

1 airport, or something like that. What airport did you use -- or
2 where'd you start -- where'd you originate?

3 A. We start -- we originate out of FLL, Fort Lauderdale --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- International and went up to Palm Beach.

6 Q. All right.

7 A. Where they -- I believe they shot an approach there, you
8 know, just normal in VMC conditions. Join the ILS or whatever to,
9 I think, it's 10 right. I can't remember their runways up there
10 in Palm Beach, but to the east.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. About normal, observe just normal crew interaction. Didn't
13 appear to be any difficulties.

14 Q. Were there any non-precision approaches with Claudio?

15 A. Not that I was -- not that I have witnessed.

16 Q. Okay. Did you have much interaction with the management at
17 Sky Jet Elite?

18 A. A lot of interaction with the management at Sky Jet Elite. I
19 talked to the new DO, which became the DO in November, I believe,
20 of 2023. But the previous DO, Dan, kind of grew the company,
21 helped the company grow. He was there for four and a half years
22 prior to being dismissed as the DO by the owner. But I talk to
23 him constantly.

24 Q. Did you talk to the owner much?

25 A. Very little. We generally don't deal -- we deal with 119

1 people, not owners, so. And that -- oh, that's about it on that.

2 Q. Was there anything about Sky Jet Elite that kept you awake at
3 night?

4 A. No. No. But just like any other operator, we're not
5 embedded with them. We hope that their commitment to safety is
6 equal to or exceeds ours. And if -- and nobody wants an
7 unfortunate event. So with that in mind, hopefully they make good
8 decisions.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. And the interest is of the safety.

11 Q. Do you recall if Sky Jet Elite was talking about or
12 discussing any possibility of adding additional aircraft to their
13 type certificate?

14 A. Yes, they had. They had -- had proposed several aircrafts
15 over the previous few years. Much which, you know, I would talk
16 to the previous DO, Dan Bruner, a lot. The owner would come up
17 with an aircraft that I would, quite frankly say, you know, this
18 is going to very a difficult endeavor. One of which was the
19 IA1124, which is the Israeli jet. There's no sim for it and no
20 qualified inspectors in the FAA to facilitate their checks. So
21 that died on the vine which, you know, is -- was a good thing.

22 They also proposed a King Air that never came to fruition.
23 They put on a -- I could tell you the lineage of those. They put
24 on a Learjet, they did the proving runs on Lear 60, years ago.
25 Before that they were just a Navajo operator. So they did the

1 proving runs. They Lear 60 away. They put on Beech 400. That
2 went away. They put on a Lear 55 that did one revenue leg that
3 I'm aware of and broke hard. And after that, they -- and in the
4 interim, somewhere along the line, they put two Navajo's on the
5 certificate but they got a pilot. The aircraft was constantly
6 broken and in fact, that was Claudio's -- I think the intent was
7 for Claudio to become the check airman in the Navajo, because he
8 had a lot of Navajo experience and was presently flying for
9 another operator.

10 Q. Do you know who that operator was?

11 A. Yeah. Aztec Airways.

12 Q. Okay. Mark, I'm going to stop right there. We'll have a
13 second round of questions, kind of follow-up questions.

14 A. Sure.

15 MR. ABRAMS: But I'm going to turn it over to Rocky right now
16 and let him carry on the conversation, please.

17 BY MR. STONE:

18 Q. Well, thank you, Mark. Your answers have been very helpful,
19 so far. And actually, I'm quite impressed with what you're doing
20 and what you have done with Sky Jet Elite and all the 135
21 operators that you have to oversee.

22 I'm going to start with just a couple questions about, as the
23 supervisor, as, you know, as a POI, you are responsible for
24 approving things like selection of the Chief Pilot.

25 A. Right.

1 Q. What do you look at, or what qualifications do you consider
2 when you're evaluating somebody to be a Chief Pilot?

3 A. Well, of course, I go to the guidance. The 8,000, 8,900.1
4 Volume 2, Chapter 2, Section 3. There's the qualifications met --
5 evaluate the qualifications of management personnel is in there.
6 And it basically, is a little bit of road map to guide you to what
7 the qualifications are. And a lot of times, if the person meets
8 those 119 qualifications right off the bat, it's kind of, a matter
9 of interviewing them, see whether they have a basic idea of what
10 the job is, what the -- we ask them questions about the
11 appropriate -- basically, like an oral, you know, appropriate
12 parts to 61, 91, 135 operation specifications, and the manual is
13 typical which is kind of a stretch. When you're bringing a new
14 guy, how is he going to know what a -- the contents of a 200 page
15 manual. But they basically understand the layout of it and what
16 the duties and responsibilities of the position are, that kind of
17 stuff. So that's the tools that I use.

18 Q. Okay. So you were the POI at Sky Jet Elite prior to Claudio
19 being the Chief Pilot?

20 A. That's correct.

21 Q. So that means you, you interacted with a prior Chief Pilot.
22 Can you tell us about that or who that was, or?

23 A. Well, now, I'm trying to think. Oh, the previous owner of
24 the company, Paul Hudik, was the Chief Pilot prior to -- I'm -- if
25 my timeline is correct. Prior to that. The company changed hands

1 in -- to a new owner from Paul Hudik, who was the owner. And a
2 new owner took the reins and moved on from there. But they've had
3 -- they start out with a Director of Operations who was very well-
4 known in the FSDO. He left. They got another guy in and in the
5 end the brought in Dan Bruner for the previous, like, five years
6 ago. And I interacted with Dan quite often.

7 Q. Do you have any idea as to why they let Dan Bruner go, or?

8 A. Well, I do. I -- Dan kind of confided in me to say that
9 there was some disagreements in the hierarchy of the company
10 between himself and the owner. He said, the owner and he were not
11 seeing eye-to-eye on some issues. So I got a call from the owner,
12 I was here at the FSDO, saying Mark, I'd like to have a meeting
13 with you, which is very rare. I don't deal with owners, to be
14 honest with you, in the position. I deal with 119 people. I said
15 no problem, I'll come down. I already had a leading suspicious
16 that thing weren't happy between him and the DO.

17 So when I walked in to meet him and I met his wife, as well.
18 Very lovely lady. And I said well, what's going on? We'd like to
19 replace Dan. I said, really? Okay. That's certainly your
20 business decision. We stand outside of that. But I did say, I
21 thought Dan was doing, as DO's go, he's as good as they get. He
22 said no, we've made up our mind. We've got this other guy Chris
23 Sharp, who's a decent individual. I met him personally before and
24 evaluated him. He was a younger guy, but not as savvy with the
25 ways of certificate, managing certificate. So I -- he met the

1 qualifications, so we installed him. And that's about what I know
2 about that.

3 Q. Okay. Do you know, is Sky Jet Elite operating now?

4 A. Yes, they are. Apparently they're operating with just one
5 aircraft.

6 Q. All right.

7 A. They had -- following the crash, from what I understand,
8 there were four aircraft on the certificate. Although, I don't
9 know whether that fourth one actually existed. They lost the one
10 in the crash, one of the owners left, pulled his airplane off.
11 They were down to two. One of the two had an engine malfunction
12 and landed short of the intended destination, but at an airport,
13 with a vibration or something. And it ended up being an engine
14 and it's now, from what I understand, it's beyond economic repair,
15 so that's --

16 Q. So there are --

17 A. -- we're down to one aircraft and I believe, they have three
18 -- last I talked to Chris Sharp, they were down to three pilots.

19 Q. Okay. Are -- do you have any concerns with the operation
20 today, as it stands?

21 A. Well, I'm not the POI anymore.

22 Q. Oh --

23 A. But --

24 Q. Okay, yeah.

25 A. Well, again, you know, I don't think there's a bigger wake up

1 call than an unfortunate event that occurred. Hopefully, they're
2 doing an extra vigilant job of ensuring that safety. But, no, I
3 mean, it was -- I'm not going to say it was a freak thing but,
4 it's -- it happened.

5 Q. Okay. And Warren asked you a little bit about the 299 ride
6 that you gave Claudio on --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- I'd like to, kind of go back to that a little bit.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. It was only seven/tenths of an hour and when you do a 299
11 ride I mean, so, first of all, you're going to look at their
12 training record, I assume.

13 A. Right.

14 Q. And that's why its not a 293 ride because he went through --

15 A. Right.

16 Q. -- an approved school.

17 A. Yeah, he went to 142.

18 Q. Okay. So do you have -- do you remember looking at his
19 training record or was there anything --

20 A. I believe I looked at his training record. I normally do.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. So I looked at his and the first officers. Even though the
23 first officer isn't getting a 299, it is a crew.

24 Q. Right. So Claudio had some issues when he went through
25 flight safety and he required some extra training.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. And there's some disagreement as to, you know, how well that
3 was communicated between Elite, Sky Jet Elite, and flight safety.
4 And I'm wondering are -- as a POI, are you involved in -- or
5 you're just -- that conversation is not pertinent to what you're
6 doing?

7 A. I became aware of that but I had no idea at the time --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- that there was any training difficulties. But, again,
10 it's training. It'd be great if we were all the ace of the base
11 and we could hit the -- put the dart in the middle of the -- yeah,
12 but it doesn't always happen that way.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. And although it, you know, can have some lasting, how should
15 I say implications, after the fact. But it's not the -- it's not
16 the end all. I don't know. I didn't even know anything about it,
17 so.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. It is what it is.

20 Q. Okay. And I guess, theoretically, I mean, even if they had
21 training difficulty, it shouldn't have an impact on your
22 evaluating what you see on your ride, I assume?

23 A. No, I --

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. I -- maybe it would. I mean, we can't -- you can't pretend

1 that we didn't hear something, you know what I mean?

2 Q. Right.

3 A. So you'd be extra vigilant to do whatever or maybe, present a
4 different type of scenario on a line check, but a line check is
5 normal operations.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. In fact, the shorter of the line check the more difficult it
8 is a lot of times. Because, you know, you have to pick up the
9 ATIS from an airport that's 15 minutes away. You got to do all
10 that, set up the approach, and do all that stuff. So it's pretty
11 tough to do, actually.

12 Q. Yeah. And actually, I -- that was kind of -- you're leading
13 me into my next question, which is good. It was only, I think, a
14 seventh tenths of an hour?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Check ride? Is that normal for --

17 A. Oh, pretty much, yeah.

18 Q. Pretty much. And it's strictly a line oriented check, so
19 there's no --

20 A. There's no maneuvers. There's no --

21 Q. -- emergency procedures, no thing --

22 A. No emergencies, no nothing.

23 Q. It's just going from Fort Lauderdale to Palm Beach and --

24 A. That's it.

25 Q. -- how about -- I mean, does their turn leg also count as

- 1 part of the line check, or?
- 2 A. Yeah, we did, at that point, yeah. But a lot of times you'll
- 3 have two pilots and they switch seats. It just --
- 4 Q. Oh, okay.
- 5 A. -- you know, and it's half that, basically. But, again,
- 6 they're both fulfilling the role, different roles in that
- 7 scenario.
- 8 Q. Okay. So -- and now, in the G100 that the check ride was in.
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. Is there a jump seat or were you in the back?
- 11 A. No, I was in the back. But as soon as they -- as -- you
- 12 know, I'm strapped in for takeoff as --
- 13 Q. Right.
- 14 A. -- soon as the airplane lifts off, I walk to the front. So I
- 15 can --
- 16 Q. So you can see everything --
- 17 A. -- stick my head in between and see what's going on.
- 18 Q. Okay. And then -- and even when you're in the back, you're
- 19 listening.
- 20 A. Yeah. They always have me turn the speaker up.
- 21 Q. Right.
- 22 A. I said I want to be able to hear the crew and ATC.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. So that's --
- 25 Q. And any recollection of the crew coordination? You said

1 earlier that the serum was good. Any recollection of --

2 A. No, to be honest with you, probably do a hundred of them in a
3 year, you know what I mean?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. I don't recall any issues whatsoever. No missed radio calls.
6 No, you know, you'll see that occasionally.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. You know, one, we're looking over their shoulder, but it's a
9 very tough environment to go to an airport that's literally, 40
10 miles away, 30 miles away. So they're very busy, but I saw
11 nothing on that flight that indicating any difficulties.

12 Q. Okay. And then on the way back. So you landed at West Palm
13 Beach and then on the way back were you doing the same --

14 A. Yeah, same thing.

15 Q. Okay. I think that might -- that might be all I have for
16 now.

17 A. Okay.

18 MR. STONE: I think I'm going to turn it over to Adam.

19 BY MR. GERHARDT:

20 Q. Yes. This is Adam Gerhardt. I am the NTSB Investigator in
21 charge for the accident.

22 Thank you, Mark, for being here.

23 A. No problem.

24 Q. I'm going to start back with Claudio. I see a few 135-293
25 orals. Oral exams for the PA31.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. Could you walk me through, to the -- so -- because some of
3 these things I see, like, Brian Hahn on here.

4 A. He was my assistant, correct.

5 Q. Got it.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. The kind of -- the history of Claudio coming onto the
8 certificate, November 2022 --

9 A. Right.

10 Q. -- as the Chief Pilot. And then Sky Jet Elite's intention to
11 use the PA31 --

12 A. Right.

13 Q. -- on their certificate and what Mr. Dan Bruner wanted to do,
14 what Sky Jet Elite wanted to do, the kind of the start and stops
15 in the fits of the PA31; that environment.

16 A. Sure, sure. Okay. Well, I'll start off. I think to the
17 dismay of Dan Bruner, they put -- they wanted to put a Navajo on
18 the certificate because primarily, that's the Ford F-150 of going
19 to the Bahamas, basically. Right? And the intent there was not
20 just to operate the Navajo, which I know Dan didn't want any part
21 of because he, you know, jets certainly bring in a lot more
22 revenue. The intent was to get approval for the PDP, the Pilot
23 Development Program, so that the owner of Sky Jet Elite, who also
24 owned Atlantis Flight School, could dangle, kind of a carrot in
25 front of his instructors. Say listen, do a good job, we can get

1 you in this, get some multi-time in a Navajo under the PDP. And,
2 you know, and use that as a farm team, I guess for the Turbojet
3 Aircraft, as well, which to me is a great idea.

4 It's a new tool, you know, the PDPs only been out for a few
5 years. The downfall of PDP which was, kind of, struck me as a
6 surprise is that the pilot in command under the PDP has to have,
7 like, six months or a year as Captain on that aircraft. It's,
8 like, the turnover was -- it was kind of, like, a shooting you
9 right in the foot. It's, like, goodness. But that was their
10 intention.

11 So at some point, the aircraft was undergoing a lot of
12 maintenance, the one, Navajo. Brian Hahn went to check Claudio
13 out. When it finally got to somewhere where we thought we could
14 do a check, or they thought it could do a check, and they got
15 weathered out, I believe, on the first attempt. Brian gave an
16 oral. So I think that was back in, July, August, I can't remember
17 the timeline.

18 So anyway, they get another Navajo, they put another Navajo
19 on the certificate. I think it was for conformity and all that
20 stuff. And I went out with it, as an OJT Instructor, to take a
21 fellow ASI, or one of our inspectors, to get OJT for giving a
22 check ride. We got in the aircraft, if I'm -- I'm just trying to
23 think if the timeline's correct. We got in the aircraft and it
24 had a mechanical -- gyro wouldn't come up. So it's, like, my
25 goodness, you know. So at that point, waiting again for them to

1 get the aircraft up to speed for the check of Claudio.

2 And I think, prior to Claudio going to the 142, we said
3 listen, let's just reset you on the oral because now they're just,
4 you know, just so far apart. And myself, and Brian were in Sky
5 Jet Elite's facility using a conference room at Sheltair. And
6 administer an oral -- I think I did Claudio and Brian did the
7 other pilot, the FO, whoever he -- Roberto, I believe. And that
8 was that. I'd only met Claudio a few times. Very personable guy.
9 Beech18 driver. Navajo for, I guess, he had flown for Aztec from
10 2016 continually. And unbeknownst to me, he also flew for another
11 one of my operators, REVA Air Ambulance, which kind of, I said,
12 okay. He has -- I think that was his second full type rating, if
13 I'm not mistaken. I don't know.

14 It really broke my heart when this happened, you know. I met
15 the guy, he's a very nice individual. Grew up flying with his
16 dad. He said, I used to sit on my dad's lap flying a Beech18 or
17 DC3 back in Venezuela, where he's from, so. That's a shame.

18 Q. Yeah, it is. Well, thank you, Mark, for that.

19 A. Certainly.

20 Q. And excellent overview. So you mentioned a few areas that I
21 want to go and I'm thinking about, since you brought up REVA.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. That was one, that was one area.

24 A. Right.

25 Q. So, when -- I want to go back to in November of 2022.

- 1 A. Correct.
- 2 Q. He's accepted as the Chief Pilot.
- 3 A. Right.
- 4 Q. The -- I have a list here of the aircraft on the certificate.
- 5 At that time it looked like they had -- this is from -- this paper
- 6 here is from AVP-110 of --
- 7 A. Okay. Yeah.
- 8 Q. -- base of the reporting what aircraft are on their
- 9 certificate. And so in March of 2022, Learjet was on the
- 10 certificate. In October of 2022, the Learjet is removed.
- 11 A. Okay.
- 12 Q. And one of the PA31s is added.
- 13 A. Okay. Is that the first PA31 or the second one?
- 14 Q. It looks like this is the first one.
- 15 A. Okay. And what's the date again on that? October?
- 16 Q. October 12th, 2022.
- 17 A. Okay.
- 18 Q. So they've got a PA31, 350, added to the certificate --
- 19 A. Got you.
- 20 Q. November 9247 Lema.
- 21 A. I --
- 22 Q. Yeah, yeah. And that matches up with one of these 293 rides.
- 23 A. Okay.
- 24 Q. So when you have to evaluate when 119 talks about aircraft
- 25 used on the certificate, what the Chief Pilot needs to be

1 qualified to act as PIC on a aircraft used on the certificate.

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. What is the guidance available -- what is your interpretation
4 of the -- what an inspector should --

5 A. Well, I'm going to tell you what the, what we call the tribal
6 knowledge is, that, to me, it was the guy needed to be qualified
7 to fly on that certificate on the aircraft. But subsequent to
8 that, I found a legal interpretation that says that's not
9 necessarily true. The person only needs to be qualified to fly an
10 under Part 91. He does not to be, which took my by surprise, in
11 fact, I ran it through the -- I'm trying to think of the
12 Department that handles the deviations. They said Mark, we know
13 about it. 10 out of 8 of us don't believe in it but, it is what
14 it is. And it literally says the person does not have to be
15 qualified in that airplane, which took everybody by surprise.

16 But again, and again, this whole thing with Claudio was
17 edging at me. This guy needs -- we need to get this guy in an
18 airplane, until I came across this. I said, well wait a second,
19 you know, it's not that pressing. And again, remembering that the
20 operator can ask for a deviation to combine positions. So it's an
21 interesting thing.

22 Q. Would you say that looking at legal interpretations in order
23 to evaluate whether or not someone can be a Chief Pilot, is that
24 something that you --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- normally have to do?

2 A. No. But it's always been, I think it's just basically a
3 general question. What does that really mean? It's kind of
4 nondescript in a lot of ways. And again, I've always taken the
5 point where 299 ride, operator could have a J3 on the certificate
6 and a BBJ. And a J3 would suffice for the line check to cover the
7 BBJ, which again, we all know that we have to infuse common sense
8 into a lot of this stuff, which would be in a pretty extreme
9 situation there.

10 Q. That's perfect. That gets that. Can Sky Jet Elite, can they
11 conduct line checks of their own pilots?

12 A. No, they've never had a company check pilot that could do --
13 except, you know, obviously, the 142. But nobody that could do
14 line checks. It was always conducted by the FAA. Although, you
15 could, you know, as you're probably well aware, they could request
16 to use another check airman from another operator, but they've
17 never gone down that road.

18 Q. When we talk about training records for -- a pilot has, to
19 use Claudio as an example here. He's exited the 142 training
20 environment at Flight Safety. They have awarded him the type
21 rating. What specific training records do you -- did you -- do
22 you review? Is it the full flight safety package? Is it just the
23 293, 297, 299 check forms?

24 A. Yeah, 293, 97. No 99 right from the training center.

25 Q. Oh, right, sorry. Thank you.

1 A. But again, to be honest with you, and obviously, I'm being
2 honest with you. There's a lack of standardization in record
3 keeping. And it's like you have to break the code on everybody's
4 records, you know. I wish, and I think the general populous of
5 the inspectors would wish, that there was more of a standard about
6 the -- standardized approach.

7 Some of it is, you know, what he did on each sim session
8 versus a summary sheet, for example. So again, looking at that,
9 if he got this type rating, we look through there and see, you
10 know, he -- that's a process that 142 facilitates. And if he ends
11 up with a type rating, we really don't look at necessarily, each
12 individual. I mean, I don't look at each individual training
13 session, that's for sure. Perhaps it would have alerted me to the
14 difficulties in training but, I did not see it.

15 Q. So the flight safety training records and perhaps, like,
16 instructor notes that's something that would -- you've never had
17 access to, or wouldn't have the -- I don't want to say, you know,
18 you're the FAA, so maybe you could get the record somehow. But
19 would it be unusual to have access to those records?

20 A. I do believe so. You know, of all the records I've looked at
21 through all the years, I don't think I've ever seen much in the
22 way of comments except at, a positive comment. But very few
23 negative comments.

24 Although, yeah, now, that I think about it. When I was doing
25 the shorts type rating, way back in the day, I was surprised that

1 the guy said I was doing good and the other guy was, I thought he
2 was doing better than me. You know what I mean? It was one of
3 those things where you go, really? He thought that was okay? You
4 know, it's -- you're your own worst critic though a lot of times.

5 Q. That's very true. So we're going to go to Mr. Dan Bruner. I
6 have spoken with him.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Very transparent, knowledgeable, individual, like --

9 A. Oh, no. He's --

10 Q. Yeah. So he worked for Sky Jet Elite, I want to say for,
11 four to five years.

12 A. Yup.

13 Q. When -- and I believe his employment ended around October of
14 2022?

15 A. Yeah, the end of October. Yes, of 2022.

16 Q. When -- or 2023, I'm sorry.

17 A. '23. You're correct.

18 Q. That was '23.

19 A. '23.

20 Q. 2023. So what I'm trying to get at is, there was a pretty
21 decent amount of time from when Claudio was the Chief Pilot at Sky
22 Jet Elite, and the Astro Jets were being added to the certificate.

23 A. Right.

24 Q. Do you ever remember a -- anything that Dan discussed with
25 you on Claudio's position as a jet pilot on the Astro Jets versus

1 his decision to keep him on the PA31 --

2 A. Well, I don't recall anything specific. The -- you know,
3 again, Claudio came with a type rating in one Turbo Jet aircraft
4 and I think an SCI rating in another. But no, I don't recall any
5 specific conversation. Claudio's first language was not English.
6 And although, he, sometimes his communication was a little labored
7 or a little slower than our pace of a lot of other people, he
8 would eventually get out the answer. And like I said, he was a
9 very personable guy, you know.

10 We've learned, especially in South Florida, we've got a lot
11 of foreign pilots here. It takes a lot of patience sometimes when
12 you're used to dealing with people that communicate in your
13 language and have done so from day one. So you have to give them
14 a little bit more time to react and to -- I think sometimes they
15 interpret it one way and then reinterpret it another way to give
16 you the answer. But no, he did fine. He had been flying for one
17 of our 135s for years in another -- so two of them. But no, you
18 know, I don't recall that Dan had ever mentioned that. But I
19 don't know.

20 Q. Was there anything surprising about once Claudio was sent to
21 flight safety of -- because what's been described to me from Dan
22 was during his tenure there, he was never going to send Claudio to
23 flight safety on the Astro Jets. And then --

24 A. After the fact, I've had a conversation with --

25 Q. -- once they were removed --

1 A. -- Dan, as well. And he said that, and I said well, you
2 know, it easy to be Monday morning quarterback, you know. He has
3 experience in jets and 135 has really gotten down to, I guess, you
4 know, there's just not the selection of the most -- the people
5 that you'd really want. I mean, obviously, everybody'd want Sully
6 in there. But you're not going to get Sully when everybody's
7 moved on to the regionals or the major airlines and they're now,
8 kind of, looking for, you know, replacement units. And some of
9 them do very, very well. It's a surprising environment.

10 Q. Was there any discussion with -- I'm going to head back a
11 little bit no REVA. REVA totally separate, 135 operator. I
12 believe, they fly primarily Learjets, maybe, only Learjets. I'm
13 not sure.

14 A. They have one Hawker.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And -- yeah, they have one Hawker, I should say that. Right.

17 Q. Was there any -- between the discussions with Chris Sharp,
18 Director of Operations at Sky Jet, or the owner, that concurrent
19 employment, was there anything that would have come into your
20 circle of him being employed as a REVA pilot, but also serving as
21 the Chief Pilot for Sky Jet Elite? Any --

22 A. I didn't --

23 Q. -- sort of discussion --

24 A. -- even know until after the fact that there ever was a REVA
25 pilot, to be honest with you. So it's like, that was news to me.

1 So I talked to the DO over at REVA and who also shared that
2 Claudio wasn't ready for the left seat yet, you know, whatever
3 that means. But that's, I guess, understandable in a lot of ways.
4 REVA's always taking an extremely cautious approach over the
5 years. Guys would be in the right seat for many years sometimes.
6 And again, it's as business dictates, as the selection or the
7 opportunity for pilots gets less that -- they've got to fly the
8 airplanes to stay in business, so. But I had several pilots when
9 I was DO at an outfit down in Miami. I was the Chief Pilot for,
10 seven or eight years, and then a DO for seven or eight years.
11 Several of my pilots had gone over to REVA and flew the Learjets.
12 And it was slow and steady process over there.

13 Q. One of the things that we learned from Aztec Airways was that
14 Claudio was asked to be their Chief Pilot a few days before the
15 accident. Would that be -- now, this is a little bit looking into
16 the future that obviously, tragically didn't happen. Is that
17 something -- can you serve as a Chief Pilot for more than one
18 carrier?

19 A. Yes. And a lot of people do serve in multiple management
20 roles. But again, it leaves the -- it leaves the (indiscernible)
21 to evaluate whether the demands of those operators would conflict
22 with the demands of another. And if the -- it would be more work
23 than you would expect from a person to do a god job at. So, the
24 POI is really the one who evaluates that, if they even know about
25 it. You know, that's another thing. They don't necessarily have

1 to disclose. We've -- it's not often you see a Chief Pilot doing
2 multiple duties, but it does occur.

3 Q. My last question in this round. The role of the Chief
4 Pilot --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- this is a position that, you know, that you've served in
7 before.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Personal experience. Can you describe the -- in your
10 perspective, the general expectations and what is expected of a
11 Chief Pilot at a 135 operator? And this is a wide envelope of --

12 A. Oh, it sure it. Again, to be perfectly frank, it can vary
13 from a person who's totally hands on who's handling the training,
14 which is normally described in the duties and responsibilities of
15 that position in the GOM, to a person who's just a place holder.
16 You know, and a lot of times, depending on the complexity of the
17 operation, that's the way it is. Normally, a person with --
18 anyone who's in the 119 positions has operation control so, you
19 know, hopefully someone's in there evaluating what people are
20 doing. Not necessarily for the everyday stuff, but again, when we
21 have weather extremes, or we have operations that involve shorter
22 runways, night, inexperienced first officers; those things are all
23 apart of that mix of operational control and trying to keep the
24 operation safe.

25 A lot of Chief Pilots are offline. I was a -- I flew as a

1 DO. Flew line operations as well. It's a good way to get out of
2 the office and maintain as a check airman as well. So it's again,
3 it really depends on what type of operation. 135 is evolved
4 significantly from when I first started, so it's an interesting
5 mix now.

6 Q. The last thing, I believe, the other pilot is Rolando Merchan
7 maybe? I mean, or I think it was Robert --

8 A. I believe, that's the younger pilot who was sitting in on the
9 oral prior to going to the training center. If I'm not mistaken.

10 Q. Okay. I was seeing if we had -- that was last thing I was
11 going to ask. Rolando Merchan, he's emailed -- he's -- his email
12 signature says that he's currently the Assistant Chief Pilot.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. So I was wondering if that's the --

15 A. Yeah, but we generally don't recognize that as a 119
16 position.

17 Q. Yeah. Okay.

18 A. You know, it's kind of place holder. But again, if their --
19 that's a good way to learn the business, to become a Chief Pilot
20 someday, is to find somebody who's willing to take on some of
21 those responsibilities and duties of a -- to assist the Chief.

22 MR. GERHARDT: Mark, thank you. That's my round one.

23 MR. LANDOLT: Okay.

24 MR. ABRAMS: Thank you, Adam. Jay?

25 BY MR. VENABLE:

1 Q. Hey Mark, Jay Venable.

2 A. Hey.

3 Q. I'm a Safety Inspector of PAI out of Richmond FSDO. I'm the
4 IIC for this accident. With Sky Jet Elite, would you -- how would
5 you say your surveillance has been over the last few years? You
6 said you've been their POI for a number of years now?

7 A. Yeah, I think I've been there -- I was their POI from around,
8 beginning of 2016 on.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Again, they were just a mom-and-pop operator. Literally, one
11 pilot on the certificate for several of those years.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. They finally got the Learjet on the certificate, which now
14 they require a crew of two. They had always maintained though, a
15 full management positions, a DO, a Chief, and a Director of
16 Maintenance, if I'm not mistaken. I had flown in an Navajo with a
17 previous owner, one Paul Hudik, originally owned the company. I'd
18 flew with him before. My assistant, at that time, Terry Herston
19 (ph.), giving check rides, as well. Paul was the G4 Pilot at
20 another certificate holder, not mine, who was experienced a
21 plethora of small jets. He -- that's where he and Dan Bruner met.
22 They were both on a G4 together.

23 But it -- so the certificate really was just full stops and
24 starts. And finally, they started getting into these Turbojets,
25 and that became a little bit more steady state. They seemed to

1 get some kind of book of business, but not really until the new
2 owner took over. The one who perished in the crash. Other than
3 that, it was just starts and stops.

4 Q. Is that -- when the new owner took over, is that when the
5 started ramping up expansion and adding more and more aircraft?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Okay. And did you -- did they have to upgrade their
8 operations, or were they still basic 135 one full one --

9 A. No, they were full.

10 Q. Full 135 the whole time?

11 A. Well, as long as you have management personnel, it's really
12 kind of --

13 Q. Right.

14 A. There's no sense limiting yourself.

15 Q. I see. So they came around, around the same time as SAS did
16 then.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Or were they certificated out before SAS came into play?

19 A. Oh, yeah.

20 Q. I believe so? Yeah, it was around the same time. How was
21 you -- how are you and your office liking the Safety Assurance
22 System, as far as documentation?

23 A. Well, it's like a lot of things, there's some good in it and
24 there's some troubling aspects of it. A lot of times it seems
25 that it changes to the office rather than being out the field.

1 Depending on the nature of the operator, though, being out the
2 field when the airplanes are scattered around the country, really
3 isn't very effective oversight. Having to, you know, being a POI
4 that goes out and does line checks, that's really what the
5 majority of our surveillance occurs.

6 We have a SAS DCTs to accomplish the effectivity of that, is
7 just marking the bark. I mean, it's just specifics. Basically,
8 what we do in PTRS. But again, this is more regimented. We have
9 the peer groups that dictate the frequency of oversight, which is
10 very interesting because you could have an operator like REVA that
11 had, at one point, I think, 20 airplanes, and they're just the
12 same nine, or less, as somebody has one airplane, or two
13 airplanes. So, we work with it because apparently, it's not going
14 away.

15 Q. That's what I understand, as well. So, I, just doing a
16 little bit of looking up in here and things in the SAS Program.
17 It looks like currently, I mean, I'm not sure when you got removed
18 from Sky Jet and you're over to the 142 centers. I think they
19 still have to do some changing around of assignments in here. It
20 looks like including your 91 operators, you have about 38
21 operators that were assigned to you. And between 135s, 91s, I
22 know a lot of times 91s are -- they're just kind of working out in
23 the background. They don't require a lot of work, but --

24 A. Right.

25 Q. -- they still have to be assigned to a principal team.

- 1 A. Which is a relatively new thing, by the way.
- 2 Q. Right.
- 3 A. The assignment of the 91s operators.
- 4 Q. Right. Yeah. It is for our office, as well. But they still
- 5 may require annual validations of all their vital data, things
- 6 like that --
- 7 A. Right.
- 8 Q. -- and everything.
- 9 A. Yeah. I believe, Sky Jet still had one operations DCT do a
- 10 -- they just moved to --
- 11 Q. I believe so. Yes, yes.
- 12 A. -- it from June 30th to the next quarter.
- 13 Q. And they still one aircraft, one Astro on the certificate?
- 14 A. That's what -- well, I don't know whether the ones been
- 15 removed, the previous one.
- 16 Q. Okay.
- 17 A. It was the first Astro they brought on was the one that broke
- 18 hard in the Phoenix or somewhere. And --
- 19 Q. I see.
- 20 A. -- is beyond economic repair.
- 21 Q. Okay. Yeah, so from what I can tell in the system, there was
- 22 no big red flags with Sky Jet. No reasons to elevate their Rich
- 23 Profile Assessment tool, or enter their CHAT, the certificate
- 24 holder assessment tool.
- 25 A. Well, sometimes that can work in reverse way.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. Sometimes the change is good, you know.

3 Q. Right. Yeah.

4 A. It really depends on what the quality of the personnel or
5 whoever their infusing into the equation is.

6 Q. Did the expansion of them becoming -- going from small
7 airplanes to adding all these Astros, did that trigger any kind of
8 increased risk --

9 A. No, remember --

10 Q. -- on the --

11 A. -- two of the aircraft are basically, phantoms. The two
12 Navajos.

13 Q. Uh-hum.

14 A. So again, it was kind of a slow and steady progression of the
15 Astros. And I don't even know whether the fourth one ever got put
16 on a certificate or was flown operationally. So it can look it's
17 a big operation but, in fact, it was --

18 MR. VENABLE: Right. Okay. That's all I have for now.

19 MR. LANDOLT: Okay.

20 MR. ABRAMS: Thank you, Jay.

21 BY MR. ABRAMS:

22 Q. Mark, I just got -- you okay? You need a break?

23 A. I'm good.

24 Q. All right. We'll keep rolling along. This second round
25 takes -- is a whole shorter than the first round.

1 A. Oh, good.

2 (Laughter)

3 MR. LANDOLT: It's all good.

4 BY MR. ABRAMS:

5 Q. You have mentioned Claudio was a very good individual.

6 A. He seemed that way, you know.

7 Q. Seemed that way. How -- can you assess that same -- can you
8 make that same statement as a pilot; he was a very good pilot?

9 A. No, I -- other than that line check, I had not observed him.
10 Although, I did -- when we went to do -- when I was acting as the
11 OJT instructor and he was going to get a flight check from another
12 inspector, a trainee who was doing a level three, I think, for the
13 299, 297, it was kind of interesting because Claudio who is
14 obviously, communication isn't, you know, spot on with talking to
15 a person whose first language is English. When he got in the
16 airplanes, you know, totally relaxed. It's, like, just went to
17 business. Doing his thing, reading the checklist, and of course,
18 I'm observing and there's another inspector performing those --
19 that initial task, but we never got in the air.

20 So, other than that, I had not seen any flying skills on him.
21 Although, I'm familiar with Aztec Airways. And he flew the Navajo
22 over there which, I believe, is a commuter operation, as well. So
23 he had taken, I'm sure, over the past five years, taken a lot of
24 check rides, plus the Beech18, which apparently is a pretty
25 challenging airplane tale dragger, freighter.

1 So, again, I looked in, you know, when I was evaluating as
2 the Chief Pilot I, of course, looked in PTRS and SPAS and checked
3 him out to see whether there was any negativity in there, and I
4 did not see any. Although, sometimes and, oh, what they call it?
5 I can't even remember the term. But slow to come up sometimes.
6 You got to sit there for 15, 20 minutes. But I saw no negative
7 comments in there.

8 Q. Okay. Good thing.

9 A. You know, PDs, those kinds of things tell you, so even if the
10 guy doesn't speak the cleanest English as we would say, a lack of
11 PDs would indicate to me there's effective communication. He's
12 flown for five years with one operator, was on with several jet
13 operators, and that kind of tells you something.

14 Q. Did any of your operators have an SMS Program?

15 A. Well, that's interesting. REVA, air ambulance operator,
16 attempted to get the FAA's version of SMS several years ago, which
17 involved a team that came from Washington to get them going in
18 SMS. They put on a couple of young college kids to tackle the
19 project. And I sat through several of the SMS meetings with the
20 folks from FAA Washington.

21 And although their plan got approved which again, I don't
22 know whether you're familiar with this, but Europe threatened that
23 if you didn't have an SMS, you weren't coming to Europe or Bermuda
24 or any of those. And so these guys got on that. But it takes a
25 lot of input to -- it's one thing to start it, it's a whole other

1 thing to keep it going. And I don't believe they ever got final
2 approval of it. That team from Washington, from what I
3 understand, had literally only certified a dozen people in so many
4 years. And there was a lot of wanters (ph.). Now, I've had a
5 couple other operators express interest. Some of them have off
6 the shelf commercially available SMS, which is better than no SMS
7 at all. You know, may be superior, who knows. But that's about
8 it.

9 Q. Okay. Sky Jet Elite, they did not have any safety programs
10 as in --

11 A. Not that I'm aware of.

12 Q. -- ASAP or anything like that?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I don't believe they were -- no, they were definitely not an
16 ASAP. We only have a handful of people that are an ASAP in this
17 office.

18 Q. We've mentioned REVA several times. Were you the POI over
19 REVA?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. How were you assigned an operator? In other words,
22 Tony comes up and says -- or do you bid on these positions? Does
23 Tony assign you these positions or?

24 A. Well, when I was due to a vacancy of a GS14 position, and I
25 just inherited a vacant set of certificates to oversee.

1 Q. Okay. But there are certificates added to you as the years
2 go by?

3 A. Yes. And some of them go away, as well. Sometimes there's,
4 you know, when an operator and a FAA person can't work together,
5 that happens. And they reassign somebody that maybe can find a
6 pathway to better communication, or coordination, and cooperation,
7 they sometimes move those certificates.

8 Q. How many POIs would you say are in the South Florida FSDO?

9 A. I'm thinking, there's, like, 12. I could be wrong. I'd have
10 to add them up on my fingers and tell you but --

11 Q. It's okay. It's all right. That's a good estimation. And
12 these are dogs and cat questions.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. When you flew the Shorts 360, did you fly parachute jumpers?

15 A. No, sir.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I flew cargo over to the Bahamas, Camen -- oh, actually, kind
18 of embarrassed to say you got type rating in that. But it's
19 actually a lot of fun to fly. It really was. Like the old, moped
20 joke, you know what I mean.

21 Q. It's a ugly airplane but, yes. I got it. I understand.
22 Were you here when Stan Chrome here?

23 A. No, I don't believe so.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I don't -- names not familiar to me.

1 MR. ABRAMS: All right. Okay. He's -- he was the POI here
2 at this office. He's deceased now. I was just curious. Mark,
3 that's all the questions I have. I'm going to pass it back to
4 Rocky.

5 BY MR. STONE:

6 Q. Thanks, Warren. And thanks, Mark. Still okay to keep going?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. So you talked about your oversight and line checks. Do the
9 second in commands and your certificate holders, do they also
10 require a line checks?

11 A. No, they don't.

12 Q. They don't? So --

13 A. It's only required for pilot in command.

14 Q. So you're never --- do you ever get any interaction or any
15 oversight of who they select as second in command, or --

16 A. Well, usually the person doesn't meet the qualifications to
17 be a pilot in command.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. You know, generally, in a Turbojet you'd have to have a --
20 for passenger carrying operations, you'd have to have an ATP. And
21 the ATP has become a little bit more difficult to get than it used
22 to be, with the CPT requirement.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. But no, we have --

25 Q. So, did you have any interaction with, I believe, his name is

1 Gagun Ready, the IPFO?

2 A. If I did, I cannot recall it to be honest with you.

3 Q. Okay. We were talking about some of Claudio's experience at
4 REVA and Aztec, and some of the other. Is there any way for you,
5 as a POI, to gather information on the performance of these pilots
6 when their operating outside of the certificate that you're
7 concerned about? In other words, so, would you -- is there any
8 way for you to hear from REVA that Claudio was having problems,
9 or --

10 A. Only if they shared that information.

11 Q. So there's --

12 A. You know.

13 Q. Yeah. So there's not --

14 A. Very interesting and new. We, as an ASI, we can't even
15 access PRD.

16 Q. Oh.

17 A. We're not allowed to access the PRD. Which, I find kind of
18 interesting. Although, I've called the people at PRD to say, hey,
19 that something going on here. Can you tell me what you're seeing?
20 Because I don't know whether it's sensitive information or
21 whatever. And PRD is certainly an evolving animal, which will be
22 a great thing when it finally gets full grown.

23 Q. So as a POI, do you think that having, you know, kind of an
24 open communication paths about pilot performance among all of the
25 pilots that you're -- of all the operators you're overseeing. I

1 mean, is that -- would that be a good thing, or?

2 A. Oh, yeah. Of course. If there was a reoccurring difficulty
3 with a pilot.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. The pilot has multiple PDs or you -- and again, a lot of
6 these are just normally, you know, communication problems.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. They're not following directions properly with ATC. But,
9 yeah, no, it'd be a great tool. But, you know, again, looking at
10 the scope of my operators, you're talking hundreds of people
11 sometimes, you know.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. I had one operator who had over a hundred pilots and lost 50
14 percent of them in six months.

15 Q. Wow.

16 A. So the demands when that occurs on the management side, on
17 the FAA side, constant change of check pilots. Need new line
18 checks. Need all this stuff. And is very burdensome.

19 MR. STONE: Right. Okay. Yeah, that's all I have.

20 BY MR. GERHARDT:

21 Q. The -- I don't have much more. The PA 31s, is there any
22 guidance to an inspector as a -- looking at an -- airplanes that
23 are listed on a certificate but the operator is not using them, or
24 they -- they're down for a maintenance constantly, where there's
25 not pilot actually checked out for 135 operation. Can an operator

1 just ride with those on the certificate indefinitely?

2 A. I don't think that there's anything in our guidance that
3 tells us that there's any action required on our side. They
4 obviously, have to maintain the DOT authority, the -- well, I
5 forget the name of the term there, but they have to maintain the
6 insurance, basically. The air taxi exception, we used to call it,
7 right? But, no, there isn't. And it -- again, normally, the
8 operations people don't handle the D or E ops spec. You
9 understand what I mean? But who wants to put an airplane on the
10 certificate, pay the higher insurance for part 135, if it's not
11 operational?

12 Q. Yeah. The line check, February 7th, 2024, was there any
13 other personnel in the back of the plane?

14 A. I don't recall. I'm trying to think if there was, but --

15 Q. Was -- because there was one other flight that their Director
16 of Maintenance rode along for, and I was just wondering if this
17 was the same flight that he did, it could be a totally different
18 flight.

19 A. I don't think so.

20 Q. But I wanted to see if there was anyone else in the back with
21 you?

22 A. Prior to doing this line check, they were out doing a --
23 like, basically, a maintenance validation flight or something that
24 I became aware of. Beautiful airplane. And they were -- run a
25 little late on that line check, as I recall. We were supposed to

1 do it at, like, 3:30 and we ended up not getting in the air until
2 5:30, or so. But they were doing some kind of operational check.

3 Q. Let me make sure. Did you have any interaction with Claudio
4 in between when he was accepted as a Chief Pilot --

5 A. Right.

6 Q. -- and then we come all the way full circle to the February
7 line check.

8 A. I don't --

9 Q. Was there anything that stands out in the middle of all that
10 time? Was he around the operator? Was he in any meetings with
11 Chris?

12 A. Well, I'm not sure whether he was in meetings with Chris or
13 not or what their relationship was. But I had really no reason to
14 really interact with him. Sometimes they would say, hey, we're
15 looking at getting this airplane up, Claudio is out flying for the
16 other operator. Again, I would imagine that if he's, you know, I
17 don't know what his employment status was, or whether we're paying
18 him, or whatever. But I would imagine he had to put food on the
19 table and fly for another operator until this thing got going the
20 way that they wanted it to.

21 Q. Any other -- and this is -- any sort of -- given that the
22 operator, Sky Jet Elite, did not have an ASAP Program.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Were you aware of any pilot reports that came to the office
25 of any concerns of -- any sort of safety deviations, CRM issues,

1 anything that came in from the Sky Jet pilot to the FAA FSDO?

2 A. I can't recall. But again, through the --

3 Q. And in the last, like, two years. Not ever. But --

4 A. No. In the last two years I don't believe so. Subsequent to
5 the -- also, we're going to put a Citation of some sort. Right?
6 They'd hired, approved, send him to training, and the deal fell
7 apart. The airplane was in protracted amount of time and
8 maintenance and apparently, the owner pulled the airplane. I did
9 hear from the pilot who was -- never got a line check, you know,
10 was never operational, that they owed him money. That's all I
11 know.

12 Q. The last clarification I had, the owner that we're
13 discussing, this is -- there's been a few people that have kind of
14 said they have ownership claim. This is the -- the owner that
15 we're -- that we've been referring to is the individual who was
16 fatally injured in the accident?

17 A. Yes. And no.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. The individual who was fatally injured in the accident could
20 not be in the sole owner of the company. He had less than,
21 whatever the requirement for voting rights to the outstanding
22 stock, so he was not technically the owner, as far as that is
23 concerned. I believe, that -- I can't remember the gentleman's
24 name.

25 Q. But the person who, for example, who came here to discuss the

1 change in the Director of Operations, that person and his wife,
2 those were the two individuals that were fatally injured --

3 A. That is correct.

4 Q. -- in the accident? Okay. Perfect. Thank you.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. I just wanted to --

7 A. And I went to them over at the Atlantis Flight School,
8 actually.

9 MR. GERHARDT: Oh, perfect. Thank you. Okay. Thank you,
10 Mark.

11 MR. LANDOLT: Sure.

12 MR. ABRAMS: Jay?

13 MR. VENABLE: I don't have anything for the second round.

14 MR. ABRAMS: Thank you, Jay.

15 Just one quick question. And I'm not talking about an active
16 investigation. Any past whistleblower complaints against Sky Jet
17 Elite?

18 MR. LANDOLT: I don't believe so. A whistleblower, that
19 would stick out, you know. And of course, they'd have to be
20 answered to -- at a higher level in the FAA. Not internally.

21 MR. ABRAMS: Great. Thank you. Everybody good?

22 Mark, that concludes the interview at time 9:20. I want to
23 keep the recordings going just for a second for the transcription.
24 We've got a lot of acronyms out here and you can help up fill
25 these acronyms in.

1 We've got ATIS, A-T-I-S, that's all capital. POI, would you
2 -- POI, would tell us what your position is and say that POI?

3 MR. LANDOLT: Principal Operations Inspector.

4 MR. ABRAMS: Thank you. ASI?

5 MR. LANDOLT: Aviation Safety Inspector.

6 MR. ABRAMS: ILS, Instrument Landing System. OGT is On the
7 Job Training. PA31 is a Piper Navajo. We -- PAI, can somebody
8 tell me what PAI was?

9 MR. STONE: Principal Avionics Inspector.

10 MR. ABRAMS: Thank you. We use SAS, Safety Assurance System.
11 PTRS. I know what PTRS does, but I don't know what the acronym
12 stands for.

13 MR. LANDOLT: Program Tracking and Recording Subsystem.

14 MR. ABRAMS: Thank you. PRD, Pilot Record Database, is
15 that --

16 MR. LANDOLT: That's correct, sir.

17 MR. ABRAMS: And PDs.

18 MR. LANDOLT: Pilot Deviations.

19 MR. ABRAMS: Pilot Deviations. And we mentioned SMS, Safety
20 Management System. ASAP, just ASAP is ASAP. FOQA was FOQA F-o-q-
21 a. SPAS is S-p-a-s. Those are all -- everything -- all these
22 acronyms are all capital. Can anybody think of anything else?

23 MR. STONE: PRF.

24 MR. LANDOLT: PTRS?

25 MR. STONE: And PRF. It was associated with DCT.

1 MR. LANDOLT: PRFs, I'm not --

2 MR. STONE: No? Okay. I might have written it down wrong.

3 Okay.

4 MR. ABRAMS: Okay. We all good now? All right. I'm going
5 to stop the recordings but they stopped at -- previously.

6 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: ISRAEL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES
 FATAL ACCIDENT AT THE INGALLS FIELD
 AIRPORT IN HOT SPRINGS, VIRGINIA
 ON MARCH 10, 2024
 Interview of Mark Landolt

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA24FA136

DATE: March 10, 2024

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.



Leah Becker Hay
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

ISRAEL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES FATAL *

ACCIDENT AT THE INGALLS FIELD * Accident No.: ERA24FA136

AIRPORT IN HOT SPRINGS, VIRGINIA *

ON MARCH 10, 2024 *

*

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Interview of: TONY SAAVEDRA, Front Line Manager
Federal Aviation Administration

APPEARANCES:

ROCKY STONE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

WARREN ABRAMS, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ADAM GERHARDT, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JAY VENABLE, FAA Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:47 a.m.)

MR. STONE: And I'm Rocky Stone, I'm an Operational Factors Investigator with the NTSB. And we're here today interviewing Tony Saavedra, and it is 9:47 a.m., and this is in relation to NTSB Accident ERA24FA136. And we're here to talk about the oversight of Sky Jet Elite Aviation.

And with me we've got, you know, three other questioners. We'll go ahead and introduce ourselves.

Warren?

MR. ABRAMS: Warren Abrams; an investigator with NTSB. Thank you for coming, Tony.

MR. SAAVEDRA: Thank you.

MR. GERHARDT: This is Adam Gerhardt, and I am the NTSB investigator in charge.

MR. VENABLE: All right. My name is Jay Venable (ph.). I am the FAA Investigator in charge from the Richmond Flight Standards District Office.

MR. STONE: Okay. And as we talked about, we are recording the interview and we will send it out for transcription. And we'll have -- you'll have an opportunity to correct any errors in the transcription. If any of your answers are wrong, we have an ability to do an addendum and, you know, add that. We can't change the answers in the transcript, but we can add the addendum to the end of it.

1 We are going to run through a couple rounds of questions.
2 We'll do it one at a time. And, you know, answer the questions as
3 best as you can, honestly as you can. We're just here to try and
4 gather information, you know, figure out what happened and why,
5 you know. And the purpose of this investigation is, again, it's
6 safety, it's, you know, trying to establish the, you know, the
7 cause of the accident and what can be done to prevent future
8 recurrences.

9 You're entitled to have one representative and I assume, you
10 have one?

11 MR. SAAVEDRA: Yes.

12 MR. STONE: And you're representative is?

13 MS. CASTILLO: Camille Castillo.

14 MR. STONE: Okay. Great. Thank you.

15 Does anyone have any questions? No?

16 INTERVIEW OF TONY SAAVEDRA

17 BY MR. STONE:

18 Q. Okay. If not, let's go ahead and get started. So we'll
19 start off with the hard questions first. Can you give me your
20 full name, including the spelling of your last name?

21 A. Anthony Aliro Saavedra. Spelling is S-a-a-v-e-d-r-a.

22 Q. And how old are you, Tony?

23 A. Well, today, I'm 57. Friday, I'm 58.

24 Q. Okay. Oh, happy birthday.

25 A. Thank you.

1 Q. So can you give us just a -- you're a FLM, which is a Front
2 Line Supervisor -- or Front Line Manager, for the FAA. Can you
3 describe real quickly what that job is and what you do?

4 A. Yes. So the official title is Supervisory Aviation Safety
5 Inspector. So as an Aviation Safety Inspector, you know, we're
6 responsible for oversight of the air operators, air agencies that
7 could be issuing certificates. All that -- pilots as well. You
8 -- enforcement investigations, accident investigations, complaint
9 investigations. And as my role as a supervisor, then I oversee my
10 people that are on my team to actually look into all these types
11 of incidents, accidents, complaints, and everything. And also,
12 they're oversee -- oversight of their air operators and air
13 agencies.

14 Q. How many people do you have on your team?

15 A. Now, it's about 15, I believe.

16 Q. And are they all POIs?

17 A. No, I've got a mixture of POIs and APOIs and one ASA, which
18 is an Aviation Safety Assistant.

19 Q. Okay. Can you give us a good, you know, the Reader's Digest
20 background of how you got to this job in your aviation career?

21 A. Sure. The long version or the short -- like, the shorter
22 version, right?

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. So I was in air traffic for over 20 years and also a
25 corporate pilot. And actually, I was an air traffic manager in

1 Boca Raton, Florida and was doing a runway safety meeting, as we
2 do every year. And invited then, manager Sergia Lopez and another
3 front line manager to write a safety meeting, which we always do.
4 And they attended and they were poaching for inspectors and I just
5 picked up on it and talked to them. I applied right away and
6 basically, got the job within, geez, I think it was two months
7 after interviewing.

8 So started out as a FG-12 Inspector and got through my
9 training in 10 months. And from there, immediately became FG-13
10 and assistant POI to one of the -- our busy POIs here. And was
11 that for -- I was her POI for six months? Or, I'm sorry, her
12 assistant for six months and then became a standalone 13 POI. And
13 did that for a year and half and became a 14 POI for eight months,
14 and then rolled into the front line manager position. So I've
15 been here for almost four and half years.

16 Q. Wow. Okay. So --

17 A. Moving and shaking.

18 Q. Good. So in your job, how much do you get involved in the
19 nitty gritty of each of your inspectors operations? I mean --

20 A. They copy me a lot. You know, every inspector seems to copy
21 me on everything. Mostly, I think it's a lot of a CYA, as well,
22 also to keep me informed of what's going on. So I don't have to
23 normally get in the weeds with their operators. And I don't
24 normally deal with operators directly, just the inspectors.

25 On occasion, the operator may ask me directly for something

1 if maybe, the POI is on leave, or if -- maybe their struggling
2 with a question on something. They might -- as a matter of fact,
3 I have to talk to one today. He has a question about a training
4 program and that's all I know, you know. He wrote that in an
5 e-mail so I'll call and find out what his question is. And, you
6 know, most times, just refer him back to the POI because, you
7 know, I found that some of their questions they just, they
8 question the regulations. And you just have to set them on the
9 right path with the regulation done, so that they understand where
10 we're coming from.

11 But for the most part, don't have to deal with operators
12 directly. I do, do over the shoulder inspections periodically
13 with my inspectors, to go see, you know, their operation, how
14 they're dealing with their operators. And that's about it.

15 Q. Have you ever done any over the shoulder inspections on Sky
16 Jet Elite?

17 A. No, I have not.

18 Q. Okay. In general, do you think that you have, with the
19 supervision that your inspectors are charged with, do you have the
20 man power you need to be able to accomplish the mission of the
21 oversight you're supposed to provide?

22 A. Yes, I do.

23 Q. Okay. Has anything come up with Mark, your POI for Sky Jet
24 Elite -- I guess he's not anymore, but during when this accident
25 occurred he was. Has he ever brought anything up to you of issues

1 with Sky Jet Elite that, you know, raised flags? Maybe not a red
2 flag but, you know, he wanted your awareness that something was
3 going on. I mean, do you -- do you get to that level of knowledge
4 about it?

5 A. Sometimes. I don't recall anything about Sky Jet Elite,
6 specifically. You know, I know he has another, or had another
7 operator, that is always thick in the weeds with pilot deviations
8 and, you know, other things, issues. So I've been with that. I
9 used to be the ASAP Program Manager for the officer, as well. So
10 I was on the ASAP panel. The ERC member for the office for a lot
11 of those with that particular operator, not Sky Jet, another one.
12 So I always, you know, really thick with them and a couple other
13 -- his other operators that were in the ASAP Program. But as far
14 as Sky Jet Elite, no. Not much knowledge of them.

15 Q. Okay. And how would you characterize Mark as an inspector?
16 Do you think he's very thorough? Does a great job?

17 A. He is -- I'd have to say he's the best operations inspector
18 in the office. He is extremely knowledgeable especially, as it
19 pertain to 135 operations. He, himself, was a DO for an operator
20 that we still have in this office to this day, IBC Airways. He
21 was, I think their chief pilot, then their DO, and was that for a
22 very long time.

23 As matter of fact, the frontline manager that I replaced,
24 that unfortunately, passed away used to work for Mark, became his
25 chief pilot. So Mark is just a wealth of knowledge and he's very

1 fair. Very fair inspector. Very thorough. But definitely has a
2 wealth of knowledge.

3 Q. Okay. Has he -- and to your knowledge, has he failed people
4 during, you know, line checks, or?

5 A. You know, the only time I remember that I went with him on a
6 line check one time and I failed both pilots. I was helping him
7 out because I'm typed in a Hawker and so, he was doing one in the
8 Hawker. I said, hey, I'll come over and do the over the shoulder
9 and I'll sit up front and I'll actually observe the ride, you
10 know. And I actually failed both pilots. You know, and then one
11 of them, on a retake, passed. And then if I remember right, the
12 other one, I think they let him go just for really lack of
13 knowledge and procedures.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And it wasn't just my saying, I'm (indiscernible), it was
16 Mark's ride. I observed it, but --

17 Q. And he's doing it and you were providing --

18 A. I provided the input and that's how -- so, yes, he has failed
19 somebody on a line check.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I can't tell you who the operator was, but --

22 Q. Oh, that's --

23 A. It's been a while.

24 MR. STONE: I don't think I have anything else.

25 Warren, I'm going to turn it over to you.

1 MR. ABRAMS: Sure. Thank you.

2 BY MR. ABRAMS:

3 Q. Tony, thanks again for coming in today.

4 A. Thank you.

5 Q. You got a lot of pins on your lanyard there. Do I see a pair
6 of Navy Wings?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Tell me about your Navy career.

9 A. Well, in the Navy I was an air traffic controller and spent
10 my career, like I said, as an air traffic controller. I got a lot
11 of friends who are pilots, as well. So one of my buddies that --
12 because I was trying to get the NAVCAM Program and, you know, I
13 was all on track because I was pilot before going in the Navy, and
14 just didn't have, I think I only had, like, 30 credit hours of
15 college at the time. And by the time I finally got in and got
16 through school and everything, and, you know, they kept pushing
17 you off like the military does, like, you love it and hate it.

18 Then when I finally got to my first command I said, all
19 right, I'm here. I'm ready for my NAVCAM Program. They go, that
20 program expired years ago. So it was like, you know, recruiters
21 dream to get you set up. But it didn't matter at the time. I
22 loved air traffic, you know, it was -- I loved it probably one
23 percent more than I loved flying. So it was just a great career.
24 But one of my buddies gave me the Navy pin, so --

25 Q. Okay. And you mentioned that you're rated in the Hawker.

1 Are you rated in anything else?

2 A. No, I never did get the type -- the SIC type for citations.
3 But I've flown citations, leers, challengers, almost every type of
4 model of Hawker there is from the 900xp down.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. 3A -- starting with a 3ARA Viper Jet.

7 Q. Are you still a current pilot?

8 A. No. Well, I'm a current pilot but not for the FAA.

9 Q. Not for FAA. So you do have a current medical certificate?

10 A. No, I don't have a current medical.

11 Q. Okay. All right.

12 A. I just do some instruction from some people that are already
13 rated, so --

14 Q. Okay. We've talked about Sky Jet Elite and with Mark, what a
15 tragic event that was. How did you find out about the crash that
16 Sky let -- Sky Jet Elite crashed and it was a fatal accident?

17 A. Mark had told me about it.

18 Q. Do you recall how long an interval it was before the crash
19 before you found out?

20 A. No, I really couldn't tell you. I'm also the office
21 coordinator for accidents and incidents, you know, so it's really
22 hard to remember. As a matter of fact, I didn't even recall this
23 accident until I was recently told about which one it was. I
24 thought it was the one that crashed into the woods after departure
25 where the aircraft came back but, it's not that one, so I'm not

1 even sure exactly the nature on this one.

2 Q. Okay. Do you get out of the office very much?

3 A. As much as I can.

4 Q. In the official capacity of work.

5 A. No. Just to -- I'll do seminars once in a while with the
6 FAST team. I have a FAST team program manager for operations on
7 my side, on my team. So I'll go out to some of the seminars. I
8 go to all of the local RSAT meetings, you know, for all the air
9 traffic towers around. But once in a while I'll get to do an over
10 the shoulder with some of my people.

11 Q. Okay. Did you say RSAT?

12 A. Yes. Runway Safety Action Team.

13 Q. Okay. Thank you. Wasn't familiar with that acronym, so, all
14 right, thank you.

15 You say you're at -- your staffing is adequate. Now, that's
16 the segway into my next -- into my question. And I was here at
17 this office five years ago and they were complaining that staffing
18 was woefully inadequate, they didn't have enough POIs, everything
19 was, you know, in disarray, so to speak, with staffing.

20 A. I took that -- okay, so, I took that as mine, meaning, how
21 many people I'm managing. But if you're saying the staffing for
22 the office, no, we're well below. We are very shorthanded. Ops
23 is the hardest discipline to recruit.

24 Q. And is that POIs you're short, or?

25 A. POIs, yes. So -- I'm sorry. So in the office we have, you

1 know, the three different disciplines; operations or pilots, air
2 worthiness, and then avionics are the other two disciplines. So
3 for OPS, we're severely shorthanded. We -- I think we're down,
4 like, 15, roughly, office inspectors.

5 Q. Is it a -- do you have the financial wherewithal to hire
6 these people if they were available?

7 A. We have the positions vacant. So in my -- on my org chart,
8 my numbers go up to 21 for my team. I have the largest team. But
9 I think I'm down to -- it might actually even be 14 now, and then
10 I'm losing another person Friday.

11 So they transfer either inter-agency, you know, to other
12 places. Like this one person was going up to the CMO on Friday.
13 I've lost what, three or four guys to the airlines. So -- and
14 other people transfer. I -- we call Florida, South Florida, the
15 hit and run office because we're the busiest office in the nation
16 with the most certificates. So you can get your training done
17 very fast if you're eager to do it. And -- but the cost of living
18 sucks. So people come down here, get their training, and then
19 they leave and go somewhere else.

20 Q. Okay. When you heard -- when Mark told you that Sky Let --
21 Sky Jet Elite crashed, did you take any action?

22 A. No, at that time, because I knew, what's it Virginia? I
23 think it crashed in Virginia, was going to be -- that or AVP would
24 be doing the investigation, wouldn't be our office doing it. And
25 obviously, with the POI, wouldn't be the one investigating their

1 own operator's crash.

2 Q. Okay. Did I miss -- yes, I probably did. Tell me how long
3 you've been with the FAA. How many years?

4 A. Eight and a half years.

5 MR. ARBAMS: Eight and a half years. Okay.

6 Tony, that's all I have at this time, thanks.

7 MR. SAAVEDRA: Sure.

8 MR. GERHARDT: Tony, thank you for the time and this is Adam
9 Gerhardt, for the recording.

10 BY MR. GERHARDT:

11 Q. I have a very specific question into the Part 119, 71 Chief
12 Pilot Requirements. So, it goes into the interpretation of to
13 service chief pilot, must be PIC and at least one aircraft be used
14 on the certificate. And this was something that we discussed with
15 Mark, and we were just wondering as a supervisor, what is your
16 guidance available, or your interpretation if an aircraft is
17 listed on the certificate, but perhaps not used on revenue
18 operations. Is there any knowledge or guidance that you have used
19 in the past as, you know, your more direct experience, or as
20 oversight in this area?

21 A. Definitely know that. And just looking at the reg itself,
22 whereas, it talks to that. I know I've had operators that have
23 had -- you know, a lot of them start with a 172. It's the easiest
24 thing to get on a certificate for a 135 single pilot 172 and then
25 they'll go up to a basic.

1 And then the flying, you know, multi (, whether it's the
2 Navahos. Usually a typically transition for a lot of folks. And
3 -- now, those don't require type rating, per say, but they
4 wouldn't use this test so much anymore. They won't remove it, but
5 they're flying primarily in Navaho. So you've seen that kind of
6 stuff a lot.

7 As far as the actual jets go, I know how the reg reads as
8 well, it, you know, and a lot of regs, in my opinion, are vague or
9 maybe not well written. They provide a lot of latitude to the
10 operators. And, you know, our guidance cannot supersede a
11 regulation because the hierarchy of law.

12 So, you know, that being said, an operator could have, let's
13 say, a 172 on the, you know, or -- no, I can't say that one. It's
14 a King Air 300 on there, which requires a type rating, you know,
15 but then fly a Falcon 50. And its legal even if they're not
16 flying the King again, just because that's the way the reg
17 states. You know, I know we still have to do our oversight, do
18 our, you know, ensure they're going to training. Make sure they
19 have the opsecs, paragraph A031, for their contract training
20 because we don't do in airplane training on jets. We do our line
21 checks, our 299, we do have check airman for the company --
22 companies. So it could be -- most of them are outhouse check
23 airman. Especially, with the -- as it pertains to jets. So their
24 used in Flight Safety, Simuflight, Simcom. And then they're
25 having a -- some of them even have check airman to do the 299 line

1 check. Otherwise, we wind up doing the 299 line check. But it's
2 definitely -- we wouldn't allow anybody to do it in airplane. We
3 don't want to do it -- we're not going to get in the airplane with
4 them doing V1 cuts. So, you know, that's the way we can back up
5 the reg by, you know, taking out the -- any ambiguity, and then by
6 ensuring they're actually doing their training and reviewing their
7 records.

8 Q. Okay. This accident happened in March of 2024, and I
9 understand there's been a change in the POI. Is there any context
10 that you can provide on at? Is that something that's standard
11 after a fatal accident, or is this something other benign issues?

12 A. The only reason why there was a change, Mark had applied for
13 a position for the 142 simulator during the time or whenever -- I
14 don't remember the exact date he applied, whenever it was open,
15 and got the position. He was the best qualified candidate of the
16 position and got it. And his assistant has been handling things
17 right now in the interim while we get another person in the role.

18 We had a bid open for that 14 POI position and it, I believe
19 it closed, I want to say it was last week. As a matter of fact, I
20 was just talking to the office manager about that today, asking
21 what the status was. And he told me that there's two applicants,
22 so we got to make the selection and go forward in the process with
23 that to get it. But there was no -- we didn't take Mark off the
24 certificate, it was just he applied for another job.

25 Q. Perfect. This is back to the chief pilot area. In your

1 knowledge of, particularly being a front line manager in this part
2 of the country, is -- would you say that there is -- that that is
3 a difficult position for 135 operators to find? Is it too
4 variable to really offer up a perspective? Is it --

5 A. I guess it's hit or miss. I mean, lately, with the airlines
6 hiring so much, there's been a lot of folks leaving to the
7 airlines. So a lot of the companies have been struggling with
8 chief pilots and DOs. Some companies ask for a waiver. You know,
9 which -- with the basic, it's a lot easier to grant the waiver as
10 long as the person meets the requirements to hold both of the
11 ratings at the same time. But it's been a struggle for a lot of
12 operators as of late to pick it up. But I think that's going to
13 change because I heard a lot of the airlines are stopping their
14 big pull, so, we'll see.

15 Q. Yeah. And it seems like the wave is --

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. The wave might be over.

18 A. For a little while, right?

19 Q. Yeah. For -- yeah. Yeah. Always seems like that's a bit of
20 a mirage. So this might be too convoluted of a question, too many
21 exceptions, but can you have a 135 certificate that's not, not the
22 basic and I think, Sky Jet Elite was not a -- they were a full
23 135, if I'm putting it correctly?

24 A. That would be the term, yeah. I'm not a hundred percent
25 familiar with the certificate itself, so they could be. If

1 they're not a basic then they would be a full.

2 Q. All right. Is there a period of time where you can operate
3 without a chief pilot on -- listed on the certificate?

4 A. You, within -- is it 30 or 60 days now? I got to remember
5 that. I have to look at the guides. It's 30 or 60 days, we don't
6 have it. They have to notify and then they have to seize
7 operations until they get the appropriate person in there. Or, if
8 they ask for a waiver, then we issue it up to -- forgive on the
9 numbers now, 280, 260 -- I forgot the Department. But it's 280,
10 we send it up to them and have -- with -- as long as they filled
11 out the worksheet and the worksheet meets the requirements for the
12 -- that they can hold both positions if it's going to be a
13 deviation.

14 Q. And again, this is not a -- this is not a test, but the
15 reduced experience approval for someone to get a waiver, perhaps
16 you have someone who doesn't meet the full 119 chief pilot
17 requirements, is -- can you walk me through what minimum level the
18 reduced experience could be? And if that's, again, I'm not trying
19 to pull you on certain rights, but if there's a general knowledge
20 that you can share. Because I don't have an awareness of this.
21 It would be very helpful.

22 A. I'd have to defer to the worksheet as I -- I'd have to look
23 at that because it's been so long since I've done one of those.
24 But there's a worksheet that breaks down their experience and any
25 other type of experience. Like, for example, I remember years ago

1 I got a deviation for one of operators. He didn't have the chief
2 pilot requirement. However, he had extensive experience as a --
3 with -- oh my god, I lost the word, operational control. He
4 worked for -- as a dispatcher. So when you break down on that
5 worksheet that we have, it gives you credit for certain things.
6 So he met the credit requirement for the operational control,
7 which 280 granted the approval on that deviation.

8 Q. Perfect. And this is my last question for this round. Sky
9 Jet Elite, we understand, did not have an ASAP Program. Is -- was
10 the -- was this FSDO office aware of any sort of safety complaints
11 or whistleblower complaints, if we want to use -- that's a loaded
12 term. Any sort of complaints that have come from Sky Jet Elite
13 employees or anything directed at their operation in the few years
14 prior to the accident or post-accident?

15 A. Not that I'm aware of. I handle a lot of the complaints too,
16 as far as the distribution of them. But I don't, you know, I
17 really don't even recall the name much until the accident. So a
18 lot of times, like, there's certain operators you hear all the
19 time. Like, oh, this one again. So they were not a -- I guess if
20 you want to call like, a trouble-marker. They were not on my
21 radar for any reason. So -- and they didn't -- and of course, the
22 ASAP Program is a voluntary program so we only have -- I think the
23 last count was, like, 18 or 19 operators that participate for the
24 pilot side.

25 MR. ABRAMS: Thank you.

1 MR. SAAVEDRA: Yes, sir.

2 MR. STONE: Jay?

3 MR. VENABLE: Yes. Jay Venable (ph.). Investigator in
4 charge from the Richmond FSDO.

5 BY MR. VENABLE:

6 Q. So let's go back to your -- you said you oversee 15, soon to
7 be 14 operations inspectors?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. And you -- but you have vacancies for seven, or so, more?

10 A. That's approximate, yes.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. My total team should be 21.

13 Q. And are the majority of your -- the inspectors, are they 13s
14 or 14s?

15 A. I think it's pretty evenly distributed. Maybe one -- maybe
16 just -- I'd say one more 14 than a 13.

17 Q. I see. And do all the 14s have assistance?

18 A. Not at this time. They used to. Now, I mean, as things go,
19 people start leaving. Every single POI 14 had an assistant at one
20 time. They met --

21 Q. They qualified for an assistant?

22 A. We got to the point where we had excess 12s and needed to
23 push them up to the next level because they got through their
24 training, so we came up with the idea to let's make everybody an
25 APOI because we didn't have enough certificates to make them

1 standalone POIs. And then in that case, we actually gave every
2 single POI an assistant.

3 Q. I see. Yeah, because --

4 A. But now, my team is -- I'm trying to think now without Mark
5 and then this other person is leaving, so I know I have two -- no,
6 actually, I have three 14 POIs without assistants right now.

7 Q. I see. But you, I mean, obviously, if you -- if you're seven
8 spots shy just on your team -- are there other ops inspectors?

9 A. One other ops team.

10 Q. Oh, okay. I see.

11 A. I have the -- more of the 14s. I think he only has two.
12 Well, no, he had three.

13 Q. I see. Okay. But you -- if you have the complexity to fill
14 seven more positions than, is -- do you guys -- do you -- and you
15 have -- do you have 13 POIs as well?

16 A. Roughly. About 13 POIs.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. With the total teams, I think, between the two of us we're
19 down, I would say approximately, 15 people.

20 Q. I see. No, I meant 13 -- a paygrade. 13 Principal Operation
21 Inspectors, as well? Or is everybody a 14 if their a Principal?

22 A. It's both. Well, we don't have any -- I'm sorry. We don't
23 have any standalone 13s. All of our 13s are assistants. So with
24 the openings that we do have, we have, on my team, one, currently
25 one 14 opening. And then three, three or four A-POIs and then I'm

1 missing an AST and so it's just a few different things.

2 Q. Okay. And with the -- so the operators that you have, I
3 guess would be split between the people that you do have once you
4 have a vacancy?

5 A. That -- well, right now, all the operators are covered by the
6 14 POIs with the exception of Mark. But the 13 APOIs, handling
7 those right now in the interim until we bring in an actual POI for
8 that position.

9 Q. I see.

10 A. He didn't apply. He didn't want the 14. But so, as soon as
11 we get a POI, then he'll wind up being the automatic assistant for
12 that person.

13 Q. With the amount of vacancies, do you have -- does your office
14 need to defer surveillance, as far as doing like, RNA, resource
15 unavailable for data collection tools that come up for operators?

16 A. We recently started talking about that to start doing RNA
17 because it's getting tighter and lot harder to do things. Plus,
18 our office gets a lot of ADHOC work. We -- I just venture to
19 guess, probably say, we are probably the top producing PD pilot
20 aviation and incidents, accidents, and then of course, all the 91
21 RVSM, MELs - I would have to guess that we're the top producer of
22 all the offices.

23 Q. Yeah. It's the culture in our office, as well, we're
24 probably at 10 percent of the size of your office. There's only
25 15 or, so, inspectors of ours. But the culture in our office is

1 to try to get everything done, as far as required inspections,
2 scheduled inspections, and stuff like that. And I believe, the
3 FAA in general has decided to in -- what, since they -- they're
4 not effectively tackling the hiring process. They're coming up
5 with ways to come up with risk-based decision making, wanting us
6 to accurately document where our problems are, and then spend the
7 resources that we do have working on those and then, you know,
8 deprioritizing the other ones. Did -- what is the average
9 experience of the ops inspectors in your -- under your
10 supervision?

11 A. As far as FAA experience currently?

12 Q. Uh-hum.

13 A. I'd say out of all of them, maybe two of the POIs are only,
14 like, around the -- or actually, yeah. Two of the 14 POIs have
15 four years' experience. Everyone else is more than 10.

16 Q. Okay. So the people that, you know, they intend to stay
17 around, I guess. And then you have the ones that will flow
18 through. Like you said, you'll get trained and then float
19 somewhere else, but then you have the core people that stay
20 around?

21 A. Pretty much. I know I do have one of my 14s right now, she's
22 trying to leave to do a detail. So it's -- but that's the nature
23 of the beast, you know. Agency just has to listen to some advice,
24 that's all.

25 Q. How -- with the -- so you've been here since before SAS, then

1 the Safety Assurance System, and into that transition. And part
2 of your duties as a front line manager is to assign the work in
3 SAS, and then also to do that quality review. Would you say that
4 your inspectors are well grasped and well versed in the features
5 and functionality of the Safety Assurance System?

6 A. I guess, I'd have to ask the question: is anybody really
7 well versed in SAS? You know, it's a --

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. -- wonderful program, we'll say that. It's -- you know, I
10 won't say everybody is well-versed in it, but everyone does their
11 best to, you know, ensure documentation, you know. And, you know,
12 we do all -- of course, all the data collection, the data review.
13 And, you know, they're doing the AAAs right afterwards. So the
14 processes are going forward. Whether it's the best process
15 compared to PTRS, I would say no. I think the old system was a
16 lot better, you know. This platform is a better recording
17 platform, but that would be about it.

18 Q. Are a lot of your inspectors still teleworking a majority of
19 the time?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And was that the case before COVID --

22 A. No.

23 Q. -- or just after COVID?

24 A. Just after COVID. COVID, before COVID, we were barely
25 teleworking. Maybe, maybe once, god, I'd have to venture to say

1 maybe, like, once a month. I mean, it was very little.

2 Q. And now it's on -- how many days would you say somebody's
3 teleworking? Is it probably eight days a --

4 A. Its eight days a pay period. Yup.

5 Q. -- pay period?

6 A. Yup. Eight days a pay period.

7 Q. I see. Do you feel like they're able to still go out to
8 their operators and conduct the surveillances as effectively as
9 before COVID when they were in the office more?

10 A. I mean, it shouldn't -- honestly, it shouldn't change your --
11 the location, the physical locality of where the person is,
12 whether they're home or in the office, shouldn't change that. You
13 know, the environment changes, of course. The -- I think the --
14 what really hurt was the, I don't want to just say the comradery,
15 but the accessibility of going to another person on the team. So
16 an operator is made up of three -- the three disciplines OPS,
17 maintenance, and avionics. So for them to be able to be, you
18 know, next to each other cubicle-wise, or just running down the
19 hallway, it was a lot easier for them to stay on the same page.
20 Now, they just have to communicate electronically.

21 Q. Do you feel like the increased telework as hurt on the job
22 training of new people?

23 A. I mean, it's yes and no. I mean, to a degree. It really
24 depends on the people you have. To tell the truth, like, we have
25 two guys that are very sharp right now that are in training. We

1 only have three ops inspectors that are in training. Two of them
2 are super sharp and they're doing whatever it takes to knock doors
3 down and get they're training going. And their trainer, as well,
4 is very available, so they're getting things done. And this, you
5 know, myself and the other ops manager, we look at things. When
6 things come up, like, special items come up and we throw it at
7 them all the time. Like, here, you know, you might need this, you
8 might need this, you know. And just to make sure that they're
9 continuously getting the stuff that they need to get done.

10 Q. Okay. Let's see here. Do you feel like the FAA's compliance
11 philosophy has helped operators to be more forthcoming with safety
12 issues in the last few years? Or is it still, pretty much, you
13 know, they only tell him about things when they get caught with
14 something?

15 A. I still think they only tell about when they get caught with
16 something. I don't love the compliance philosophy, I'll say that.
17 Just because I think it just gives them too many outs, you know.
18 I think, you know, over the years I'm sure, if you guys have been
19 around for a long time, you know the FAAs, you know, went from
20 sharp teeth to gums, you know. And its -- that's really the
21 nature of it. You know, by letting too many things slide. I
22 think the documentation needs to stay there. As matter of fact, I
23 was talking to one of my guys about that today. You know, about
24 documenting some stuff with an operator that he found. So it's,
25 you know, they're going to always pushback but, you know, not

1 saying that we have to be a bully. but we have to be firm. We
2 have to, you know, ensure that we're upholding the regs, at the
3 end the day.

4 MR. VENABLE: Okay. I think that's all I have for now.

5 MR. SAAVEDRA: Okay.

6 MR. VENABLE: Thank you.

7 MR. STONE: Okay. Do you need a break or are you ready to
8 keep going?

9 MR. SAAVEDRA: No, I'm good.

10 BY MR. STONE:

11 Q. There's not going to be much here. Can you help -- I'm not
12 from the 135 world, I'm from the 121 world. But I'm trying to
13 figure out the relationship between the DO and the chief pilot.
14 What kind of a relationship is that supposed to be? I mean, who's
15 supervising who?

16 A. Well, really, DO should be the overall director of the
17 operations. So the operations wouldn't just be, you know, the
18 flying, it could be the oversight of maybe, even the maintenance.
19 But you should also, in a special unit, when have a basic or a
20 full, you should have a DOM as well, so your director of
21 maintenance. But the DO should be overall the oversight over the
22 certificate. And then, of course, the chief pilot over the pilots
23 itself.

24 Q. Okay. So I mean, would you say the DO really is, it includes
25 supervising the chief pilot because he's one of the pilots?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. We have heard the term chief pilot in name only,
3 sometimes applied to the chief pilot for Sky Jet Elite that was
4 involved in this accident. Does that mean anything to you or?

5 A. No. I didn't even know who was in the accident. I -- the
6 only thing I heard about was that the person on-board owned a
7 flight school also.

8 MR: STONE: Right. Okay. That's, I think, all I have for me
9 for round two.

10 BY MR. ABRAMS:

11 Q. Tony, we've talked about your POIs that report to you. Who
12 do you report to?

13 A. The assistant office manager is my direct and then of course,
14 the office manager.

15 Q. And how long have they been here? The office manager?

16 A. Well, he's on a detail. His detail ends July 13th,
17 technically, I guess, the new office manager that was selected as
18 of last week starts on July 14th.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So he's been around but he's been an office manager for,
21 like, four and half years, I think it is.

22 Q. Right. Not --

23 A. And then --

24 Q. Not in the south Florida FSDO?

25 A. No, he's at the north Florida FSDO, which is the Alabama, the

1 Birmingham office.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And then the assistant office manager, he's been around
4 since, I think Orville and Wilbur were around. So he's been
5 around a long time. Don't tell him I said that.

6 MR. GERHARDT: It's in the transcript.

7 MR. SAAVEDRA: Is that --

8 BY MR. ABRAMS:

9 Q. Is Ozzy still around?

10 A. No. Well, I've heard that name before but, no.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. It's Robbie Robinson. He's been around for, I want to say,
13 at least 25 years, maybe.

14 Q. Oh wow. Okay.

15 A. Maybe more.

16 MR. ABRAMS: All right. Tony, that's all I have as well.

17 MR. SAAVEDRA: Okay.

18 MR. STONE: And I have no other questions.

19 MR. VENABLE: I'm good.

20 MR. SAAVEDRA: Okay.

21 MR. STONE: I did, just wanted to add one thing about, you
22 mentioned Mark and his -- Mark Landholt and his experience. I
23 wanted to say how much we appreciate his transparency and
24 thoroughness of his answers in the prior interview, so thank you.

25 MR. SAAVEDRA: Thank you. Thank you. He's -- I -- sad to

1 lose him. Well, I mean, he's technically on my team but, you
2 know, losing him as a POI, he's just a fantastic resource of
3 knowledge. I know he helped me a lot when I was coming up and
4 going through my training. And then like I said, I got through my
5 training so fast and then I became a trainer. And then Mark and I
6 were the two, pretty much, primary trainers for everybody coming
7 through after that. So we, you know, he's just fantastic, a
8 wealth of knowledge.

9 MR. STONE: Okay. With that, thank you, Tony.

10 And it's 10:28, 10:27 and we'll go ahead and -- oh, one other
11 acronym. FAST, F-A-S-T?

12 MR. SAAVEDRA: The FAA Safety Team.

13 MR. STONE: FAA Safety Team.

14 MR. ABRAMS: Okay. Hold on Rocky. AST? Aviation Safety
15 Team?

16 MR. SAAVEDRA: Aviation Safety Technician.

17 Mr. ABRAMS: Okay. ASA?

18 MR. SAAVEDRA: Aviation Safety Assistant. So basically, not
19 to belittle anybody, but a secretary and then, is ASA, and then a
20 technician is still below an inspector, they just have lesser
21 duties. A lot lesser duties.

22 MR. ABRAMS: We mentioned ERC. Event Review Committee.
23 RSAT, I wasn't familiar with RSAT?

24 MR. SAAVEDRA: Runway Safety Action Team.

25 MR. ABRAMS: Thanks. Yes, you asked -- you answered that,

1 didn't you? RVSM, Runway --

2 MR. STONE: No.

3 MR. SAAVEDRA: Reduce Vertical Separation Minimum.

4 MR. ABRAMS: Yes. MEL, Minimum Equipment List. And the last
5 one I had was, AAAs?

6 MR. SAAVEDRA: So that's just a -- it's a function in SAS
7 when they're -- its --

8 MR. VENABLE: Analysis, Assessment and Action.

9 MR. SAAVEDRA: Yeah, thank you.

10 MR. STONE: Okay.

11 MR. SAVEDRA: Analysis, Assessment and Action.

12 MR. GERHARDT: I'm the SAS guy for our office.

13 MR. SAAVEDRA: Oh, are you?

14 MR. ABRAMS: Hold on. And --

15 MR. GERHARDT: Unfortunately.

16 MR. ABRAMS: Tony, would you spell your middle name, please?

17 MR. SAAVEDRA: A-l-i-r-o.

18 MR. ABRAMS: Thank you. That's all I've got.

19 MR. SAAVEDRA: That was easy. Did I pass?

20 MR. STONE: Yup, awesome, thanks.

21 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
22
23

CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: ISRAEL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES
 FATAL ACCIDENT AT THE INGALLS FIELD
 AIRPORT IN HOT SPRINGS, VIRGINIA
 ON MARCH 10, 2023
 Interview of Tony Saavedra

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA24FA136

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.


Leah Hay
Transcriber