

**Docket No. SA-540**

**Exhibit No. 14 C**

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**

**Washington, D.C.**

Interview Transcripts

(225 Pages)

## Attachment 2

to the Human Performance Specialist's Factual Report

ANC17MA001

Interview Transcripts

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FLIGHT 3153, AIR TAXI AND COMMUTER  
ACCIDENT, OCTOBER 2, 2016,  
TOGIAK, ALASKA

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Docket No.: ANC17FA001

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Interview of: JON KAPSNER

NTSB Offices  
Anchorage Federal Building  
222 West 7th Avenue, Room 216  
Anchorage, Alaska

Tuesday,  
December 6, 2016

## APPEARANCES:

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Anchorage, Alaska

KATHERINE A. WILSON, Ph.D., Senior Human Performance  
Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C.

CAPTAIN MARVIN FRANTZ, Air Safety Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C.

ERIC WEST, Air Safety Inspector  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Office of Accident Investigation and Prevention  
Washington, D.C.

NOREEN PRICE, Aviation Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Anchorage, Alaska

Also Present:

DAVE LOWELL, Director of Safety  
Hageland Aviation  
Anchorage, Alaska

MARC WILHELM, Esq.  
Richmond & Quinn  
Anchorage, Alaska  
(Representative on behalf of Mr. Kapsner)

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:29 a.m.)

1  
2  
3 DR. WILSON: Good morning. I'm Katherine Wilson. I'm a  
4 human performance investigator with the NTSB. The NTSB, if  
5 you're not aware, is a federal agency, an independent federal  
6 agency. We're charged with investigating transportation  
7 accidents and determining probable cause. We are not a part of  
8 DOT or the FAA. We don't have any enforcement authority or  
9 regulatory authority. We're strictly here from the safety side,  
10 promoting safety, and hopefully preventing accidents from  
11 recurring.

12 We're going to go around the room and everybody will  
13 introduce themselves so you'll know who they are and it'll also  
14 be on the record.

15 MR. FRANTZ: Hi, Jon. Marvin Frantz. I'm an operational  
16 factors investigator with the NTSB in Washington. I work with  
17 Katherine.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams. I'm the investigator in  
19 charge, NTSB. I'm here out of Anchorage.

20 MR. LOWELL: Dave Lowell, Vice President of Safety,  
21 Hageland Aviation.

22 MR. WEST: Eric West. I'm an accident investigator with  
23 the FAA out of Washington, D.C.

24 MR. WILHELM: Marc Wilhelm, attorney for the witness.

1 MS. PRICE: Noreen Price. I'm an accident investigator up  
2 here in Anchorage and I'm assisting Shaun Williams with this  
3 investigation.

4 DR. WILSON: And just to reiterate, Dave and Eric, they're  
5 both here from the safety side, not from any enforcement or  
6 regulatory powers either. So just so that's clear.

7 All right. Today we're going to be using a court reporter  
8 who's going to record the interview and then transcribe it. The  
9 transcript, not the audio recording, will be made a part of our  
10 public docket which is a part of every investigation that we  
11 have.

12 As I said, we're here to determine the probable cause.  
13 We're not here to assign fault or blame as a part of the  
14 investigation. This is a routine interview that we do as a part  
15 of our fact-finding phase of the investigation. So we're here  
16 to ask you about your interactions with Mr. Welty and also  
17 familiarity with company procedures, training and policies. We  
18 cannot offer confidentiality or immunity as a part of this  
19 process.

20 We're going to go around the room. I'll start by asking  
21 questions and everybody around the table will have a chance to  
22 ask questions as well. If you don't understand a question  
23 please ask us to clarify. If you don't know the answer to a  
24 question it's okay to say I don't know. You're the expert here,  
25 so we're just trying to get information from you. We will do

1 one round of questions and then everyone will have a chance to  
2 ask follow-up questions if anything comes up after their turn.

3 So just answer the questions to the best of your  
4 recollection. As Mr. Wilhelm stated, try to avoid an uh-huh or  
5 a nodding of the head so that the court reporter will be able to  
6 transcribe what you're saying.

7 You're entitled to have one representative of your  
8 choosing. Who would you like that to be today?

9 MR. KAPSNER: One representative?

10 DR. WILSON: Yes. Okay. Mr. Wilhelm you choose?

11 MR. KAPSNER: Yeah, please.

12 DR. WILSON: Okay. All right. Mr. Wilhelm may direct you  
13 to answer a question or not, but he cannot answer questions for  
14 you. Do you have any questions before we get started?

15 MR. KAPSNER: I don't.

16 INTERVIEW OF JON KAPSNER

17 BY DR. WILSON:

18 Q. Okay. We will now begin the interview. For the record,  
19 can you please state your full name?

20 A. Jonathan Frederick Kapsner.

21 Q. And what is your position?

22 A. I'm a line pilot.

23 Q. Okay. With what company?

24 A. Hageland Aviation.

25 Q. And how long have you been in that position?



- 1 A. Twelve years this January.
- 2 Q. What certificates and/or ratings do you hold?
- 3 A. ATP commercial, private, single-engine land, multi-engine  
4 land.
- 5 Q. And --
- 6 A. And instrument of course.
- 7 Q. Okay. What aircraft are you currently flying for Hageland?
- 8 A. The Caravan 208.
- 9 Q. Okay.
- 10 A. Bravo.
- 11 Q. And how long have you been flying that airplane?
- 12 A. Ten -- 10½ years.
- 13 Q. Okay. What other airplanes have you flown with Hageland?
- 14 A. 207 and the 406 and the Piper Navajo.
- 15 Q. And where are you currently based out of?
- 16 A. Bethel.
- 17 Q. Right. How long have you been based out of Bethel?
- 18 A. Well, 9 years.
- 19 Q. Okay. Where were you previously based?
- 20 A. I've been in St. Mary's, Barrow, Nome and Bethel.
- 21 Q. Okay. Have you held any other positions at the company?
- 22 A. I was a company flight instructor.
- 23 Q. Okay. Ever a check airman?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. How about a safety pilot?

1 A. Yeah, the safety pilot included as the company flight  
2 instructor.

3 Q. Oh, okay. What is your total time?

4 A. Around 15- -- between 15,000 and 16,000.

5 Q. Okay. How much time of that is on the Caravan?

6 A. 9,500 I'd say.

7 Q. Okay. And how much of that time is PIC time?

8 A. All of it.

9 Q. Okay. And if you could just give me a brief Cliffs Note  
10 version of your aviation background and how you got to Hageland?

11 A. I started at ERA Aviation flying the Twin Otter as a first  
12 officer in 1994 for ERA in Bethel. Flew for a year and then I  
13 went to Yute Air to fly for -- let's see, I flew the 207 at Yute  
14 Air for a couple, 2 or 3 years. After that I went to Grant  
15 Aviation, flew the 207 for around 5 years and then to Hageland.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Started at Hageland in 2005.

18 Q. So you flew with the accident SIC, Mr. Welty. Is that  
19 correct?

20 A. I did.

21 Q. Okay. How often would you say you flew with him? Or how  
22 many times.

23 A. I flew with him approximately a week --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- off and on.

1 Q. All right. And do you recall when that was?

2 A. Yeah, the week before the crash.

3 Q. Okay. So describe for me what that week on and off was  
4 like flying with him.

5 A. It was entertaining. He was very smart, experienced. Came  
6 from the -- he had a military background. I think he was in  
7 Iraq or Afghanistan and yeah, very -- very entertaining.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Trusting person, smart.

10 Q. Okay. Was there anything unusual about the schedule that  
11 you flew, anything out of the ordinary?

12 A. Nothing.

13 Q. Okay. Do you recall by chance what the weather conditions  
14 were like that week, anything that was unusual?

15 A. Not that I can recall.

16 Q. Okay. Do you recall if there was any changes in weather?  
17 So you're flying along in the leg and you run into weather, have  
18 to turn around or cancel a flight because of weather?

19 A. I don't think we did during that week. I'm not sure.

20 Q. Okay. Do you recall what cities you flew through, what  
21 pairings you did?

22 A. No, I --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I can't recall.

1 Q. Okay. Did you have any abnormal or emergency situations  
2 that you recall?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Did Mr. Welty seem open to your input or suggestions that  
5 you made during the flight?

6 A. Oh, yeah.

7 Q. Okay. Can you tell me a little bit more? What were some  
8 of the things that he seemed open to receiving?

9 A. I made comments on his flying. You know, he was sometimes  
10 a little rough. You know, he's new; he was new. It's expected  
11 and I would tell him to, you know, be a little more gentle.

12 Q. Okay. Any of the comments that you made, were you ever  
13 concerned about flying with him --

14 A. No.

15 Q. -- or concerned --

16 A. No.

17 Q. -- about his flying skills? Okay.

18 So I don't want to put words into your mouth. You said  
19 that flying with him, it was entertaining. Was he someone that  
20 you enjoyed flying with?

21 A. I did. I did.

22 Q. Do you recall if he discussed his experience flying this  
23 type airplane or was this his first time? Was he new out of  
24 training on the 208?

1 A. Yeah, he was -- I mean, he was brand new. I don't think it  
2 was his first shift, but he didn't have many shifts under his  
3 belt.

4 Q. Okay. Have you flown with other pilots that were fresh out  
5 of training?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. How would he compare to those pilots that you flew with?

8 A. Average.

9 Q. Okay. Was there anything that stood out that you could say  
10 was one of his greatest strengths as a pilot that you observed?

11 A. His intelligence.

12 Q. Okay. And when you say intelligence, was that sort of in  
13 the broad sense or specific to aviation or the airplane?

14 A. The broad sense. He was very smart.

15 Q. Okay. Besides being a little rough on the controls, he was  
16 new, any areas where you felt that he needed to improve?

17 A. Well, he was so new. Everything was new. He was new to  
18 the airplane and to the environment. It takes time. I mean, he  
19 was new, so --

20 Q. Okay. What was his personality like?

21 A. He was open, engaging, social.

22 Q. I know he was new, but you think maybe he had one shift  
23 before you'd flown with him?

24 A. Possibly.

25 Q. Did you hear anything about him, any concerns, anything --

1 A. Negative.

2 Q. -- somebody might have said?

3 A. Nope.

4 Q. Okay. When you were flying with him did he ever talk about  
5 any concerns that he had with the company or the airplane?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Did you observe him using the checklist as he should  
8 have?

9 A. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

10 Q. All right. Did he ever seem to take unnecessary risks?

11 A. No. No.

12 Q. Do you recall the last time you spoke with him prior to the  
13 accident?

14 A. So he flew with me the day before. His last flight we shut  
15 down that evening. The next morning he crashed.

16 Q. Okay. How did he seem the day before?

17 A. Typical Welty. I called him Welterweight and, you know,  
18 just teasing. Wonderful person.

19 Q. Okay. Did you ever see him outside of Hageland?

20 A. No, I never did.

21 Q. No?

22 A. Never did.

23 Q. Okay. Shifting gears a little bit. The risk assessment  
24 process that you go through prior to a flight, could you explain

1 that to me? What is it, what's the process that you as a PIC go  
2 through?

3 A. Well, we're on the phone with OCC and we're discussing --  
4 you look at the weather. You have the board there and you  
5 determine, based on the weather, the condition of the plane,  
6 whether there are deferrals. You categorize each element there  
7 and you come to an agreement with OCC before you release.

8 Q. So it's a joint assessment versus you call the OCC and the  
9 risk assessment's already been done or --

10 A. No, it's joint.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. They might disagree with me and something that I might have  
13 overlooked.

14 Q. Okay. And this is done for -- so it's my understanding a  
15 flight is -- could be multiple legs?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Is that correct? So this is done for a flight versus  
18 each --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- individual leg?

21 A. Exactly, for a flight.

22 Q. Okay. When you're checking the weather, how far in advance  
23 might you be looking at the weather prior to the flight?

1 A. It depends on the weather. If it's a VFR day, CAVU, it's  
2 going to hold all day, you know it will, but we continually  
3 check the weather, continually.

4 Q. Is that in flight or --

5 A. Oh, yeah.

6 Q. -- when you're at the airports?

7 A. Yeah. I obsess. I obsess.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I love playing with the -- I check the whole state while  
10 we're flying, you know, to see -- yeah. I really enjoy it.

11 Q. Have you ever had a risk assessment rating of 3 or 4?

12 A. Oh, yeah.

13 Q. Okay. And so if it's a 3, that requires a phone call from  
14 somebody?

15 A. It does.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Yeah, Part 119.

18 Q. The rating of 3, is that something that was determined  
19 prior to a flight, or has -- I'll stop there. Was that  
20 determined prior to a flight? So it wasn't changed in flight  
21 where weather changed and maybe the rating went from a 2 --

22 A. Prior to flight.

23 Q. -- to a 3?

24 A. Yeah, it'd be prior to the release.



1 Q. Okay. Would that happen where the rating could change mid-  
2 flight if the weather deteriorated?

3 A. If it would have changed, we'd turn around.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. If it's a level 3 and we're released and it changes, if it  
6 worsens you turn around.

7 Q. Okay. The weather that you're reviewing when you're on the  
8 phone with the OCC, is that an open computer or is it a system  
9 that you log into with your own login and -- in order to pull up  
10 weather, or is it just an open computer that you walk up to and  
11 you can pull up weather?

12 A. In dispatch there's a computer there with the weather  
13 there. You also have in front of you the sheet that the agents  
14 provide and you're on the phone with OCC who has their system.

15 Q. Okay. Have you ever disagreed with a rating? So I know  
16 you said sometimes the OCA would disagree with --

17 A. OCC.

18 Q. Well, so OCC is the --

19 A. Center.

20 Q. -- the center and then you speak with the OCA?

21 A. Oh, the agent? Yes.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. All right.

24 Q. What do you call them?

1 A. I just call them OCC and then their names, you know, their  
2 nicknames.

3 Q. Okay. All right. All right. So you're talking with the  
4 OCC.

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. Have -- you said that you two have disagreed before. On a  
7 rating?

8 A. You know, something that I might not have caught. You  
9 know, oh, you know, there's that. I said okay, there it is,  
10 you're right.

11 Q. Have you ever felt that the OCC has tried to encourage you  
12 to, you know, use a lower rating than you thought --

13 A. Oh, no, no, no.

14 Q. --- that it should be?

15 A. No, no.

16 Q. Okay. I'm going to butcher the names I'm sure, but have  
17 you flown -- is it between Quinhagak? Is that how you say it?  
18 Quin --

19 A. So southeast --

20 Q. How do you say that?

21 A. -- southeast of Bethel or -- Quinhagak?

22 Q. Yes, Quinhagak.

23 A. Quinhagak?

24 Q. How do you say it?

1 A. We -- that's what we jokingly call it, Quinhagak, but it's  
2 Quinhagak.

3 Q. Quinhagak?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And Togiak?

6 A. Togiak. Yes, I have.

7 Q. Okay. Is that a route that's a common route that you all  
8 fly?

9 A. In -- it was, yes.

10 Q. Was? It's no longer a route that's being flown?

11 A. We no longer do that.

12 Q. Okay. When you're flying between those two airports are  
13 there designated routes that you fly, or do you pick the route  
14 that you're going to --

15 A. Depends on the weather.

16 Q. Okay. And it's up to you though as the pilot, as the PIC,  
17 which route you're going to take?

18 A. Well, the release, you have to refer to your release.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So if you're going IFR, you go IFR.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. If it's VFR, you're going VFR.

23 Q. Okay. But are there multiple ways that you could go  
24 between the two airports, or is it pretty much just one way that  
25 you're going to go?

- 1 A. I just go one way.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. Go up and over.
- 4 Q. Up and over --
- 5 A. The mountains.
- 6 Q. Okay. Is there a way to go not up and over the mountains?
- 7 A. If you wanted you could stay low, you know.
- 8 Q. Okay. I don't mean it to be a trick question. I'm just
- 9 asking.
- 10 A. Yeah, but I just go -- me personally, I go up and over --
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. -- stay out of the turbulence.
- 13 Q. So there's -- typically when you're flying between two
- 14 airports are there other Hageland flights flying that same route
- 15 but maybe at different spacing from you, several minutes behind
- 16 or ahead?
- 17 A. It's -- yeah. I mean, if you're going to Hooper Bay,
- 18 Bethel, Hooper Bay, you could have three planes behind you
- 19 train.
- 20 Q. Okay. And are you in communication with --
- 21 A. Oh, yeah.
- 22 Q. -- those other aircraft?
- 23 A. Oh, yeah.
- 24 Q. Is it -- what information are you sharing between?

1 A. If it's professional we're talking about weather, if there  
2 are weather changes. It's -- you know, that's a huge thing. If  
3 the weather's changing you're telling them. If there's icing  
4 you're telling them. Yeah, it's a great thing to have, the  
5 frequency.

6 Q. Okay. Is there ever any competition when those few  
7 airplanes are flying --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- the same route?

10 A. No. I mean, there's --

11 COURT REPORTER: Off the record just a second.

12 (Off record at 9:47 a.m.)

13 (On record at 9:48 a.m.)

14 COURT REPORTER: Thank you.

15 DR. WILSON: Are we back on the record?

16 COURT REPORTER: We're back on the record.

17 DR. WILSON: Okay.

18 BY DR. WILSON:

19 Q. All right. So just to continue, I -- in case the thought  
20 process got cut off --

21 COURT REPORTER: Sorry.

22 BY DR. WILSON:

23 Q. -- no competitions between pilots --

24 A. No, no.

25 Q. -- going between routes or --

1 A. No. No.

2 Q. -- anything like that? Okay. Have you ever heard of guys  
3 doing that or gals? Making any bets as to, you know, maybe who  
4 can get there faster or --

5 A. No, no, no. No. I mean, there's --

6 Q. -- take a shorter route?

7 A. -- no. No, no, no. I mean -- no.

8 Q. Okay. Have you ever inadvertently flown into IMC?

9 A. Inadvertently?

10 Q. Uh-huh.

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. So if you were approaching weather, what would you  
13 do if you see weather up ahead? What would your thought process  
14 be, your decision making?

15 A. Well, I mean, it depends on the weather. But if you're  
16 IFR, you're IFR, you're -- and if it's doable, if the weather  
17 changes -- for example, you're going to Hooper Bay. If the  
18 weather starts deteriorating, you're watching it, you're talking  
19 to other pilots out there who are doing approaches into Hooper  
20 Bay. And you can see it deteriorate on your screen, and then if  
21 you see someone doing an approach into Hooper Bay you ask them  
22 what the actual conditions are. If they say it's bad, you just  
23 turn around. Or ice. You know, if you're picking -- the guys  
24 up ahead of you are picking up ice and they say they're picking  
25 up ice, you just turn around.

1 Q. Do you have to make a call to someone, back to base or to  
2 OCC?

3 A. Yeah. You immediately, you know, tell -- if you don't have  
4 -- if you can't reach base, you have someone else relay for you  
5 that you're turning around due to icing, due to deteriorating  
6 weather, so that no one else is launching out there.

7 Q. Is there any paperwork that you have to fill out if you do  
8 something like that?

9 A. Nope.

10 Q. How do you like working for Hageland?

11 A. I love it.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. I love it.

14 Q. Any external pressures that you feel from them ever to take  
15 a flight or --

16 A. No. No.

17 Q. -- to continue a flight? Okay. Have you ever -- have they  
18 ever encouraged you to take a flight that you've turned down?

19 A. Never.

20 Q. Okay. How would you characterize the morale of the pilot  
21 group?

22 A. I'd say it's really good. I mean, I haven't flown in a  
23 couple weeks, but yeah, it's -- it's lively. It's fun. It's a  
24 great place to work. It might -- it's a little cold now. I  
25 don't know how it is now. It's kind of -- wind chill.

1 Q. Just a little cold.

2 A. It's cold out there.

3 Q. Describe the safety culture at Hageland.

4 A. It's -- you know, that's the most important thing. You  
5 can't run an airline unsafely. You lose your passengers. You  
6 lose the trust of the community. It's everything.

7 Q. If you had a safety concern, what would you do; how would  
8 you go about reporting that?

9 A. Safety concern. In terms of --

10 Q. About another pilot, the equipment,

11 A. Oh. If I had a concern about a pilot, I'd tell everybody.  
12 That's true.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. I mean, I'd tell -- and then it goes up and I'd talk to  
15 everybody.

16 Q. So is there a formal process though that you could go  
17 through also --

18 A You go --

19 Q. -- a system that you could log into to report something?

20 A. Well, I -- you know, WBAT. But I mean, I talk to the chief  
21 pilot. I've talked to the assistant chief pilot, chief pilot,  
22 the director of operations and I -- if I see something that, you  
23 know, you know it's a new -- if it's a new person and I see  
24 something, oh yeah.

25 Q. Yeah. Have you ever had to do that before?



- 1 A. I have.
- 2 Q. Did you feel that the company was responsive?
- 3 A. They're receptive, yes, very much so.
- 4 Q. Does the company have an ASAP program?
- 5 A. Uh-huh.
- 6 Q. Okay. Have you ever used that?
- 7 A. I did once. It was a long time ago. I don't know what it
- 8 was.
- 9 Q. Okay. So you feel comfortable reporting concerns that you
- 10 might have?
- 11 A. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.
- 12 Q. All right. The St. Mary's accident that occurred in 2013,
- 13 what changes have you seen to your procedures since then? Have
- 14 you --
- 15 A. So based on that accident?
- 16 Q. Uh-huh.
- 17 A. OCC, I think, was developed.
- 18 Q. Okay. Any changes to how you're -- the routes you're
- 19 supposed to fly or the way --
- 20 A. Yeah.
- 21 Q. Yeah.
- 22 A. Yeah. VFR routes at night have increased. You know, VFR
- 23 routes are higher.
- 24 Q. Okay. Do you ever have any concerns about flying the 208?
- 25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Like what?

2 A. In icing, when there's bad ice.

3 Q. Okay. Any concerns about the maintenance of --

4 A. No.

5 Q -- the aircraft?

6 A. No, no, no. No.

7 Q. Okay. Have you ever flown in the airplane where maybe the  
8 right side instruments aren't operational?

9 A. Never.

10 Q. Heard of that?

11 A. If something does happen, we write it up.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I mean, even a turn and bank on the right side, it's  
14 written up. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. When you're flying, is it -- are you always flying  
16 with a second in command or is --

17 A. No.

18 Q. No.

19 A. No.

20 Q. How is it determined that you're going to have an SIC for a  
21 flight?

22 A. Well, I was crippled for a while, so -- yeah, I don't -- it  
23 depends. You know, you have -- we had one guy, two guys, and if  
24 some guy wants them, we'll share them. You know, if someone

1 wants the extra help. I'm an old guy, so, you know, need the  
2 extra help. Yeah, it's dependent. You share.

3 Q. Okay. Few questions about your training and then I'll open  
4 it up to other people.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. Are you trained for CFIT avoidance?

7 A. We are.

8 Q. Okay. Is that in ground school?

9 A. Ground school, recurrent ground school, yeah.

10 Q. Okay. And what does that cover?

11 A. You know, simulator simulating weather deteriorating, go  
12 into higher terrain ahead of you; do you turn around, what do  
13 you do? Judgment.

14 Q. Okay. Is that in every recurrent training?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. And how often do you go to recurrent training?

17 A. Once a year.

18 Q. How about crew resource management, is there a specific  
19 training module on that?

20 A. Our second in command program, they're trained to be pilot  
21 in command. So me as a captain, I let him do everything as I  
22 monitor his flying. You know, he does the radio calls. He  
23 flies.

24 Q. Okay. So that's in flight, or that's also done -- that's  
25 in the training, in the simulator training?

- 1 A. Well, in the airplane when I fly, when I'm a captain.
- 2 Q. Okay. Is there a specific lecture on CRM that explains  
3 what CRM is and --
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Is that -- so that's in ground school?
- 8 A. It is.
- 9 Q. In every recurrent also?
- 10 A. It is, yeah.
- 11 Q. Okay. How about training for the risk assessment? Is --  
12 once OCC -- did you do a risk assessment prior to OCC, or is --
- 13 A. We did, yeah.
- 14 Q. Okay. Has it changed since OCC?
- 15 A. The categories changed.
- 16 Q. Okay. Did you receive additional training when --
- 17 A. Yes, we did.
- 18 Q. -- the categories changed?
- 19 A. Yes, we did.
- 20 Q. Okay. Is that a one-time training or is that something  
21 that's also recurrent?
- 22 A. If there's a change in anything, it's mentioned and we have  
23 to go over it.
- 24 Q. Did it seem straightforward, the training --
- 25 A. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

- 1 Q. -- everybody understands it, you think?
- 2 A. Yeah. And if you have any questions people ask.
- 3 Q. Okay. Any concerns about the training or the instructors?
- 4 A. No. No. Not at that airline, not at -- not at Hageland.
- 5 Q. Okay. Was the FAA present for any training or check rides
- 6 that you've been involved in?
- 7 A. Yeah, uh-huh.
- 8 Q. Both, like, ground school training, sim training, check
- 9 rides?
- 10 A. I've seen them everywhere, in every corner.
- 11 Q. Okay. Have you seen an increased presence from the FAA
- 12 since this most recent accident?
- 13 A. Negative.
- 14 Q. Okay. Have you ever heard anybody refer to Hageland as
- 15 being the Wild West?
- 16 A. No. Twenty years ago. Now, I don't know.
- 17 Q. Okay. Not recently?
- 18 A. Not recently, no, no, no.
- 19 Q. Okay. I'm going to take a break --
- 20 A. Okay.
- 21 Q. -- and let Marvin ask questions. You doing okay, do you --
- 22 A. I am. I'm fine.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 BY MR. FRANTZ:

1 Q. Okay, Jon. I don't have too much. Katherine's covered a  
2 lot. Have you done -- how much commercial flying have you done  
3 outside of Alaska?

4 A. It's all Alaska.

5 Q. All Alaska.

6 A. I did some training in Denmark, commercial training in  
7 Denmark.

8 Q. What would you describe as the biggest challenge, the  
9 single biggest challenge for flying in Alaska versus the lower  
10 48?

11 A. I -- see, I have no comparison. I've never really -- I've  
12 never flown in the lower 48.

13 Q. Okay. Can you take me through a -- briefly, a typical day  
14 when you start off with a flight? And before we go there, let  
15 me just make sure we have the same vocabulary. A flight is some  
16 -- is done -- you have one flight a day typically, or you might  
17 have more than one flight a day?

18 A. Oh yeah, several. Several flights.

19 Q. Okay. And a flight could consist of multiple legs?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. Are those termed legs?

22 A. They are.

23 Q. Okay. When you show up for a flight, say it has three  
24 legs, what is your -- when you arrive at the airport what is  
25 your planning process? What's the --

1 A. So --

2 Q. -- basic sequence you go through?

3 A So we'll use a -- let's use a three-stop west coast,  
4 Chevak, Hooper, Scammon. So the first thing you do is you look  
5 at the weather. If there's any trend -- in fact, when I wake up  
6 in the morning I'm looking at the weather, see what the trends  
7 are and I just keep referring to that. I mean, if it's a  
8 marginal day you're just constantly looking at the weather,  
9 what's moving out there.

10 So let's say it's good weather, it's VFR weather. You know  
11 it's good, the winds are easy. An hour before you do your  
12 preflight. You get your load ready, look at your available  
13 load. You get that ready and you load the airplane. You secure  
14 it. You have your fuel. You've got your flight cam. Make sure  
15 all the maintenance items are good. You've been -- you know,  
16 the log sheet there, make sure it's all signed off. I mean,  
17 that's -- and this is of course before you load the plane. And  
18 then you call OCC a half hour before the flight leaves and you  
19 get your release.

20 Q. Would you talk to OCC typically any other times during the  
21 day for one flight, for a particular flight that had multiple  
22 legs?

23 A. So --

24 Q. Or would you talk to OCC just once before you go?

1 A. If I landed in Chevak and suddenly the weather's down and  
2 it's bad or there was an occurrence, you call OCC to make sure  
3 that they know so that if someone, say, from St. Mary's is  
4 coming down to Scammon or Hooper that they won't send that  
5 plane.

6 Q. Okay. Is there any kind of ongoing risk assessment done  
7 though for the next leg? If you land one place --

8 A. You're released for each leg, so you're released for the  
9 three villages.

10 Q. Okay. Before you take off on the second leg, have you gone  
11 inside or somehow taken a look at the latest weather report for  
12 your next destination?

13 A. Constant. I mean --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Yeah, it's constant.

16 Q. All right. And if it's changed significantly from what  
17 you'd expect, would that cause you to maybe call OCC at that  
18 point?

19 A. For sure.

20 Q. Okay. But if it was what you're expecting and everything  
21 was routine you wouldn't call --

22 A. Right. If it was --

23 Q. -- OCC before you launch on that leg?

24 A. Right. You're released under those conditions. If the  
25 conditions change you make changes.



1 Q. Okay. When you do the risk assessment is -- does it ever  
2 come out as a 1?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. It's a perfect day?

5 A. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

6 Q. Does that require a call to OCC, even if it's a 1?

7 A. That's -- it has to be through OCC.

8 Q. You have to still talk to them. You mentioned that you've  
9 stopped flying on the leg that was the accident leg, that  
10 they're not doing that route anymore.

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 Q. Do you know why that is?

13 A. I don't.

14 Q. What percentage of the flights prior to -- prior to the  
15 accident, what percentage of the flights would you say were done  
16 under VFR flight plans versus IFR flight plans of your flights?

17 A. Of all the flights?

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Say generally speaking they're -- well, for the Caravan  
20 it's half IFR, half VFR.

21 Q. You have some brief time working for some other operators  
22 in Alaska?

23 A. Uh-huh, I did.

24 Q. How did -- how does -- how do they compare, what's your  
25 experience with them versus --

1 A. I'm glad you mentioned that because when I got to Hageland  
2 I'd -- so I'd flown at ERA, Yute Air, Grant and when I got to  
3 Hageland it was immediately -- it was eye opener. They were  
4 professional and organized. That's what immediately I saw.

5 Q. Do you feel that Hageland had a different view of safety or  
6 a different safety culture than you saw at your previous  
7 occupations?

8 A. You had the support of Hageland. You had Jim Tweeto  
9 flying. You had Mike Hageland out there. You had the support.  
10 Yeah, it was totally different from the other airlines that I  
11 flew for.

12 Q. The SIC, Mr. Welty, he was -- how new was he?

13 A. I -- he was brand -- he was --

14 Q. As far as you knew he was fairly --

15 A. Yeah, like a baby, you know.

16 Q. Did he -- when you flew with him did he make any remarks  
17 about his training at Hageland that you can recall, his --

18 A. No, not that I can recall.

19 Q. -- that he had just recently completed?

20 A. Yeah, no.

21 Q. Were you aware of what his previous flight experience was,  
22 or did you talk about that with him?

23 A. I think I did, but I don't know who he flew with, who he  
24 had flown with, the other captains, the other shifts.

1 Q. Did he have -- to the best of your knowledge did he have  
2 any commercial flight time outside of Hageland before he got --

3 A. Not that I know of. I don't know.

4 Q. Do you have an MEL that you operate under?

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. Okay. What determines whether you're going to have an SIC  
7 on any particular flight or not?

8 A. If you're -- you know, if you need extra help loading,  
9 unloading.

10 Q. When you come in for a particular flight, you've come in,  
11 in the morning, do you know before you arrive that this is going  
12 to be a two-person or a two-crew flight versus a single pilot?

13 A. No, it's -- dispatch will have the guy with you. I mean,  
14 so you look at your -- you look at their -- I mean, what do you  
15 call it -- your flight. They have all the planes, the pilots  
16 assigned to each plane, and they'll have you with a copilot. If  
17 a copilot's with you, you can see it right there next to your  
18 name.

19 Q. Okay. And so would -- for the same flight one day -- is it  
20 fair to say that one day or one week when you do a particular  
21 flight you would have an SIC, but the next time you do that same  
22 flight you may not have an SIC?

23 A. Oh yeah, yeah.

24 Q. That's not uncommon?

25 A. Yeah, no.

1 Q. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

2 DR. WILSON: Shaun.

3 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

4 Q. Not too many here, Jon. Let you get out of here and escape  
5 for a little bit. A couple questions about the GPWS, the  
6 terrain system. How often is that system tested?

7 A. Tested preflight.

8 Q. So preflight, once --

9 A. So you start off in the morning, you do preflight. You hit  
10 it, make sure the enunciator's working properly.

11 Q. Okay. So then it would just be once a day; is that  
12 correct?

13 A. Yeah. And then -- well, but through your -- when you're  
14 descending you always hear the 500-foot callout. If that  
15 doesn't happen -- it's never not happened to me, but if it  
16 doesn't happen you tell maintenance. They always want to know  
17 about it.

18 Q. Okay. So you mentioned that 500-foot callout. So that  
19 being the oral enunciation or oral warning?

20 A. Uh-huh, it's oral.

21 Q. How often is that inhibited?

22 A. Well, you're not supposed to inhibit it. We don't.

23 Q. You don't inhibit it? Okay. If it is inhibited, being  
24 bumped or hit or something like that, the oral portion goes away

1 but do you still have the display, the visual depiction of the  
2 terrain out there?

3 A. So that's separate. I mean, you have that, but on your  
4 Garmin, on the GMX-200, yeah, you have the terrain display.

5 Q. Okay. So you would still have that available?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. What about the radar altimeter? Are there any company  
8 policies or procedures on the use of the Beretta?

9 A. We use it for IFR. You set your DH.

10 Q. But in cruise it would normally be -- would it be set at  
11 anything --

12 A. Zero.

13 Q. -- golf, or --

14 A. Set at zero.

15 Q. Set at zero. Okay. When you're in cruise can you reach --  
16 is there any way to get in touch with OCC when you're en route?

17 A. You -- well, no.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. If you need to, though, you can always relay it through  
20 base. I mean you're always in contact.

21 Q. Okay. Base being Bethel --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- or --

24 A. Yeah, if you're flying out of Bethel, it'd be Bethel.

1 Q. Okay. And then who determines that the flight would be VFR  
2 or IFR? Is that made by you as the captain, or is it made --

3 A. Well, it's weather related.

4 Q. So you wouldn't -- when you get the release or you call  
5 OCC, they're not telling you, hey, you're going VFR, hey, you're  
6 going IFR?

7 A. No.

8 Q. It's up to you to look at the weather --

9 A. Right.

10 Q. -- and make that determination?

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: That is all I have.

13 Dave.

14 DR. WILSON: Dave.

15 MR. LOWELL: I have no questions.

16 DR. WILSON: Eric.

17 BY MR. WEST:

18 Q. I know you flew with the SIC. Did you know the accident  
19 pilot well?

20 A. Tim Cline?

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. I did not know him well.

23 Q. Okay. You knew him though?

24 A. Uh-huh.

1 Q. Okay. I don't know where he fit into the company at all,  
2 but I take it you never flew with him?

3 A. I did fly with him.

4 Q. Oh, you did?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. Under what conditions?

7 A. I was his safety pilot.

8 Q. Safety pilot. And that meant you were a check airman of  
9 some kind, or --

10 A. I was an instructor safety pilot.

11 Q. Okay. Could we talk a little bit about his skills --

12 A. Sure.

13 Q. -- as a pilot?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. What did you --

16 A. He was above average.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. His hand -- hand to eye coordination, above average.

19 Q. Above average.

20 A. For sure.

21 Q. All right. And I don't know much about his level in -- as  
22 far as total time or anything. Do you know if he was a very  
23 experienced pilot?

24 A. He had some experience. I mean, he didn't have -- you  
25 know, he wasn't a 10-year guy, but he had 5 years flying bush --

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. -- under his belly, I think.
- 3 Q. In Alaska.
- 4 A. In Alaska.
- 5 Q. In Alaska. Not as much as you though.
- 6 A. No.
- 7 Q. Okay. This route from -- this Togiak route.
- 8 A. Um-hum.
- 9 Q. So you make a decision whether you go over or around or  
10 whatever and typically this weather that -- does it come in  
11 fast, does it --
- 12 A. No, not there.
- 13 Q. Not there?
- 14 A. No.
- 15 Q. Okay. This thing about the SIC, when you're assigned an  
16 SIC it could be for -- from what I'm gathering here it can be  
17 for one of two reasons. One, to assist you --
- 18 A. Uh-huh.
- 19 Q. -- and the other is for training. Am I correct? You can  
20 be --
- 21 A. No, not -- you mean for other pilots, or are you talking  
22 specifically for me, about me?
- 23 Q. No, in general.
- 24 A. In general?



1 Q. In other words, an SIC could be assigned to you for a  
2 senior pilot --

3 A. Right, but it wouldn't be for training. It would be -- I  
4 mean there --

5 Q. For grooming him in other words?

6 A. Oh, for sure, constantly.

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. You're constantly -- yeah, it's --

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. If he's next to you and he's -- they're new, you're  
11 constantly telling them -- I mean you're trying to make them  
12 a --

13 Q. Right.

14 A. -- a great pilot.

15 Q. Because really this is a -- it's a single-pilot operation.

16 A. It is.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Right. Okay.

20 A. And so your concern is for the public. I mean -- actually  
21 for my kids. I mean, I always pretend that my kids -- you want  
22 the guy to be so good, so safe that you'd let your kids fly with  
23 him. That's it.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. That's what you're constantly trying to achieve.

1 Q. Okay. That's what I was trying to get at. Have you ever  
2 experienced -- have you ever had an en route inspection from an  
3 FAA inspector?

4 A. Sure. Yeah.

5 Q. Yeah. Okay. You're familiar with the structure of the  
6 office here in Anchorage as far as CMO and how it's set up?

7 A. The FSDO?

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. So there's a certificate management office that  
11 oversees Hageland --

12 A. Right.

13 Q. -- Aviation and they have a principal inspector. Have you  
14 ever met him and do you know who he is?

15 A. Our -- the principal inspector that's assigned to Hageland?

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. It's Charlie.

18 Q. Charlie.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Correct. Okay. Good. So you're familiar with that and  
21 you're -- you know that these people exist. They come and  
22 they --

23 A. I do. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Yeah, Charlie's a wonderful guy.

1 Q. Okay. Good. All right. That's it.

2 DR. WILSON: Okay. Noreen?

3 BY MS. PRICE:

4 Q. Okay. I have a couple quick ones. How do you pick an  
5 altitude when you have a route? What's your method of I'm going  
6 to fly this route at this altitude? You were saying you go up  
7 and over the mountains.

8 A. Right. So I try to get -- so let's say it's VFR, beautiful  
9 day. I'd go where it's smooth. I don't -- you know, I don't  
10 want to chop your eye. I just go where it's smooth.

11 Q. Okay. And then the SIC program, I have a couple of  
12 questions because I'm not that familiar with it. When you have  
13 an SIC with you, how do you guys -- do you do a brief before the  
14 flight that explains like who takes care of the checklist,  
15 emergency procedures?

16 A. Yeah, yeah.

17 Q. How is it different than when you're flying by yourself?

18 A. Because I do it all. I don't talk to anyone else.

19 Q. So you -- but you were saying that the SIC has got sort of  
20 in training to be a PIC, let him do it all.

21 A. Uh-huh.

22 Q. What -- so is there any crew coordination with --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. -- the checklist and things like that or --

1 A. Right, I'm telling him. So I'm -- this is your -- you  
2 know, eventually you're going to be a captain. I'm monitoring,  
3 making sure you're doing everything right and he's got the  
4 workload.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So he's making traffic calls. He's flying the airplane.

7 Q. He's doing the checklist?

8 A. Yeah. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. What if there's an emergency, what do you -- do you  
10 brief ahead of time if there's --

11 A. If there's an emergency, I would take over. I'm the PIC.

12 Q. Is there any coordination during the emergency with the  
13 SIC, or you handle it like a single pilot in emergency?

14 A. Well, I would coordinate with him, but I am the PIC and I  
15 -- I'm -- I've been trained to fly -- it's a single pilot  
16 airplane, so I would do everything unless I needed his help.

17 MS. PRICE: Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

18 BY DR. WILSON:

19 Q. Okay. I have a few follow-ups, things that popped into my  
20 head. You said you flew with Mr. Cline.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Do you recall how long ago that was?

23 A. When he got upgraded to the Caravan -- I don't know -- was  
24 it a year and a half ago?

1 Q. Okay. So not anytime this year, within a couple of months  
2 before --

3 A. No.

4 Q. -- this accident?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Any concerns that you had flying with him?

7 A. He was -- he had a high -- you know, another hyper-  
8 intelligent guy, wonderful guy.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. And again, his hand to eye coordination was supreme. He  
11 was really good.

12 Q. Okay. Ever heard anyone else have any concerns about him  
13 or flying with him?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. The Garmin that's on the airplane, is the weather  
16 page separate from the terrain page, or can you --

17 A. Yeah. No, it's separate.

18 Q. So can you overlay weather on the terrain?

19 A. You can do a split if you want.

20 Q. Split. Okay.

21 A. Split screen.

22 Q. What page would you typically have up? What is the page  
23 that you should have up?

24 A. Well, I have what I prefer and it's just the north up -- or  
25 correction, it's the 360-degree view. I've got it on auto so

1 that as I approach the village it, you know, reduces, I get more  
2 detail. And then again, I mean, en route constantly checking  
3 the weather. Just love the weather. It's a great thing.

4 Q. Is there training on the Garmin?

5 A. Yeah, uh-huh.

6 Q. Is it a one-time training or is that something that's also  
7 in recurrent?

8 A. It's -- we go over things during recurrent.

9 Q. Okay. I didn't know whether you were thinking and had  
10 something else to add.

11 A. No, I'm always thinking, you know.

12 Q. Okay. How long is a typical work day?

13 A. 7:30, wintertime you get done around 7:00, 7:30, depends.

14 Q. Okay. So about a 12-hour shift?

15 A. Yeah, about that.

16 Q. Okay. Is summer different?

17 A. Summer a little bit longer. You know --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- daylight, you know, you take advantage of it.

20 Q. And how much of that is flying time?

21 A. Oh, you typically do between 4 to -- you know, you can  
22 have an 8-hour day, but, you know, I'd say you average 5 to 6.

23 Q. Okay. Who do you report to?

24 A. For --

25 Q. Who's your boss?

- 1 A. My wife.
- 2 Q. At work.
- 3 A. At work it is the chief pilot, assistant chief pilot.
- 4 Q. How often --
- 5 A. I mean dispatcher, you know, that guide -- you know, you
- 6 report -- you know, my boss is the chief pilot.
- 7 Q. Okay. How often do you see him?
- 8 A. Well, it's a her now.
- 9 Q. Oh, right, Erin.
- 10 A. Erin. Yeah, I've seen her out in the bush three times I
- 11 think lately, yeah.
- 12 Q. Okay. Where is she based out of?
- 13 A. Anchorage.
- 14 Q. Okay. How about the assistant chief pilot, also in
- 15 Anchorage?
- 16 A. Justin Essian floats between Anchorage and Palmer.
- 17 Q. Okay. So do they sometimes come out to Bethel or --
- 18 A. Oh, yeah.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. Oh, yeah.
- 21 Q. How often do you see them out there?
- 22 A. Every other month, I'd say.
- 23 Q. Okay. Are there also yearly performance evaluations that
- 24 you all have? Does the company do performance evaluations on
- 25 the pilots?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Like in terms of what? I mean, for upgrades or --

4 Q. Just to evaluate how things are going.

5 A. Well, I mean, you have up -- you obviously have your  
6 annual --

7 Q. Training.

8 A. -- you know, your check rides and the -- the IFR pilots,  
9 they have them every 6 months. Are you referring to that?

10 Q. No, a separate thing --

11 A. Oh, a separate thing.

12 Q. -- that sort of looks at your performance overall and --

13 A. Well, I mean -- for example, if there's a guy in a 207,  
14 he's been flying for a year and a half and it's time for him to  
15 possibly upgrade to a Caravan, yeah, everyone's talking, you  
16 know, how is he doing. Oh, yeah, everyone's watching everyone.

17 Q. Okay. How are your schedules determined? How do you know  
18 when you're going to be working?

19 A. So I'm the pilot and how do I know which flight I'm going  
20 to do?

21 Q. Right. So are you on -- you're going to be flying Sunday  
22 through Thursday of this week.

23 A. So we're on a 15-day -- we're on a 15-day cycle, so it's  
24 the first shift. First shift flies from the 1st to the 15th and  
25 then second shift has the rest of the month.



1 Q. Okay. And so the 12-ish hour days you fly 5 days, 6 days a  
2 week, 7?

3 A. You fly 7.

4 Q. Seven days. Okay.

5 A Sunday's a half day.

6 Q. Okay. And then back to 7. So you fly every day.

7 A. Yeah, you fly every day --

8 Q. For the 15 days.

9 A. -- of the -- yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes.

10 Q. Sundays are half days.

11 A. Right.

12 Q. Okay. And then for the specific flights that you're going  
13 to fly, when do you find out about those?

14 A. An hour before the flight leaves.

15 Q. Okay. Is that enough time?

16 A. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

17 Q. When do you contact base during a flight?

18 A. So I take off, I get in the air. I tell them my fuel, the  
19 time I'm off, souls on board, and if there's nothing else, if  
20 it's a routine flight, when I start coming back from my -- you  
21 know, 20 minutes out I'll call them. Twenty minutes out, souls  
22 on board.

23 Q. Okay. Since the accident have you noticed any -- have  
24 there been any changes in procedures for pilots?

25 A. Not that I've been exposed to yet.

1 Q. Okay. When were you a safety pilot?

2 A. Last couple years.

3 Q. Okay. Are you still a safety pilot?

4 A. No, I'm trying to get out of it.

5 Q. Okay.

6 DR. WILSON: All right. Anyone else, follow-ups?

7 MR. FRANTZ: A couple quick ones.

8 BY MR. FRANTZ:

9 Q. What are your requirements for time off as a 135 operator?

10 A. Do time off as much as possible

11 Q. Yeah. I agree.

12 A. So the requirements?

13 Q. Yeah. You said you fly 7 days and you only -- then you  
14 have a -- the seventh day is a half day?

15 A. Yeah, on Sunday just because --

16 Q. You're on duty for a half day on Sunday.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Half day meaning, what, 6 hours?

19 A. Well, just -- it's just -- it's a Sunday morning and out in  
20 the bush. People don't like to get up early on Sunday morning,  
21 so typically your first schedule is at 12:30. All the airlines  
22 out there do that.

23 Q. And then you're back to a full 12-hour day typically the  
24 next Monday?

25 A. Uh-huh.

1 Q. So when do you get a day -- how often do you get a day off?

2 A. On the 16th day. Or if you have a mechanical. There are  
3 times where they're working on your plane. You'll have 2, 3  
4 days sitting around doing nothing.

5 Q. But you'll be off duty -- or are you on duty, just not  
6 flying? During those --

7 A. Well, I go home. I live in Bethel, so I just go home, wait  
8 and --

9 Q. I get it. But are you subject to being called in, say hey,  
10 the plane's fixed now, come back, or --

11 A. Yeah. Yeah. You -- yeah.

12 Q. So are you going off and on duty in a situation like that,  
13 or are you --

14 A. No, you're on duty, but you're --

15 Q. You're on duty, but you're --

16 A. You're at home, yeah.

17 Q. But you're still burning your, into your -- into your duty  
18 time that you're -- you have to keep track of or somebody has to  
19 keep track of.

20 A. Yeah. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay. So you typically get a full 24 hours off every 2  
22 weeks? You said the 16th day.

23 A. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

24 Q. Okay. Compared to previous operators you've flown for,  
25 what's your exposure to the FAA, to flying with the FAA or

1 seeing the FAA personnel around at Hageland versus your other  
2 operators in Alaska that you flew for?

3 A. There's no difference. I mean, they were always -- well,  
4 Grant, didn't see a lot them there. I don't know why. But, you  
5 know, ERA we had route checks. Yute Air, they're around.

6 Q. When was the last time you flew with an FAA inspector that  
7 was actually checking, you know, a line check or a PC with --  
8 for you?

9 A. Probably 2 years ago.

10 Q. Okay. You typically do those items with a check airman?  
11 Company check airman -- annual, your PC or your 6-month PC line  
12 check and --

13 A. Yeah, so the check ride?

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. We do the check ride every 6 months.

16 Q. With -- that's the check airman?

17 A. With the check airman. And if it's a new check airman,  
18 then you have an observed, yeah.

19 Q. He's observed, right? Okay. Do the Caravans have  
20 autopilots?

21 A. Uh-huh.

22 Q. They're routinely used?

23 A. Uh-huh, yes.

- 1 Q. Okay. When you fly with an SIC, can he sit in the left  
2 seat? Do -- and if he can't, is there a company policy that  
3 says he can't?
- 4 A. Yeah, no. It --
- 5 Q. He doesn't?
- 6 A. I mean no. It would freak me out.
- 7 Q. Yeah. Is it an airplane -- I don't even know. Is it an  
8 airplane that you could -- is it qualified to be operated from  
9 either seat, equipped so that you could be --
- 10 A. No, you fly from the left.
- 11 Q. -- you could it operate from either seat?
- 12 A. I mean --
- 13 Q. It's not equipped, so --
- 14 A. Yeah, the right -- the right side --
- 15 Q. Yeah.
- 16 A. -- he's got some -- you know, he's got enough instruments  
17 to fly, yeah.
- 18 Q. Okay. And training and checking is all done in the  
19 airplane at Hageland; is that correct?
- 20 A. No, you do some -- I mean you're talking so specifically --
- 21 Q. Initial training.
- 22 A. Initial training, some you're in the sim for several hours.  
23 That's out --
- 24 Q. What kind of sim is it?
- 25 A. It's a full.

1 Q. Level C?

2 A. We're still doing the one at the university. Yeah.

3 Q. Is it --

4 A. I don't know what level it is.

5 Q. So it's full motion?

6 A. It's full motion, yeah.

7 Q. Okay. But proficiency checks for new people and for  
8 current PICs are done in the airplane; is that correct?

9 A. Right. For current --

10 Q. Your 6-month.

11 A. Right.

12 Q. And --

13 A. Check ride.

14 Q. -- yearly line check. Okay.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. Are done in the airplane?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And usually by a check airman versus the FAA?

19 A. Yes, check airman.

20 MR. FRANTZ: Yeah. Okay. Okay. That's all. Thanks.

21 DR. WILSON: Shaun?

22 MR. WILLIAMS: I have nothing further.

23 DR. WILSON: Dave?

24 MR. LOWELL: Nothing.

25 DR. WILSON: Eric?

1 I do.

2 BY DR. WILSON:

3 Q. As an instructor what were you training? Were you a flight  
4 instructor, ground school instructor?

5 A. Flight instructor, yeah.

6 Q. Flight instructor. Have you heard the GPWS go off besides  
7 the 500-foot callout?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. Like when you're going over terrain or --

10 A. Uh-huh.

11 Q. And what do you do when it goes off?

12 A. You just monitor. You know, you're looking, did you not  
13 see something? You know, yeah, just monitor.

14 Q. Okay. Does it typically go off?

15 A. Goes for -- my experience is it's going off at 500 feet.  
16 That's the callout.

17 Q. But in terms of terrain?

18 A. If there's terrain, no, it doesn't -- not --

19 Q. You don't hear that often?

20 A. No. No, I like to go high.

21 Q. Okay. What is the minimum that you're supposed to fly  
22 above terrain?

23 A. Above terrain?

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. Like flat terrain? Any kind of terrain?

- 1 Q. Right. Do you have to maintain 500 feet?
- 2 A. 600 feet.
- 3 Q. 600 feet?
- 4 A. Uh-huh.
- 5 Q. Okay. And then you like to go higher typically?
- 6 A. I do. I do.
- 7 Q. Okay. Do you feel like people typically -- pilots that
- 8 you've flown with, do they typically stay at 600 feet --
- 9 A. No.
- 10 Q. -- or do they like to go higher?
- 11 A. I mean, guys in the Caravan, they're high. You know, they
- 12 -- you know, you just want a smooth ride and -- yeah.
- 13 Q. Okay. Smooth because the higher you are above the
- 14 terrain --
- 15 A. Right.
- 16 Q. -- the less turbulent?
- 17 A. Right. Less turbulent. You know, even if I'm alone I do
- 18 it. Just, you know, I don't want a rough ride.
- 19 Q. Okay. The long duty days that you have, those -- the 12
- 20 hours --
- 21 A. Um-hum.
- 22 Q. -- are there -- is there a time for you to get any rest?
- 23 Is there --
- 24 A. Oh, yeah. I mean, it's -- yeah, it doesn't get on you.
- 25 Q. Okay. Is there an area like at the base?



1 A. Yeah, there's a pilot lounge upstairs, a bunch of couches  
2 if you -- you know, that's if you have a -- if your flight's  
3 been cancelled or there's a delay, just lay down. Oh, yeah.

4 Q. Okay. Is that pretty typical that you'd have enough time  
5 in between flights where you could go and rest in between them,  
6 or do you -- are the flights back to back?

7 A. It's -- you know, you have an hour, hour and a half. It  
8 depends.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Yeah, there's more than enough time. You're not scrambling  
11 around.

12 Q. Okay. What if you ever felt too tired for a flight? Does  
13 that ever happen?

14 A. Too tired for a flight? I mean, I wouldn't do it.

15 Q. You wouldn't take the flight if you were too tired?

16 A. No, I mean, if I'm too -- if I'm so tired I would just, you  
17 know -- and it's just rare, you know.

18 Q. Right. Rare that --

19 A. For me personally to feel that tired, that -- yeah.

20 Q. Okay. Is there a procedure? What would you do if you felt  
21 too tired?

22 A. Just cancel.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It -- I don't want to do the flight. I have no problems  
25 cancelling flights.

1 Q. Do they talk about that in training at all, if you needed  
2 to cancel for fatigue?

3 A. Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. They -- you know, yeah.

4 Q. Okay. Do you all have like sick leave also that you can  
5 take or how does --

6 A. Uh-huh.

7 Q. Okay. If you called in fatigue would that be -- would you  
8 be taking sick leave time for that?

9 A. Oh, I -- you know, it depends. I mean, I don't care if I'm  
10 paid or not, you know.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. If I'm not feeling up to it, I'll just take the day off.

13 Q. Have you done that before?

14 A. Oh, yeah.

15 Q. Yeah. Any repercussions?

16 A. No. No, no.

17 Q. Okay. All right. Nothing from anybody? Okay.

18 Anything else that we didn't ask you that you hoped we  
19 would or something that you would like to share with us that you  
20 think would be helpful to our investigation?

21 A. No. Yeah, I hope you guys find something. I'd love to  
22 know. Two very smart guys and that Tim Cline was a exceptional  
23 pilot. He was.

24 Q. Well, we really do appreciate you taking the time talking  
25 to us. I'll give you one of my business cards. If anything

1 comes up, something that you think of, feel free to reach out to  
2 us. These investigations typically last 12 to 18 months, so  
3 we'll be doing this for a while, if anything should come up that  
4 you think is relevant.

5 A. Cool.

6 Q. Thanks, Jon.

7 A. Thanks, guys.

8 DR. WILSON: Off the record.

9 (Whereupon, at 10:33 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:     FLIGHT 3153, AIR TAXI AND COMMUTER  
                          ACCIDENT, OCTOBER 2, 2016  
                          TOGIAK, ALASKA  
                          Interview of Jon Kapsner

DOCKET NUMBER:        ANC17FA001

PLACE:                 Anchorage, Alaska

DATE:                  December 6, 2016

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared  
to the recording accomplished at the interview.

---

Nicolette Hernandez  
Official Reporter

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

FLIGHT 3153, AIR TAXI AND COMMUTER \*  
ACCIDENT, OCTOBER 2, 2016, \*  
TOGIAK, ALASKA \*

Docket No.: ANC17FA001

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: DAVE LOWELL

NTSB Offices  
Anchorage Federal Building  
222 West 7th Avenue, Room 216  
Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,  
December 7, 2016

## APPEARANCES:

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Anchorage, Alaska

KATHERINE A. WILSON, Ph.D., Senior Human Performance  
Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C.

CAPTAIN MARVIN FRANTZ, Air Safety Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C.

ERIC WEST, Air Safety Inspector  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Office of Accident Investigation and Prevention  
Washington, D.C.

NOREEN PRICE, Aviation Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Anchorage, Alaska

Also Present:

MARC WILHELM, Esq.  
Richmond & Quinn  
Anchorage, Alaska  
(Representative on behalf of Mr. Lowell)

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:15 a.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. FRANTZ: Morning, Dave. My name's Marvin Frantz --

4 MR. LOWELL: Morning.

5 MR. FRANTZ: -- NTSB. I'm an air safety investigator in  
6 the Operational Factors Division. And we're here, as you know,  
7 as part of the investigation of a Hageland accident recently.  
8 We -- as you know, because of your experience and position,  
9 we're -- NTSB is a federal agency charged with investigating and  
10 determining probable causes of transportation accidents with the  
11 ultimate goal of improving aviation safety through safety  
12 recommendations that evolve from our conclusions and probable  
13 causes of investigations. We're not part of the Department of  
14 Transportation or the FAA. We have no regulatory or enforcement  
15 authority over individual pilot certificates or pilots.

16 We're going to go around the room in a moment. Everyone  
17 can introduce themselves so you'll know who you're talking to  
18 today. We're going to use a court reporter who will transcribe  
19 the interview. The transcription, not the recording, will  
20 become part of the public record.

21 Again, we're tasked with determining the probable cause and  
22 coming up with safety recommendations to mitigate or prevent  
23 accidents like this in the future. This is a typical interview,  
24 part of our fact finding. We're going to ask, as yesterday, we  
25 were going to ask pilots and company people about their roles,



1 company policies and procedures and specific information to the  
2 degree that they can help us about this particular accident. We  
3 don't offer confidentiality or immunity as part of our  
4 investigation.

5 We'll go around the room and each group member will have a  
6 chance to ask you questions one at a time and then after the  
7 first round if anybody has any follow-up questions precipitated  
8 by someone else's questions or some of your answers we'll have a  
9 chance to ask those questions on a second round.

10 Answer everything to the best of your recollection and  
11 ability. It's okay to say I don't know or it's okay to say I'll  
12 find out and get that back to you. Or it's okay to say I don't  
13 know, but -- you know, we'll give you contact information at the  
14 end of the questioning and you can send us -- get us information  
15 later on if you need to.

16 Please answer questions yes, no, I don't know or with some  
17 narrative as opposed to just a, you know, uh-huh or nodding,  
18 because we are trying to get the recording onto the -- on the --  
19 or we are recording for the record, so we'll need verbal  
20 responses.

21 You are entitled to have a representative of your choosing  
22 at this interview and so can you tell me who that would be?

23 MR. LOWELL: Yes, please. It's Marc Wilhelm.

24 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Very good. Thank you. The -- your  
25 representative can't answer questions. He can -- you can confer

1 with him privately if you need to. He cannot direct you not to  
2 answer questions. He can't answer questions for you. Okay. Do  
3 you have any questions before we get started?

4 MR. LOWELL: I do. I have one question just so that I know  
5 where -- the level of knowledge around the table for the safety  
6 program. Is -- have any of you had an opportunity to review the  
7 Hageland safety manual or the emergency response plan? Have you  
8 seen any of the documents associated with the safety program?

9 MR. WEST: I have not.

10 MR. FRANTZ: I have not.

11 MR. LOWELL: Okay.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: No.

13 MR. LOWELL: Okay. Ma'am?

14 DR. WILSON: I don't think I have.

15 MR. LOWELL: Okay.

16 DR. WILSON: It's been a while.

17 MR. LOWELL: Right. Okay. Thank you. No, it's just so I  
18 understand --

19 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Sure.

20 MR. LOWELL: -- the level of -- depth of explanation I  
21 might need to go into.

22 MR. FRANTZ: Yeah, you may have to go into some depth.

23 MR. LOWELL: Okay.

24 DR. WILSON: And I think even if we all had an  
25 understanding, we would want to have it on the record anyway.

1 MR. LOWELL: Sure. Sure.

2 DR. WILSON: So I think the more information that you can  
3 give us --

4 MR. LOWELL: Absolutely.

5 DR. WILSON: -- the better, even if you think we might  
6 already know it.

7 MR. LOWELL: Okay.

8 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. So we don't want to forget about the  
9 introduction part. So we'll start with Shaun and then we'll go  
10 around the room and let everybody get on the record.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams. I'm the investigator in  
12 charge with the NTSB here in Anchorage, Alaska.

13 MS. PRICE: Noreen Price, Accident Investigator here in  
14 Anchorage.

15 MR. WEST: Eric West, FAA, Senior Accident Investigator in  
16 Washington, D.C.

17 MR. WILHELM: Marc Wilhelm, counsel for the witness.

18 DR. WILSON: Katherine Wilson, Human Performance  
19 Investigator with the NTSB.

20 MR. FRANTZ: Thanks.

21 INTERVIEW OF DAVE LOWELL

22 BY MR. FRANTZ:

23 Q. Okay. All right. Just to start, could you state your full  
24 name?

25 A. Sure. David Charles Lowell.

1 Q. And your current position?

2 A. Vice President of Safety for Hageland Aviation.

3 Q. Okay. What was your date of hire at Hageland?

4 A. May of 2012.

5 Q. Okay. Have you had any other positions at Hageland other  
6 than director -- or vice president of safety?

7 A. I have not.

8 Q. Okay. Can you give me an outline of your pilot  
9 certificates, ratings, just very briefly?

10 A. Sure. I have a commercial multi-engine, single-engine land  
11 and 27 years of aviation experience with the Air Force and the  
12 Air National Guard in Alaska flying Casey 135s and C-26B  
13 Metroliners.

14 Q. Approximately how many total hours do you have, flight  
15 hours?

16 A. About 3,500.

17 Q. Okay. And did you have any commercial aviation positions  
18 prior to Hageland?

19 A. I have had no commercial aviation positions prior to this.

20 Q. Okay. What -- can you give us a brief outline of what your  
21 duties are as vice president of safety?

22 A. Absolutely. I'm responsible for managing the safety  
23 program at Hageland Aviation. So that -- those duties include  
24 the safety reporting system, safety promotion, safety  
25 communication and visiting the locations that we operate from.

1 Reporting to the president of the company and then I also report  
2 to the safety chair of the board of directors for Ravn Alaska.

3 Q. Okay. So who is your immediate boss?

4 A. On a day-to-day basis for the safety program is the  
5 president of the company.

6 Q. Okay. Do you have any people working for you in the -- in  
7 a safety -- in the safety department?

8 A. I do not.

9 Q. Okay. Can you tell me -- give me a brief outline of the  
10 safety management system that Hageland uses now, the risk  
11 management system? And I believe you have a -- probably another  
12 company name for that particular system where risk is evaluated  
13 for flights. Is that -- does it have a title?

14 A. Are you speaking of a flight risk --

15 Q. Yeah. Yeah.

16 A. -- system or a company risk system?

17 Q. No, the flight.

18 A. Flight risk system is a 1 through 4 gradient that measures  
19 the man, the machine and the environment on a daily basis. And  
20 that risk is arrived at for each flight, which could be a series  
21 of shorter takeoffs and landings, and it's arrived at jointly by  
22 the pilot in charge and the Operations Control Center. And then  
23 each flight is risked. If it goes to a level 3, then that  
24 flight must be released by a FAR Part 119 director or a  
25 authorized representative. So typically the chief pilot or the

1 director of operations or the assistant chief pilot can release  
2 those flights.

3 Q. Were you involved in the implementation or the creation or  
4 the starting of that system at Hageland?

5 A. Peripherally, but not directly. That was mostly an  
6 operations focus.

7 Q. And when did Hageland start using that system?

8 A. I'm going to say January of 2014 maybe or the end of 2013.  
9 I don't have an exact date.

10 Q. Okay. What was the impetus for that system to be put in  
11 place?

12 A. I don't know what the impetus was for that.

13 Q. Is it required by the FAA?

14 A. It is not required. There is a similar system that has  
15 been required for helicopter operators, but I don't believe that  
16 that requirement has come in place yet.

17 Q. Are you familiar with the dispatch process for Hageland  
18 flights?

19 A. I would call it a flight release process rather than a  
20 dispatch process since it's not actually a Part 121 dispatch  
21 where you get your package and your release and everything.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So -- but I am, yes.

24 Q. Can you describe it for me?

1 A. Yes. It's a two -- or a three-step process, I believe.  
2 And it begins with the release of the aircraft which is done by  
3 the maintenance control center, and if the aircraft is not  
4 airworthy then it's not able to be released.

5 The Ops Control Center checks the strips for the day. When  
6 I say strips I mean the flights strips that are in a proprietary  
7 software that we have. And then they review the pilot  
8 qualifications to make sure that they have a current medical,  
9 their check ride is complete, any additional training is -- that  
10 is required is done.

11 And then they proceed to check, as does the pilot in  
12 charge, the weather, the NOTAMs, any other particular runway  
13 conditions or factors that might impact the flight. The PIC  
14 calls the OCC within 30 minutes prior to takeoff. They have a  
15 brief conversation regarding all of the factors that they both  
16 checked and they arrive at a risk and then they risk the flight.  
17 That flight risk is printed out on the flight manifest and then  
18 the initials of the ops control agent are also on there so we  
19 have a record of who released the flight from the operations  
20 center.

21 Q. And are you familiar with the concept of Tier 1 and Tier 2  
22 operational control --

23 A. I am not.

24 Q. -- from the FAA --

25 A. No, I'm not.

1 Q. -- point of view or description? Okay. So the actual  
2 permission or the release of the flight is a joint venture  
3 between the PIC and someone at the OCC. Is that correct?

4 A. No.

5 Q. They both --

6 A. No, the --

7 Q. They both have to approve?

8 A. They do, but the actual flight release comes from the Ops  
9 Control Center. The flight may not depart until it's been  
10 released from the Ops Control Center.

11 Q. Okay. And the Ops Control Center though to release it  
12 requires the agreement of --

13 A. Indeed.

14 Q. -- the PIC with the plan --

15 A. That is correct.

16 Q. -- to use the generic term, of the flight.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Okay. I heard the term yesterday "dispatchers" by some of  
19 the other interviewees and it wasn't in reference to the people  
20 at the OCC. So in Hageland terminology do you use the term  
21 dispatcher --

22 A. I think the term is --

23 Q. -- for the people that aren't in the OCC, but are part of  
24 flights?



1 A. I think the term is loosely used and it varies from base to  
2 base what the term is, but those are the individuals that are  
3 responsible for assigning aircraft and pilots to a particular  
4 series of flights during the day. So -- and then inputting all  
5 the information into the software for generating a flight  
6 manifest. So that would include cargo, mail, passengers and so  
7 forth. They don't have any operational control over the flight.

8 Q. How many of these people are there in the whole system?

9 A. I do not know.

10 Q. How many on duty at a particular time?

11 A. It depends on the size of the base.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Generally at least one. There might be more than one. I  
14 honestly don't know.

15 Q. How many -- and the dispatchers operate -- dispatchers, in  
16 quotation marks -- operate out of Hageland bases?

17 A. They do.

18 Q. And how many bases are there?

19 A. We have 10 bases, one of which is a maintenance location,  
20 so it's a nonoperational base.

21 Q. So just so I understand. There are individuals at each  
22 base that are building flights, putting -- matching pilots and  
23 airplanes and loads to fly out of that particular base.

24 A. Correct.

1 Q. And those are the people that are sometimes referred to as  
2 dispatchers --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- base dispatchers?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. No operational control over the flight actually  
7 leaving the ground and approved for --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- the route, the fuel, the weather, all that. They --

10 A. No.

11 Q. -- they're the planning folks.

12 A. Yes, that is correct.

13 Q. What kind of training do those people have --

14 A. I do not know.

15 Q. -- to do that job?

16 A. I do not know.

17 Q. Okay. Are they required to be named in your GOM at all --

18 A. They are not.

19 Q. -- the people that are eligible or qualified to do that?

20 A. They are not.

21 Q. Okay. One of the things you did say, I believe, about them  
22 was that they are responsible for planning loads on aircraft,  
23 the cargo --

24 A. When I say planning loads is they identify what needs to go  
25 from location to location. They don't --

1 Q. Oh.

2 A. -- actually plan what goes on the airplane.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. The PIC is responsible for the actual quantity of freight  
5 or mail or cargo that goes on the aircraft.

6 Q. All right. So now I just want to talk briefly about the  
7 other people that are responsible, that -- sorry, that are  
8 involved in flight release and that would be the OCAs --

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. -- operational control agents --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- who work at the OCC. So can you briefly give me a  
13 rundown of what an OCA -- what his duties are?

14 A. They're responsible for verifying -- I believe I touched on  
15 this briefly before. Verifying that the aircraft is released  
16 and that's simply by checking that it has a flyable status and  
17 if there's any deferred items or if it's close to inspection  
18 they note that. Checking the pilot to make sure that all of  
19 their training requirements and check rides are complete and  
20 then reviewing the weather and the NOTAMS or any other pilot  
21 reports or anything that we have about the locations they're  
22 going to fly to. And so they review all of that and then they  
23 wait for the pilots to call them.

1 Q. In a typical weekday morning operation do you have any idea  
2 or a ballpark number about how many flight each individual OCA  
3 would have responsibility for releasing?

4 A. I could do some math. I'm not very good at public math.  
5 But I will say that on a weekly basis on a Monday through Sunday  
6 that the two on duty OCAs release between 900 and 1,000 flights  
7 a week.

8 MR. WEST: I'm sorry, what was that number?

9 MR. LOWELL: 900 to 1,000.

10 MR. WEST: Thank you. And there are two people you said?

11 MR. LOWELL: Yes, there are.

12 MR. WEST: Okay.

13 MR. LOWELL: The Ops Control Center is divided into two  
14 sectors, the north sector which generally handles all the calls  
15 from north of the Alaska Range and then to the Arctic Circle.  
16 And then south handles everything south of that. It's not  
17 dedicated, but that's generally how it's split up.

18 BY MR. FRANTZ:

19 Q. Okay. I know this is outside of the safety department, so  
20 just tell me what you can about it. I'm curious about the  
21 qualifications and the training that an individual would get if  
22 he wanted to become an OCA at Hageland.

23 A. Sure. Since it's not a dispatcher position a certificate  
24 is not required. And since there's no definition in the federal  
25 regulations for a Part 135 center like this with any

1 requirement, the company has created a fairly rigorous training  
2 program. The program involves not only proving proficiency and  
3 training on the proficiency for all the different various  
4 weather sources and how to read NOTAMs and the things that are  
5 directly associated with that, but it also has a recurrent  
6 training period in it. There's also -- there's a manual that  
7 actually has the training and then all of the OCA's training is  
8 documented by the OCC manager.

9 Of note, the Medallion Foundation, which for the record is  
10 an independent organization that is tasked in working with the  
11 FAA here in Alaska to increase the safety of all aviation  
12 operations, has audited our OCA and our OCC process during the  
13 process of getting the Medallion Shield. So it is audited by  
14 external agencies, as well as the internal company audit  
15 procedure.

16 Q. Tell me a little bit about the Shield. I know they're --  
17 you accumulate stars based on reaching certain training or  
18 qualification goals at your organization. Is that correct --

19 A. The Medallion Program --

20 Q. -- for Medallion?

21 A. The Medallion Program has five and I believe they're going  
22 to six stars and those stars are in safety, flight into train,  
23 control flight into train, avoidance, maintenance and ground  
24 operations. Operational control is a star and then internal  
25 audit is also a star. So each of those programs are audited on

1 an annual basis with a checklist that Medallion has developed  
2 that gives an assessment of each of those area's programs and  
3 the efficacy of them as they're designed and implemented.

4 Q. Okay. And what of those stars has Hageland achieved?

5 A. Hageland has all five stars and the Shield. So we are a  
6 Shield carrier.

7 Q. Okay. If a pilot or an OCA, or even a ramper, at Hageland  
8 had a safety concern what are some routes they would take to  
9 bring that to the company's attention?

10 A. The company has a web-based safety reporting system that's  
11 managed by the safety department and that system is trained on a  
12 initial and a recurring basis to all the employees. Its name is  
13 WBAT, which is -- just stands for Web Based Application Tool.  
14 It was developed by the FAA for the Aviation Safety Action  
15 Program, the ASAP program, several years ago and many carriers  
16 have adopted it as a primary reporting device within the  
17 company.

18 That report -- reporting system provides confidential  
19 reporting to the safety department and the reports are processed  
20 much like they are in the ASAP world. They are de-identified  
21 and then given to managers or employees in the area of the  
22 report that have the authority to take a corrective action,  
23 determine a root cause and fix whatever happened. During their  
24 training we also tell the employees that in a -- parallel to  
25 that, if they have a safety concern, that they should feel free

1 to let their manager know about it because it might be able to  
2 be fixed at a lower level than elevated to safety.

3 But we encourage them even if it's been fixed to file a  
4 report for tracking and trending, so for data use at the safety  
5 program level. There's also a toll-free number that employees  
6 can call. It's a 1-800 number. They can leave an anonymous  
7 safety report. In our experience at the company that's used  
8 very infrequently. The company has implemented, is in the  
9 process of implementing a just safety culture that encourages  
10 the level of trust between management employees, that employees  
11 have a certain level of protection, for lack of a better word,  
12 for reporting safety issues through the reporting system. So  
13 there's no negative consequences for reporting something through  
14 the safety system.

15 Q. If an employee reports or just makes a comment or reports  
16 an item to his supervisor verbally and it's -- say it's  
17 something that can be corrected readily and easily by the  
18 supervisor, would it still eventually reach your level of  
19 knowledge? Would you still become aware that there was a safety  
20 problem, but it's been resolved, or is possible you might never  
21 hear of it?

22 A. No safety reporting system is perfect, so I don't really  
23 know. I would be speculating as to whether that happens or not.  
24 We -- as I said, we train people that even if they fix it to  
25 report it. Whether they do or not I have no knowledge.

1 Q. Okay. Is it -- are you responsible for resolving all  
2 reports that come through the hotline, or the WBAT system? Is  
3 that ultimately to you to figure out how to deal with it?

4 A. No.

5 Q. In your safety report.

6 A. No, it is not. We have two types of reports. Well, I  
7 would say three. There's an on-the-job injury report and an  
8 irregularity report which -- it's used for things that have  
9 happened, whether it's an incident or accident. And then we  
10 have hazard reports that indicate a potential for causing harm  
11 to employees or to equipment in the company. The hazard reports  
12 are completely confidential and managed in the safety  
13 department.

14 When I say managed, that is the process of opening the  
15 report, assigning an analyst to the report, risking it based on  
16 the company risk matrix, which is different than the four point  
17 risk release that -- a matrix that the pilots use. And then  
18 tracking corrective actions, communicating with the filer so  
19 that they know what's going on with their reports and ensuring  
20 that a corrective action has been implemented for the route  
21 cause and closing the report. So there's a management process  
22 of the report itself, but the safety department has no authority  
23 operationally or anyplace else in the company to direct  
24 corrective actions. We can just suggest it to the managers, so



1 119's that are responsible for their own programs. If that  
2 makes sense to you.

3 Q. Yes. You -- but your level is a vice president level. Is  
4 that co-equal to the level of the directors at the director of  
5 vice president -- director of operations?

6 A. Yes, we're all equal, other than I'm not --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- I'm not a Part 119 as required under the -- right.

9 Q. Right, right. Okay. So do you have an idea how many  
10 safety reports have come through either the hotline or the WBAT  
11 system --

12 A. I do.

13 Q. -- this year, say 2016?

14 A. I do. We are at about 450 reports, I would say, for the  
15 year in the company. And that reporting system is open to all  
16 employees and it does not replace the ASAP program for mechanics  
17 and pilots. To compare that against the ASAP program in the  
18 state, statewide our pilots and mechanics have submitted about  
19 160 reports and statewide the ASAP program has had maybe 120 or  
20 130 reports. So that's for all carriers here in the state. So  
21 I would say that we have a fairly healthy reporting culture for  
22 a 135 operation.

23 Q. Okay. Let me just ask you a couple questions about the  
24 accident flight. How did you first learn about the accident?

1 A. I was called by the president of the company notifying me  
2 that we had an overdue aircraft. And we immediately stood up  
3 the emergency command center. Well, let me retract that. We  
4 met at the location for the emergency command center while the  
5 overdue aircraft checklist was processed until we located the  
6 aircraft. We suspected that the aircraft was down because the  
7 notification came to the vice president of operations through  
8 the rescue coordination center, that they had received an  
9 emergency locator transponder transmission from the aircraft.

10 Q. Okay. Did you know the pilot in command of that aircraft?

11 A. I did not know him personally. I have met all of the  
12 pilots and I have provided them training, but I don't have any  
13 personal knowledge of him.

14 Q. Have you -- as safety vice president have you ever ridden  
15 along on Hageland flights --

16 A. I have.

17 Q. -- just as an observer to look at routes --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- and procedures and policies?

20 A. I have.

21 Q. Do you do that regularly?

22 A. I do.

23 Q. Or how often in the last year have you --

24 A. I do. It depends. It depends. I travel to stations on a  
25 regular basis and then if the opportunity arises to ride along

1 I'll do so. And then I also ride on our flights just when I'm  
2 going from base to base.

3 Q. Is Hageland or are you conducting an internal investigation  
4 of the accident?

5 A. We are.

6 Q. Do you have any early ideas about what you think may have  
7 happened --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- in this particular accident?

10 A. No, I do not.

11 Q. Who is the -- I think this is my last question. Who is the  
12 individual in charge of the OCC on a day to day basis?

13 A. It's Greg Tanner is his name.

14 Q. And he is the -- what's his title?

15 A. He's the Ops Control Center manager.

16 Q. Okay. All right. I think that's it for me for now.

17 A. Okay.

18 Q. So let me pass it to Shaun.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Kat, did you want to go ahead?

20 DR. WILSON: Okay.

21 BY DR. WILSON:

22 Q. Doing okay?

23 A. Yep, absolutely.

24 Q. All right. I'm going to jump around a little bit filling  
25 in some of the holes in my understanding of things. Your

1 background in the Air Force and the Air National Guard, flew  
2 airplanes?

3 A. I did.

4 Q. And did you also do any safety work?

5 A. I did not. I did manage a maintenance squadron, so I have  
6 some non-flying operational experience. And then I finished my  
7 career as the director of operations for the National Guard.

8 Q. Okay. You mentioned that there is an internal audit  
9 process?

10 A. There is.

11 Q. Can you explain that?

12 A. Yes. The internal audit program reports to neither  
13 director of safety. Reports to the safety chair at the board  
14 currently. And that -- that program audits both the 121 and the  
15 135 certificate based on the Medallion checklist and regulations  
16 and then the company manuals for compliance with those programs.

17 Q. How often are internal audits done?

18 A. It varies. The audit program is based on not just the  
19 requirements of the entire program, but also inspecting the  
20 operations at the base level and generally we do that two times  
21 a year at each location. So that's OSHA compliance and then  
22 operational compliance at the stations for turning aircraft and  
23 all those kinds of various things. And then the programs  
24 themselves are audited on an annual basis, so that's flight

1 operations and maintenance programs and the safety program  
2 itself is audited by the audit program.

3 Q. Okay. Are you required to turn in a report to the  
4 Medallion group or --

5 A. No. They review the audit program as part of their annual  
6 Shield audit. So they'll come in and look at the audits that  
7 the audit department has performed for that year. But not a  
8 report that goes to them --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- but they inspect it when they come in.

11 Q. Was there any cost to Hageland going through the Medallion  
12 process?

13 A. Yes, there was. I don't know what that was. I'm not privy  
14 to the operational costs of the company. But there was a cost  
15 not only in employment -- FTEs, full-time employment  
16 authorizations, but also just in the time and effort going  
17 through the program and making sure that it's all --

18 Q. But the company didn't have to pay Medallion to come in and  
19 review their --

20 A. We do pay --

21 Q. -- processes?

22 A. We do pay an annual fee to Medallion to be part of the --  
23 absolutely.

1 Q. Okay. You mentioned with the WBAT system the reports come  
2 in, they're de-identified and then they're reviewed by a  
3 committee? Did I understand that correctly?

4 A. I don't believe I said that, but as a matter of fact we do  
5 that. On a biweekly basis the managers sit down and review that  
6 all the reports have been risked appropriately. That's just a  
7 risk assessment meeting. And then review what actions have been  
8 taken for reports that are closed and if there's any questions  
9 with that.

10 Q. Okay. Who is in that meeting?

11 A. In general it's the Part 119s and the president of the  
12 company and the director of stations and myself.

13 Q. And who assigns the risk to the reports?

14 A. The safety department or -- and what we call an analyst in  
15 the area of operation will assign a risk. So if I have a  
16 maintenance report, somebody from the maintenance department may  
17 assign a risk for it or we may do it based on the matrix.

18 Q. Okay. I think I might have misunderstood maybe your answer  
19 to the question. So you do have a safety department with staff  
20 below you?

21 A. I do not.

22 Q. Okay. So when you say --

23 A. No, but we have -- there is a safety department, but the --  
24 we have a manager of the safety systems that performs the  
25 identical function on the 135 certificate as she does on the 121

1 certificate. And so that's a function that doesn't report to  
2 me. I don't have any direct reports, but the safety department  
3 does have an audit section and then the safety systems manager  
4 that helps process all the reports.

5 Q. Okay. Do you feel that it would be beneficial to have  
6 staff that reports to you?

7 A. You know, I don't know if it would or not. The management  
8 of the company is very active in the safety program and I find  
9 that having management supporting the safety program is much  
10 more effective than having somebody in the safety department,  
11 another body in the safety department.

12 Q. You mentioned that you visit the bases often?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. How often?

15 A. I generally get to each base two or three times a year.

16 Q. Okay. And what was the last base that you visited?

17 A. I believe the last base I visited was at Unalakleet.

18 Q. Okay. And what do you typically do when you're visiting  
19 the bases?

20 A. I generally either participate in safety meetings or I  
21 provide training. I do observations and visit with the  
22 employees.

23 Q. Okay. The training that you're providing, can you explain  
24 that a little bit more?

1 A. It depends. It may just be a recurrent safety training.  
2 Currently right now as I go to the stations I'm training all of  
3 the employees in the just safety culture. So I have a  
4 presentation for that and I document all the training.

5 Q. The training content may change then on a --

6 A. It does.

7 Q. -- year-to-year basis?

8 A. Yeah, the safety program isn't static. You have to change  
9 it for whatever is going on in the company.

10 Q. Okay. And when you offer or provide the training you do  
11 the same training at all of the bases?

12 A. I do.

13 Q. Okay. Are you involved in hiring of pilots at all?

14 A. I am not.

15 Q. You mentioned as a part of your duties and responsibilities  
16 that safety communication is one of those. Can you explain that  
17 a little bit more?

18 A. Absolutely. The company has a newsletter that goes out on  
19 a monthly basis that we contribute to from both certificates.  
20 So it's a companywide newsletter that has 121 and 135  
21 information in it. So we have topics and articles that go out,  
22 a summary of the safety reports that have been received and in  
23 general what their categories are, so the employees know that  
24 their reports are being looked at and cataloged. So we do that.



1           We also provide a summary -- when I say we, the safety  
2 systems manager and I -- a summary of all of the safety meeting  
3 minutes from the stations each month and provide that to all the  
4 station managers and to the management. We produce a report for  
5 management of all of the safety reports, again just a brief  
6 summary with the risk and the status of the report that goes out  
7 on a weekly basis. So we communicate up and down and within the  
8 company.

9 Q.    So then that information, if it's relevant to the pilots  
10 would it be up to the base managers to pass that along to  
11 pilots?

12 A.    We communicate -- we have a -- the ability to communicate  
13 directly to any employee group through a read file system. So  
14 if we have a, say, a safety -- we also have safety alerts. So  
15 if we have a safety alert that affects pilots, perhaps it's a  
16 cell phone's blown up in flight, we can provide that to a  
17 specific -- we can target an employee group and send that to  
18 them. And then they're also posted on the safety bulletin board  
19 at each station.

20 Q.    Okay. Does Hageland have a FOQA program?

21 A.    We do not.

22 Q.    Is there any means of actively reviewing safety data to  
23 look for trends and -- operational trends versus waiting for  
24 safety reports to come in from the pilot group?

1 A. I would say that the -- there are two areas that might  
2 touch on that. One is the CASS program for the 1900s that we  
3 also have for all of our aircraft. The reviews trend data for  
4 maintenance and then also they review -- the pilots are required  
5 to record engine data in flight. Those reports are analyzed and  
6 reported for trends during that meeting. On the operations  
7 side, the Operations Control Center provides a report of the  
8 number of flights dispatched on a dispatch -- I need to use that  
9 term more accurately -- released and then how many have turned  
10 back because of weather or for maintenance or things like that.

11 So on the maintenance and operations side there is, and  
12 then other than that we provide the report that we have as to  
13 how -- you know, what are the -- the topics that the safety  
14 reports come in.

15 Q. Are you required to provide any additional safety data to  
16 the president beyond the meetings that you have, the  
17 newsletters? Is there any reports that you generate  
18 specifically for the president?

19 A. No. We found that the more we share information at the  
20 management levels, then all the managers can provide input back  
21 to the safety department. So there's no special report that  
22 goes to the president. The top management of the company does  
23 meet on a quarterly basis and we call that the operations safety  
24 committee. And we discuss things such as annual goals, how  
25 we're doing with injuries, any other reporting issues or trends

1 that we have. So that helps set the focus of the safety program  
2 for that quarter.

3 Q. Okay. Is the safety department or you specifically  
4 responsible for the accident investigation portion?

5 A. I do investigate accidents and incidents, yes.

6 Q. Okay. Is that your primary -- are you primarily in charge  
7 of that, or is there somebody else --

8 A. No, I -- the --

9 Q. -- that shares that responsibility?

10 A. Depending on the -- what the -- what caused it. Sometimes  
11 maintenance has it, they conduct their own investigation.  
12 Sometimes operations conducts an investigation. I'm the  
13 independent investigator that reports outside of what you would  
14 normally think about as a manager.

15 Q. Okay. What would you -- how would you describe a typical  
16 work day? What would you be doing?

17 A. That just depends. You process reports. I'm also the  
18 security manager for the company, for the entire company, so I  
19 spend some time doing security work. Conversing with  
20 management. If I'm on the road, visiting with the employees.  
21 It -- it's -- it just varies.

22 Q. How about how would you describe your workload on a day-to-  
23 day basis?

24 A. It's entertaining. It's enough to keep me busy.

1 Q. Okay. Do you feel though that you have enough time in your  
2 day to complete your duties and responsibilities?

3 A. I do.

4 Q. Okay. Do you interact with the FAA at all?

5 A. I do. I participate in all of the -- we have monthly  
6 meetings with the certificate management team and I participate  
7 in those. And then I occasionally have conversations outside of  
8 that with both the POI and the PMI just depending. It's not  
9 frequent. As I'm not a Part 119, I'm not required to interact  
10 with them and they generally just work with the 119s. But I'm a  
11 regular attendee at the meetings they have.

12 Q. How do you feel the relationship between Hageland and the  
13 FAA is?

14 A. The relationship is as good as you can get for having a  
15 regulatory body. The certificate management team is working to  
16 implement the new vision of enforcement that the FAA has which  
17 requires a fair amount of transparency on the company's part,  
18 and I think we're working very well to establishing that with  
19 the company.

20 Q. Marvin asked you if you knew the accident crew. You said  
21 that you had provided training to them.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Is that the training that you were talking about like when  
24 you go out to the bases and -- or --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- some other type of training?

2 A. No. I provide initial safety training to all of the flight  
3 crew and maintenance, mechanics, when they come on board. And  
4 that training isn't static training, but it does cover the  
5 reporting system, accidents that we've had, incidents that we've  
6 had, the ASAP program, security training. They got all of that.  
7 It's about a 2-hour block. And then each year I have an  
8 opportunity for about 2 or 3 hours during recurrent training  
9 that I provide safety training and that gets updated annually.  
10 So I interact with the flight crew on a frequent basis, I would  
11 say.

12 Q. Okay. You mentioned that the culture at Hageland is a just  
13 culture. Is there other -- how else would you describe the  
14 safety culture at Hageland? Are there other ways that you would  
15 describe it also?

16 A. I would say that the safety culture at Hageland is -- it is  
17 -- I believe we are still in a reactive phase of safety culture,  
18 but we're moving towards a proactive phase and the employees are  
19 actively participating in the safety program. They don't in my  
20 experience cover things up that are safety issues. They would  
21 rather identify them and get them repaired.

22 So I would say in general the safety culture is very  
23 healthy. It's well supported throughout top and mid-management  
24 and the employees actively engage with the safety department and  
25 with their managers on safety issues.

1 Q. Okay. Beyond the being in a more reactive versus proactive  
2 stage, are there other areas that you think the culture could  
3 improve?

4 A. Well, safety culture is a moving target and so you're  
5 always looking to improve your safety culture. There's not a  
6 safety officer in the world that doesn't want a better safety  
7 culture. So -- but I believe that for a Part 135 operation of  
8 our size that we have a pretty astounding safety culture.

9 Q. Do you follow an SMS program?

10 A. We do not have an SMS program, though we have several  
11 elements of a safety management system and that is our next step  
12 proceeding down the safety road is implementing an SMS, whether  
13 that's in conjunction with FAA guidance. There really isn't any  
14 for a Part 135 carrier. The Medallion Foundation has developed  
15 an SMS star that we are likely to pursue because they have a  
16 checklist that's scoped for 135 operations. It's a challenge  
17 because the SMS is designed for Part 121 operations and so many  
18 areas of the SMS just don't apply to 135 carriers.

19 Q. The 450 FOQA reports that -- safety reports that you've  
20 received so far this year, is that pretty average; is that  
21 higher than normal, lower than normal?

22 A. We've had -- no, we're -- it's about average for the year.  
23 I think we're going to have a high year, probably our highest  
24 year of reporting that we've had.

25 Q. Why do you think that is?

1 A. Well, we're almost there right now. And so we've got just  
2 under 30 days and we average anywhere between, oh, 10 and 15  
3 reports a week, so --

4 Q. Have you noticed since the accident, has there been any  
5 increase in the number of reports?

6 A. No. It's been pretty steady.

7 Q. Okay. Have you noticed any changes in the type of reports  
8 that are coming in since the accident?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. And then once -- so let's just say a pilot submits a  
11 report in WBAT, it gets reviewed. Is there follow up with that  
12 person who submitted the report to let them know the resolution?

13 A. There is. It's -- I would say that it's not perfect just  
14 because of the number of reports. And if you -- I will put this  
15 in perspective, is that the safety systems manager that does a  
16 lot of the communicating is also managing all of the Part 121  
17 reports. So it's a fairly heavy workload. But we -- and I also  
18 -- when I say we, I attempt to respond to any of the reports as  
19 to a status of the reports. And we do that within the  
20 constraints of the WBAT system. So they have their emails there  
21 and we'll reply. And quite often we query the reporter if  
22 there's anything else or if we have questions about their  
23 report.

24 Q. Okay. What are some of the most prevalent safety concerns  
25 that people are reporting?

1 A. I think most of the safety concerns are associated with --  
2 let me pause for just a moment and think --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- so that I have an accurate answer.

5 Many of the reports that we get are associated with  
6 equipment or facilities, whether that's company owned or  
7 locations that pilots are operating from. Many of the reports  
8 are associated with mechanical malfunctions on the aircraft.  
9 When I say many, we don't have that many mechanicals, but  
10 generally the pilots will report that in addition to writing it  
11 up in the aircraft logbook. We have issues with passengers on a  
12 regular basis that gets reported. Whether that be a passenger  
13 that's misbehaving or a passenger that is a challenge to get on  
14 or off the airplane based on size or physical disability. So we  
15 monitor those kinds of things and look for ways to improve how  
16 we do business, so --

17 Q. Have you reviewed the reports since the accident to  
18 identify any reports or safety concerns that may have been  
19 reported regarding either Mr. Cline or Mr. Welty?

20 A. I've had no reports regarding either one of them.

21 Q. How would a passenger report a concern about one of the  
22 pilots or the equipment?

23 A. The passengers have a couple of avenues and they use them.  
24 They will either report to the FAA and the FAA will notify us of  
25 the passenger concern and then we do an investigation. They



1 contact our public relations office or they may post on our  
2 Facebook page. So we have very many different ways the  
3 passengers interact with the company.

4 Q. Okay. And the same question, then any reports from  
5 passengers about either one of the crew members?

6 A. No.

7 Q. If a pilot had an inadvertent IMC event occur should they  
8 be submitting a report for that?

9 A. Not necessarily, but I don't know of any instance where we  
10 actually have aircraft operating VFR that go into IMC  
11 conditions.

12 Q. And you're not aware because it's not required to be  
13 reported, or pilots wouldn't do that?

14 A. Well, we visit with the pilots all the time. I would be  
15 surprised if any of our pilots would do that.

16 Q. Is there any repercussions for a pilot submitting a safety  
17 concern?

18 A. No. Absolutely not.

19 Q. Has there been any safety alerts or special safety  
20 newsletters that have gone out with any information regarding  
21 the accident to the pilots?

22 A. No. We did recognize that we had lost two pilots and we  
23 wrote an article about the pilots. But not -- no specifics with  
24 the accident since it's still under investigation.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. We won't -- we typically don't release anything unless  
2 there's things that we need to do differently until an NTSB  
3 report is done.

4 Q. Okay. So no -- even not specific to the accident and  
5 what's been learned or hasn't been learned yet, but anything  
6 reinforcing certain concepts, terrain avoidance, CFIT avoidance?

7 A. I do know that we had two articles in the last newsletter.  
8 I wrote one. I'm trying to remember the topic of it. But  
9 they're aviation related. We also solicited articles from  
10 pilots in the system and from the managers based on a topic and  
11 I know that we had a pilot submit an article also, but I don't  
12 recall the content of it. I'd be happy to provide you the last  
13 newsletter if you'd like.

14 Q. That'd be great.

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. Were you involved in the FAA audit following the St. Mary's  
17 accident?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. Were you made aware of the findings of that audit?

20 A. Peripherally. Peripherally.

21 Q. Were you a part of any changes that came about at the  
22 company based on the audit?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. Are you aware that changes have been made since the  
25 audit?

1 A. There have been changes in the company, but I don't know  
2 their relation to any of the accidents that we've had.

3 Q. Okay. All right. I think that's --

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. -- all I have for now. Thanks, Dave.

6 DR. WILSON: Shaun.

7 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

8 Q. Hey, Dave.

9 A. Hey.

10 Q. So I don't have many. Kat kind of took care of a lot of  
11 them there. Who's responsible for the management of the  
12 Medallion programs?

13 A. I am.

14 Q. You are. Okay.

15 A. When you say management -- let me retract that answer and  
16 say that each star has a responsible manager, but overall I  
17 coordinate audits and -- from the Medallion Foundation.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So I'm the overall Medallion manager for the company.

20 Q. With these audits, is there any documentation of the  
21 audits?

22 A. There is not. Medallion Foundation does not retain any  
23 records of the audits other than a pass or fail, I guess. I  
24 don't know that they even retain that.

25 Q. Do they supply you with any?

1 A. They do. If they have any findings they provide that to  
2 the company and we're allowed to address the findings. Or  
3 concerns, either way.

4 Q. So are those kept by you guys?

5 A. I believe we have records of that in the audit department.

6 Q. Can we get a copy of those?

7 A. I'll have to research and see what we have, but yes.

8 Q. Okay. Thank you.

9 There was a letter sent out in May of this year by the FAA  
10 division manager and it was sent out to the 135 operators  
11 expressing concerns or bringing attention to recent accidents  
12 involving control flight to terrain. Are you aware of that  
13 letter?

14 A. I am.

15 Q. Were there any changes that you're aware of at Hageland as  
16 a result of that letter?

17 A. When we reviewed the letter we found -- and I don't have  
18 the letter in front of me, so I may not be able to address  
19 specifically. But we found that we were already operating in  
20 answer to many of the concerns with our operational control  
21 processes or anything else, so.

22 Q. With the operational control, have you -- you've gone  
23 around to the bases and kind of see the operations side of it.  
24 Have you ever sat in the OCC and kind of watched?

25 A. I have.

1 Q. Okay. Have you observed their training?

2 A. I have not.

3 Q. The flight risk assessment being a large part of the  
4 operation control at Hageland, would you characterize that as it  
5 stands right now as being sufficient?

6 A. I do. It's -- I've done flight risk assessments myself  
7 throughout my career and sometimes flight risk processes are  
8 overly complicated. And this touches on all the required areas  
9 that we would assess for a flight and does it in a very  
10 efficient and clear manner that we can easily train and is  
11 easily tracked from all the pilots and the OCAs.

12 Q. Would you make any changes to it?

13 A. At this time, no. I don't think that you would be able to  
14 -- there would be no -- I don't know. I'll just say at this  
15 time I don't think so.

16 Q. Did you have any input into its creation, how it stands  
17 now?

18 A. I didn't have any input, but I was aware and was -- I'm not  
19 going to say briefed, but we have a very -- you know, we have  
20 frequent conversations within the company. And so when that was  
21 developed I was made aware of it and was able to review it as it  
22 was being developed.

23 Q. Katherine mentioned the data monitoring program, such as  
24 FOQA and -- are there any plans to try to bring FOQA or a  
25 monitoring system online in the aircraft for the pilots?

1 A. There's been discussions regarding that. I do not know the  
2 status of it, but I believe the company is -- I would just be  
3 speculating.

4 Q. Just a couple more. We had discussed previously PRIA  
5 records for both pilots --

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. -- Pilot Records Information Act, if I remember correctly.  
8 I know Mr. Welty it was too new, but were there -- was there a  
9 PRIA check conducted on Mr. Cline?

10 A. We do PRIA checks on all pilot hires that have previous  
11 commercial aviation experience.

12 Q. Okay. Can I get a copy of those when --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- you can? Okay. And last one here. You also have a  
15 security role --

16 A. I do.

17 Q. -- at Hageland. How would you categorize the amount of  
18 time spent between the two, the division of attention between  
19 the safety and the security side?

20 A. I think that depends on a daily, weekly, monthly basis  
21 whether I'm responding to inspections on the security side.  
22 Security is not a large, overly large role. I mean, compared to  
23 safety.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: That's all I have.

25 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Thanks. Noreen?

1 BY MS. PRICE:

2 Q. I have a couple of odds and ends and most of the questions  
3 have to do with the clarity between the 121 and 135 side.

4 A. Sure.

5 Q. You're the VP of safety for the company.

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Just for the certificate.

9 Q. Just for the 135 --

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. -- certificate. Okay. So you're VP of safety for Hageland  
12 only?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. You have nothing to do with the 121?

15 A. I do not.

16 Q. Okay. All right. Thank you.

17 So when you refer to the safety department are you  
18 referring to Hageland safety department or --

19 A. No. The safety department is a shared services kind of  
20 organization. Each certificate has its own vice president of  
21 safety and the rest of the functions are shared between the 135  
22 and 121 world. And that benefits the 135 world because the 121  
23 safety requirements are much more rigorous. So we benefit by  
24 having folks that work in the 121 world also work for the 135.  
25 If that makes sense.

- 1 Q. Okay. Yes. Yeah.
- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. So you have an SMS on the -- not you --
- 4 A. Yeah. The 121 certificate.
- 5 Q. -- but the 121 certificate has an SMS.
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Correct?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. And the -- and Hageland, the 135 side, does not have an
- 10 SMS?
- 11 A. Correct.
- 12 Q. Okay. But the internal audit functions, who are those
- 13 performed by?
- 14 A. Those are performed by the -- we have a director of -- I'm
- 15 sorry, I'm losing the title here. Safety assurance.
- 16 Q. Safety assurance.
- 17 A. Safety assurance. Thank you. Yes, director of safety
- 18 assurance that has auditors that perform those audits
- 19 independent of either safety director.
- 20 Q. Okay. And you said earlier that they do audit the
- 21 operations portions of Hageland.
- 22 A. They do.
- 23 Q. So that would include OCC functions --
- 24 A. Yes, absolutely.



1 Q. -- and they review the paperwork and the releases to make  
2 sure --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- they conform to your own requirements.

5 A. They do.

6 Q. Okay. And would you say they're resourced properly at this  
7 time or --

8 A. The audit program is in flux right now and we are currently  
9 hiring auditors. So based on the workload I believe that we're  
10 sufficiently -- at least on -- we plan to be resourced. We're  
11 just short auditors at the moment.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And you mentioned 400 and something reports. Those are  
15 Hageland reports this year?

16 A. Hageland only, yes.

17 Q. Hageland only. Okay. I keep saying Hageland. I'm sorry.  
18 Hageland would be more appropriate. So operations safety  
19 committee meeting you referred to.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. Is that just the 135 certificate, or is that --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- both or --

24 A. No. I conduct all my own safety meetings.

25 Q. I see. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. All right. And that's all I have.

3 A. Okay.

4 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Eric.

5 BY MR. WEST:

6 Q. This -- all right. This Part 119 business, you've met with  
7 the FAA before. There is a little wiggle room on the part of  
8 the regulation and the administrator reserves the right to  
9 require a VP of safety for a Part 135 operator if he sees fit.  
10 Have you ever discussed that with the FAA by any chance?

11 A. No, we haven't. We've -- prior to my coming to the company  
12 there's been a director or VP of safety at Hageland. I don't  
13 know how many years prior to me, but they've always recognized  
14 the need for it independent of what the FAA would require. So  
15 we've provided that at our own.

16 Q. So there's -- so I guess the FAA sees fit that  
17 independently they don't see a need to require that, that you  
18 guys are already doing it --

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. -- having that position. All right. Do you cover  
21 maintenance issues as well in your position besides  
22 operations --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- on -- okay. In your role as a safety person do you  
25 review pilot training records?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Do you review -- in safety concerns, if there is a safety  
3 concern with a pilot tell -- run through what you would do under  
4 a circumstance like that. If you have a safety concern about a  
5 pilot what would you do?

6 A. Can you be more specific about the nature of a safety  
7 concern?

8 Q. All right. Well, you have somebody who's called and  
9 supposedly in your de-identified WBAT world, which you've  
10 conflicted by saying that because supposedly WBAT is not de-  
11 identified according to what you said. Somebody has said  
12 something about a pilot not operating safely. What would you do  
13 in a case like that?

14 A. Well --

15 Q. How would you handle a situation like that? Would you go  
16 look at his records, would you --

17 A. Sure.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, absolutely.

20 Q. So you're looking at his background or try to --

21 A. Right. Well, and I also would interview the pilot.

22 Q. Right. Okay.

23 A. So I'll take statements from the pilot if we had an  
24 incident like that.

25 Q. So you would interview him?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And you would look at his records?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And if the report was submitted -- if there was a report  
6 submitted I would obviously want to talk to whoever submitted  
7 the report to get more information. I'm concerned about your  
8 characterization of the de-identification, so I'd --

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. -- like to clarify that.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. May I do that.

13 Q. Yeah, I'd like you to do that.

14 A. So the report comes in and as a function of the software  
15 you have to log in with a user name and a password.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So we de facto know who submits reports, but if the content  
18 of the report goes out there's no name. So in other words, if  
19 it goes to another division, operations or maintenance, to be  
20 analyzed, the name doesn't accompany it. So it comes out of the  
21 safety department de-identified, just like the ASAP program  
22 does.

23 Q. Yeah, that surprised me because at the end you go it was  
24 de-identified and then -- you said it was de-identified

1 originally and then at the end you said you knew who submitted  
2 it.

3 A. Well, we --

4 Q. That kind of threw me off.

5 A. No, we do in the safety department. Absolutely, we know  
6 who submits all the reports.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yes. That's why we have a toll-free number for absolute  
9 anonymous reporting.

10 Q. And you also at the very beginning mentioned when you were  
11 talking about the -- at the very beginning, almost the very  
12 first page you were rattling off the four pillars of SMS and I  
13 honestly thought that you had an SMS program.

14 A. Just because we don't have a formal SMS program --

15 Q. Right.

16 A. -- doesn't mean that we don't recognize --

17 Q. Exactly.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Yeah. So I just wanted to make sure I knew -- and you did  
20 state that you did not have an SMS program.

21 A. That is correct, we do not have a formal SMS program.

22 Q. Okay. Good. I just wanted to -- because I wrote down SMS  
23 and I put pillars, so. And you're familiar with the SMS  
24 program.

25 A. Indeed.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Indeed.

3 Q. All right. So I can do that one follow-up here. All  
4 right. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about being as that  
5 you're a safety person your knowledge of civilian aviation seems  
6 to me to be lacking. Because you're -- you've come directly  
7 from the Air Force.

8 A. No, that's not correct.

9 Q. All right. So tell me a little bit about your --

10 A. I spent --

11 Q. -- civilian aviation experience.

12 A. This is the only civilian aviation experience that I have.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. The other civilian experience that I have after retiring  
15 was I was a manager of quality for a Native corporation.

16 Q. For a?

17 A. Quality for a Native corporation, Alaska Native  
18 corporation.

19 Q. Native.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. What is -- I don't know what that means.

22 A. We can discuss that off the record if you'd like.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It's a -- it's lengthy discussion that I don't know that we  
25 need to --

1 Q. All right. Is it aviation oriented?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. No, absolutely not.

5 Q. All right. Go ahead. So this is -- Hageland --

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. -- Hageland is the only --

8 A. It is.

9 Q. -- aviation experience though. Okay.

10 So when it comes to civilian regulations, I mean, there is  
11 a big difference between civilian and military type operations.  
12 That -- you must be aware of that. I mean, there are no  
13 regulations when it comes to the Air Force. Now, military, in  
14 terms of regulatory regulations --

15 A. Right.

16 Q. -- they do operate in the NAS, they do operate and so forth  
17 in different ways, but have you found the transition to be easy  
18 or difficult in learning the regulations?

19 A. Well, I would characterize military flying much like a 121  
20 operation, other than we're not generating revenue. So I take a  
21 bit of umbrage. I understand what you're saying, that there's  
22 no Federal Aviation Regulation that applies to the military, but  
23 there's an entire internal slew of military regulations that  
24 conform the military to the FARs as best they can, with the

1 exception of training requirements and things like that. But we  
2 do operate side by side with civil aviation in the airspace.

3 Q. Oh, I understand that.

4 A. So -- yeah. So the transition was not difficult. It just  
5 required a change in perspective because the 135 regulations are  
6 so much less stringent than even what we did in the military.  
7 So -- and I didn't do combat operations. You know, there's all  
8 manner of flying that happens in the military that the civil  
9 folks don't do.

10 Q. And the last thing I would like to talk to you about as  
11 director of safety is something that I would like to address,  
12 and that is the transition in flying from piston flying  
13 airplanes to turbine flying airplanes.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. How long did Mr. Cline actually fly the 208?

16 A. I don't have that information with me.

17 Q. You don't have that information. So is there a -- does  
18 Hageland have a training program that you're aware of to train  
19 pilots from piston flying airplanes to begin to fly in turbine  
20 type aircraft?

21 A. Well, yes, they do. Let me start by saying that our new  
22 pilots come to us and go into a turbine aircraft. And then as  
23 they gain experience they become PICs in a piston aircraft, a  
24 Cessna 207. And then we have two different types of piston  
25 aircraft in the fleet. We have Piper Navajos and 207s.



1 Everything else is turbine. So they go back and forth as they  
2 progress throughout the company and ultimately end up as a PIC  
3 of a Cessna 208 or a Beechcraft 1900.

4 Now, we often hire pilots -- when I say often, I don't know  
5 the frequency; you'll have to ask the operations folks -- from  
6 other carriers that have been PICs or have high time operating  
7 in an Alaskan environment, and we'll hire them directly into the  
8 left seat of a Cessna 207 perhaps, or even a 208, based on their  
9 experience. But you'll have to inquire a little bit more about  
10 that.

11 But each aircraft type has its own ground school and it's  
12 aircraft specific. So we don't have a broad brush training  
13 program that doesn't include the specific operational  
14 requirements of the aircraft and how to fly it and what the  
15 differences are between perhaps another aircraft in the company  
16 that somebody's flown.

17 Q. Okay. So am I off base going in this direction --

18 A. I'm curious -- I'm --

19 Q. -- safety?

20 A. No, I'm curious as to your line of questioning. But it's  
21 not something the safety department would necessarily be  
22 involved with.

23 Q. All right. It just seems to me that -- you know, I've seen  
24 this in the past with other companies that put people into --  
25 like Mr. Welty, I'm wondering why he was -- you know, I would

1 think you would start off a guy with 187 hours in a piston plane  
2 rather than a turbine plane.

3 A. Well, we put them in a 208 because it's the -- the  
4 opportunity is there to have a second pilot and that gives them  
5 the most exposure to the full range of operating environment  
6 that we -- that we're in, whether it's IFR or VFR. They get a  
7 wide exposure to how we operate. If they were in the 207, all  
8 they would see is VFR flying and that's not a good snapshot of  
9 what they're going to see on a day-to-day basis across the  
10 company. Does that make sense?

11 Q. To me, no.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. To me it would make more sense to see a more organized  
14 training program, that's all. That's just from me.

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. Okay. So I'm pretty much done with the safety issues then.

17 DR. WILSON: Okay.

18 BY MR. FRANTZ:

19 Q. I've got a few quick follow-ups --

20 A. Sure.

21 Q. -- Dave. Give me a -- can you give me a quick synopsis of  
22 the kind of orientation or what you provide from the safety  
23 point of view to new hire pilots and other -- and is it -- what  
24 the pilots get, is that the same safety orientation that all

1 other company employees receive when they get hired, or it a  
2 different program for pilots?

3 A. It's not a different program. It's very -- it's much --  
4 the safety training, the training on the safety program is --  
5 has the same kind of content for all employees. It's delivered  
6 online for non-certificated employees. That doesn't say that we  
7 don't train that on a face-to-face basis or when we're out in  
8 the stations. But the training that we -- that I give to the  
9 pilots has -- as I said before, training on the safety program  
10 itself, training on the ASAP program.

11 And then I always -- the whole focus of a safety program is  
12 to change behavior. And so I always try to make it relevant to  
13 where we are today, and to that end I always brief incidents or  
14 accidents that we've had with likely or probable cause or what  
15 we've determined on an investigation.

16 I also talk about fleet characteristics fleet wide in the  
17 United States with our aircraft with accidents and incidents so  
18 that they have a perspective of what all the 208s have  
19 experienced in the United States versus what they'll be  
20 experiencing here. So I try to tailor it to what's going on.  
21 If there's been any incidents or accidents outside of the  
22 company involving our aircraft type I try to bring that into the  
23 safety training also.

24 So it's tailored to the employees. If I'm just talking to  
25 new hires in 208s or 207s, it's tailored to that.

1 Q. Okay. Who's heading the investigation from Hageland on  
2 this accident?

3 A. I am.

4 Q. Do you have anyone that is specifically assigned or that is  
5 working with or for you in this investigation?

6 A. No.

7 Q. How many pilots does Hageland have in 135?

8 A. I'm going to say -- I just have a vague number.  
9 Approximately 130.

10 Q. Okay. Do you feel like your office, that your safety  
11 office division is -- it's only you at Hageland. Is that  
12 correct? You have no personnel. Do you feel it's adequately  
13 staffed for that size pilot group?

14 A. I believe so. We have one director of operations, one  
15 director of safety, one -- you know.

16 Q. You -- jumping just real quick to your security role. You  
17 talked about you process reports and I guess they could be --  
18 come through the safety side, but you mentioned passenger  
19 misbehavior. What kind of passenger misbehavior reports do you  
20 receive? How many do you typically receive a year?

21 A. Not a large number of passenger misbehavior reports.  
22 Sometimes it's just generic as -- or not generic, but it's  
23 somebody's intoxicated and we denied boarding on the airplane.  
24 Sometimes passengers act out in flight and generally those are  
25 handled -- those incidents are handled locally when the pilot

1 lands because they have the authorities meet the aircraft and  
2 then I get a follow-up report. We do maintain a company no-fly  
3 list and passengers that are I would say extreme behaviors,  
4 extreme aren't allowed to fly with us.

5 Q. How many people would you say are on that list, how many  
6 names?

7 A. Between the two certificates, I just reviewed the list,  
8 eight statewide.

9 Q. Has there ever been any serious in flight incidents of  
10 passenger misbehavior that you're aware of since --

11 A. Not -- there haven't -- there hasn't been any passenger  
12 misbehavior in terms of obstructing the crewmembers from doing  
13 their duties or anything like that. That generally happens  
14 between passengers or back in the airplane. Anything that they  
15 do that distracts a pilot though is very concerning.

16 Q. Are you involved or -- in charge or involved in reviewing  
17 PRIA reports when there are --

18 A. No.

19 Q. -- new hire pilots?

20 A. I am not.

21 Q. You don't even look at the reports?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. Okay. That's all.

24 MR. FRANTZ: Katherine, any follow-ups?

25 DR. WILSON: Yeah, a couple follow-ups.

1 BY DR. WILSON:

2 Q. Shaun asked for the most recent Medallion Foundation  
3 audits, but curious, do you recall what some of the last  
4 findings were?

5 A. I don't think we had any.

6 Q. How about for -- the most recent findings that required  
7 Hageland to take action?

8 A. I don't recall.

9 Q. Do you have any joint safety meetings between the 135 and  
10 the 121 operation?

11 A. We don't. Our safety systems, I'm going to say for lack of  
12 a better term, talk to each other though. So if a 121 employee  
13 has a safety concern on the 135 side, they file a report on the  
14 121 side, and since we use the same reporting system we cross  
15 file that into the 135 side. And then we take the company risk  
16 from the 121 side and translate that into the 135 side. And  
17 then we'll process a report and then we report back through the  
18 system to the 121 side and then they can close the report on  
19 their side. So the systems talk to each other.

20 And then I will say that if there's instances -- and  
21 Hageland Aviation operates as a contract turn at many locations  
22 for the 121 providers, so there's opportunities to improve our  
23 operations. So we participate -- I mean, I'm in contact, daily  
24 contact with the 121 vice president of safety. So if there's  
25 issues we always discuss them.

1 Q. Eric was asking you about what you would do if you received  
2 a safety report regarding another pilot. Have you ever received  
3 a report about a pilot?

4 A. We've had -- it's only come through passenger concerns, so.

5 Q. Okay. Has any of those concerns led to the termination of  
6 a pilot?

7 A. No. Generally I find when I investigate passenger concerns  
8 that the pilot was operating within the requirements of the  
9 regulation and operating the aircraft in a safe manner. And --  
10 and passengers have a different perspective sitting in the back  
11 of the airplane. They don't always know what they're seeing and  
12 they -- they think they know what they're seeing. So.

13 Q. And so you follow up with the pilot. Do you also follow up  
14 with the passenger when they submit concerns?

15 A. At times we do. We'll respond back to it. And often if  
16 there's concerns it -- I bring in the operations folks too as a  
17 -- just a sanity check.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And if there are any bigger concerns then they can address  
20 that.

21 Q. Thanks.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: I have nothing.

23 MR. FRANTZ: Noreen? Eric?

24 MR. WEST: No.

25 BY MR. FRANTZ:

1 Q. All right. Thank you, Dave. Anything that we didn't ask  
2 you that you think we should have regarding this investigation?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Any other information that you think you have that would be  
5 valuable to us that --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- that we haven't touched on?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay.

10 DR. WILSON: Right.

11 BY MR. FRANTZ:

12 Q. All right. You have -- you will have our contact  
13 information. If facts or anything is recalled later that you  
14 think would be valuable to us don't hesitate to get in touch  
15 with --

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. -- Shaun or myself or Katherine and --

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. -- be happy to receive it. All right.

20 A. All right.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 A. Thank you.

23 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Off the record.

24 (Whereupon, at 9:33 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:     FLIGHT 3153, AIR TAXI AND COMMUTER  
                          ACCIDENT, OCTOBER 2, 2016  
                          TOGIAK, ALASKA  
                          Interview of Dave Lowell

DOCKET NUMBER:        ANC17FA001

PLACE:                 Anchorage, Alaska

DATE:                 December 7, 2016

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared  
to the recording accomplished at the interview.

---

Nicolette Hernandez  
Official Reporter

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

FLIGHT 3153, AIR TAXI AND COMMUTER \*  
ACCIDENT, OCTOBER 2, 2016, \*  
TOGIAK, ALASKA \*

Docket No.: ANC17FA001

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: ERIN WITT

NTSB Offices  
Anchorage Federal Building  
222 West 7th Avenue, Room 216  
Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,  
December 7, 2016

## APPEARANCES:

SHAUN WILLIAMS, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Anchorage, Alaska

KATHERINE A. WILSON, Ph.D., Senior Human Performance  
Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C.

CAPTAIN MARVIN FRANTZ, Air Safety Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C.

ERIC WEST, Air Safety Inspector  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Office of Accident Investigation and Prevention  
Washington, D.C.

Also Present:

DAVE LOWELL, Director of Safety  
Hageland Aviation  
Anchorage, Alaska

MARC WILHELM, Esq.  
Richmond & Quinn  
Anchorage, Alaska  
(Representative on behalf of Ms. Witt)

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:55 p.m.)

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THE REPORTER: We're on record at 2:55.

MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Hi, Erin. Marvin Frantz.

MS. WITT: Hi.

MR. FRANTZ: I'm an Air Safety Investigator with Operational Factors Office from the NTSB in Washington.

MS. WITT: Okay.

MR. FRANTZ: And we'll go around the room in a minute and then everybody else can introduce themselves and tell you who they are.

MS. WITT: Okay.

MR. FRANTZ: Before we do that, I'll give you a rundown on kind of what's going on today.

MS. WITT: Okay.

MR. FRANTZ: As you know from your experience in aviation, the NTSB is an independent federal agency tasked with investigating and determining probable causes for aviation accidents. We're not part of the Department of Transportation. We're not part of the FAA. We don't have regulatory or enforcement powers.

MS. WITT: Okay.

MR. FRANTZ: Strictly investigation, analysis and finding probable causes with the ultimate goal of developing safety recommendations from these accidents that will help mitigate or

1 prevent future accidents of this type, or of whatever particular  
2 type --

3 MS. WITT: Okay.

4 MR. FRANTZ: -- we're talking about. So that's what we're  
5 doing.

6 We're using the services of a court reporter today who is  
7 going to record. A recording will not be kept, but from the  
8 recording there'll be a printed transcript made of the  
9 recording. That'll become -- of the interview and that'll  
10 become part of the public docket eventually.

11 MS. WITT: Okay.

12 MR. FRANTZ: We don't -- we're not -- our goal is not to  
13 assign fault, liability or blame and just to get the facts and  
14 do some analysis and try to figure out what happened. We can't  
15 offer any guarantees of confidentiality or immunity for anything  
16 that we talk about today.

17 Each group member will have a chance to ask questions.  
18 We'll kind of go around the room and then after one round if  
19 anybody has any follow-ups we'll go around again and try to get  
20 those cleared up.

21 Please answer everything to the best of your recollection.  
22 If you don't know the answer you can say I don't know. If you  
23 don't remember, I don't remember or I'll find it. You're not --  
24 this is not sworn testimony. If you say something and 20  
25 minutes later you realize you misstated something or you

1 remember something different it's fine to go back and correct  
2 that over here. After the fact, tomorrow, a week down the road,  
3 a month down the road you think of something else that you think  
4 would help us, you'll have contact information for all of us  
5 that you can get in touch with us and pass that information on.

6 MS. WITT: Okay.

7 MR. FRANTZ: Because we're being recorded and transcribed,  
8 please verbalize answers as opposed to just nods or uh-huh or  
9 something like that. It has to be something that our -- the  
10 transcriber can clearly hear and make sure she enters correctly.

11 MS. WITT: Understood.

12 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Before we -- oh, and you are entitled  
13 to have a representative with you during the interview and can  
14 you tell us who you've chosen?

15 MS. WITT: Marc Wilhelm.

16 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Very good. He can not answer questions  
17 for you. He can advise you not to answer a question, or you can  
18 ask for a personal conference which would -- in case we'd go off  
19 the record and you could go out and discuss anything you needed  
20 to and then come back in and we'd continue the interview.

21 MS. WITT: Okay.

22 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Do you have any questions before we  
23 introduce everybody and get started?

24 MS. WITT: Not at this point.

25 MR. FRANTZ: Okay.



1 MS. WITT: Thank you.

2 MR. FRANTZ: Great. Okay. Start with Katherine, she can  
3 tell you who she is.

4 DR. WILSON: Katherine Wilson. I am a Human Performance  
5 Investigator with the NTSB out of headquarters in Washington,  
6 D.C.

7 MS. WITT: Okay.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Shaun Williams. I'm the investigator in  
9 charge with the NTSB here in Anchorage.

10 MS. WITT: Awesome.

11 MR. WEST: Hi. I'm Eric West. I'm an Air Safety  
12 Investigator with the FAA out of Washington, D.C.

13 MS. WITT: Okay.

14 MR. LOWELL: I'm Dave Lowell, Vice President of Safety for  
15 Hageland.

16 MR. WILHELM: Marc Wilhelm, counsel for the witness.

17 MR. FRANTZ: Okay.

18 DR. WILSON: Do you have any questions before we get  
19 started?

20 MS. WITT: I don't think so, not at this time. Thank you.

21 INTERVIEW OF ERIN WITT

22 BY MR. FRANTZ:

23 Q. Could you state your full name for the record, please?

24 A. Absolutely. Erin Michelle Witt.

25 Q. Okay. Could you spell Erin?

- 1 A. Yes. Echo-Romeo-India-November.
- 2 Q. Okay. And Michelle?
- 3 A. Mike-India-Charlie-Hotel-Echo-Lima-Lima-Echo.
- 4 Q. Okay. And last name?
- 5 A. Whiskey-India-Tango-Tango.
- 6 Q. Okay. Thanks. What's your current position at Hageland?
- 7 A. Chief pilot.
- 8 Q. Okay. What was your date of hire at Hageland?
- 9 A. June 1, 2015.
- 10 Q. Okay. And were you hired as the chief pilot?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. So what was your first position at Hageland?
- 13 A. Director of Flight Standards.
- 14 Q. Okay. And when did you become chief pilot?
- 15 A. October 1st, 2016.
- 16 Q. Okay. Prior to Hageland, could you give me a synopsis of  
17 your aviation experience?
- 18 A. Absolutely. I soloed on my 16th birthday where I was  
19 living in Melbourne, Australia, and ended up moving back to the  
20 States where I went to flight school in Phoenix. Moved to  
21 Alaska, started flying for Frontier Flying Service in 2004.  
22 Flew right seat in the Beech 1900, left seat in the Navajo, left  
23 seat in a Beech 1900. Left to fly at Omni. I flew right seat  
24 in a DC-10 for a year. Was furloughed. At that time Hageland  
25 and Frontier had merged, so I joined Hageland Aviation in 2009

1 and flew with them as a line pilot through 2011. Joined Bald  
2 Mountain Air Service in 2011, was a line pilot with them, became  
3 a check airman, then their director of safety, then their  
4 director of operations. And then I -- when I left there, I  
5 started at Hageland Aviation as the Director of Flight Standards  
6 in 2015.

7 Q. Okay. So what aircraft have you flown?

8 A. In our --

9 Q. Primarily.

10 A. In our fleet --

11 Q. Outside of training. Yeah, as a commercial.

12 A. Beech 1900 and Navajo are the airplanes I have the most  
13 time in and the King Air 200.

14 Q. Okay. Oh, wait. What pilot certificates do you hold and  
15 what ratings?

16 A. ATP. I've got a Beech 1900 type rating. I've got a DC-10  
17 right -- SIC type rating and I've got a three -- excuse me --  
18 three instructor tickets. I've got my double I, MEI and single  
19 engine instructor certificate as well.

20 Q. And what's your approximate total flight time?

21 A. 7500-ish.

22 Q. Okay. So currently as chief pilot at Hageland what are  
23 your duties and responsibilities?

24 A. Main job, I would say my main responsibility is to  
25 supervise the line pilots. Coordinate training and scheduling.

1 Be a liaison and be responsible to the FAA for the actions of  
2 the pilots. I'd say that's probably it for the main  
3 responsibilities.

4 Q. What are your responsibilities in the field of operational  
5 control?

6 A. I would say I'm involved in training the pilots about  
7 operational control. I'm also designated as an RA-3 manager,  
8 which means I get involved in calls that get to a risk level  
9 three as far as calling and approving or not approving a flight  
10 and that -- that's it.

11 Q. You -- the position of -- was it director of flight  
12 standards and -- director of flight standards?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. That's not a 119 position.

15 A. It is not.

16 Q. Correct? Okay.

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Have you ever -- you have a CFI certificate --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- you're a certificated flight instructor. You ever been  
21 a check airman?

22 A. Yes, in my previous job and this job.

23 Q. Okay. Line airplane -- aircraft check airman?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. What aircraft?

1 A. King Air 200 and Beech 1900.

2 Q. Okay. Do you have -- are part of your responsibilities,  
3 you might have said this, hiring pilots?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. What are the qualifications you look for when you're  
6 interviewing or looking to hire a pilot for Hageland?

7 A. Can you be a little more specific, please?

8 Q. What would you -- what qualifications from someone's  
9 resume, either experience or abilities or some combination,  
10 would cause you to say yes, this is someone we should interview?  
11 And then when you interview them what are you looking for in the  
12 interview that you would -- ultimately lead you to say yes, we'd  
13 like to hire this person?

14 A. As far as looking to interview somebody, if their resume is  
15 well put together, doesn't have spelling or punctuation mistakes  
16 on it, and they have a commercial or ATP certificate. That's  
17 what I'm looking for.

18 When it comes to choosing who to interview or not, my --  
19 what I've done since I've been chief pilot is check with  
20 previous employers to see what the work history was. Alaska is  
21 a very tight knit, close group when it comes to aviation, so  
22 chances are if somebody's flown in Alaska I know somebody that's  
23 flown with this person or has directly supervised that potential  
24 pilot. And I think that's probably the answer to your question  
25 there.

1 Q. Okay. For -- as far as supervising pilots or being  
2 responsible for pilots, as part of your responsibility do you  
3 have any oversight over pilot flight and duty times?

4 A. Over --

5 Q. Oversight as in making sure that from the company's point  
6 of view pilots are assigned to flight or -- and/or duty time  
7 that would cause them to violate 135 regulations in that area.

8 A. So I guess are -- let me clarify the question a little bit.  
9 Are you talking on a day-to-day basis, or am I part of the --

10 Q. Both.

11 A. Okay. So on a day --

12 Q. Overall -- let me ask two different questions.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Overall who has responsibility at Hageland as -- we know  
15 the pilot has some responsibility to make sure he doesn't  
16 violate the regulation.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Does anyone at the company -- is there one person or one  
19 office at the company that has got oversight to make sure that a  
20 pilot doesn't violate a time or duty regulation?

21 A. So I don't know how familiar you are with Part 135 flight  
22 and duty regulations. Our pilots are on an assigned duty day,  
23 so we don't do a 10-hour look back. So ensuring that they stay  
24 within those flight and duty times is very simple. As far as  
25 ensuring that they don't go over their 8 or 10 hours of flight

1 time, flight strips are built into the system, so we would see  
2 that potentially there would be an issue of going over the 8 or  
3 10 hours in the 14-hour duty day what -- before the -- before  
4 flights were initiated.

5 Q. All right. And in cases where those things are exceeded  
6 out, for reasons outside of the control of the company, for  
7 example weather --

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. -- then who's responsible for saying, oh, this person went  
10 over duty time or flight time this period and therefore we have  
11 to make sure we give them the additional rest required before  
12 the next period or whatever? Who's responsible for catching  
13 that?

14 A. So the pilot, the -- well, first of all, the pilot in  
15 command inputs their time at the end of the day, so it would be  
16 very obvious if that happened. It --

17 Q. To --

18 A. To the pilot in command inputting their times in because it  
19 would --

20 Q. So the pilot's going to catch it --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. -- we hope.

23 A. Because they're actually entering their flight times --

24 Q. Right.

25 A. -- at the end of the day.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. Generally if something like that were to happen they would  
3 notify the chief pilot or the DO and we would research together  
4 what requirements, if any, were necessary, VDRP, extra rest,  
5 anything along those lines.

6 Q. And if the pilot didn't catch it then he may end up  
7 violating the reg if he went on duty the next day as planned  
8 because the system or any individual at Hageland did not observe  
9 it. Unless they were notified by the pilot that it had  
10 happened.

11 Is that -- you're saying you're relying on the pilot to  
12 alert you that he flew over his required or his time or he was  
13 on duty over his allotted time?

14 A. If there is a flight that -- if a pilot goes over 8 or 10  
15 hours or goes past their 14-hour window, the OCAs review that  
16 every single morning. So they would be the second point of  
17 contact that would let me know if a pilot failed to let me know  
18 about that.

19 Q. So the OCAs should be --

20 A. Are reviewing the flights.

21 Q. And they're reviewing the pilot's flights time the previous  
22 day to see how long he flew or was on duty the previous day, the  
23 OCA?

24 A. That's my understanding, yes.



1 Q. Okay. Okay. Have you ever had that issue come up since  
2 you've been chief pilot? Well, since you've been at Hageland.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I sure have.

6 Q. Or -- okay, let -- have you ever had pilots that were --  
7 that violated flight or duty time inadvertently?

8 A. Not inadvertently, no.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. It's hard to understand until you go in and look at our  
11 system, but it's -- it would be extremely difficult to  
12 inadvertently do that because of the way our system's set up.

13 Q. Okay. Director of flight standards, what was your relation  
14 in that job to the director of training? Did you -- well, did  
15 you have any involvement or input into training? Pilot  
16 training.

17 A. Yes, but not -- yes, I did. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. What can you tell me about the type of training that  
19 Hageland new hire pilots would receive on an EGPWS system? And  
20 let's talk to a specific airplane, let's talk about the 208.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. So how would -- what kind of training would they get? How  
23 would they be trained on that particular system?

24 A. On-the-job training, as well as ground school, system-  
25 specific ground school.

- 1 Q. Okay. So they have -- they cover it in ground school?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. Would it be part of their -- you said on the job. Would it  
4 be part of their flight training?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. And how many hours of flight training do they get?
- 7 A. Its dependent on the candidate.
- 8 Q. You don't have a required number of hours --
- 9 A. No, Part 135 --
- 10 Q. -- in your training program?
- 11 A. No, Part 135 doesn't have any requirements for flight  
12 training times.
- 13 Q. Okay. Do you have training modules --
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. -- laid out? And do you have -- GPWS, is that a specific  
16 training module that you know of?
- 17 A. You'd have to look in our OTM for that.
- 18 Q. Okay. All right. Were you acquainted with the -- either  
19 the captain or the FO of the accident crew?
- 20 A. The captain only, yes.
- 21 Q. You weren't acquainted, you hadn't met the --
- 22 A. I had not, no.
- 23 Q. Okay. All right. Were you involved in the hiring of the  
24 captain?
- 25 A. No.

1 Q. No. Okay. Had you ever flown with him?

2 A. No.

3 Q. In your role before you became chief pilot, as director of  
4 flight standards had you had any -- had his name ever come to  
5 your attention?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. For what reason?

8 A. I met him a few times in person. In Palmer during plane  
9 trade-outs, and then when he would come through the office in  
10 Anchorage. And I was a part of initial new hire ground school,  
11 so I did know him.

12 Q. Okay. But you'd never had -- officially in your role as  
13 director of flight standards interact with him on any kind of  
14 flight standards issues --

15 A. Oh, no.

16 Q. -- or anything --

17 A. No, sir.

18 Q. -- of that nature?

19 A. No, sir.

20 Q. Okay. And I -- is the same true of the SIC --

21 A. That -- the same is true, yes, sir.

22 Q. -- the accident SIC, no contact, no interaction with him  
23 either as chief pilot or previously as director of flight  
24 standards?

25 A. That's correct.

1 Q. Okay. Were you a designated -- were you one of the  
2 designated management personnel that could receive a call when  
3 there was an RA-3?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. You were. So -- and I guess you were hired as the director  
6 of flight standards, so from the beginning of your employment at  
7 Hageland you were one of those people that could receive that  
8 call?

9 A. I don't want to say from the beginning because I did -- I  
10 was on the job for a little while and received some training and  
11 then.

12 Q. Yeah, okay.

13 A. But it was always the intention.

14 Q. Okay. How many times a week or a month would you say you  
15 would -- you in your position where you could do that would  
16 receive one of those calls for an RA-3?

17 A. On a week where the weather was good, five calls. On a  
18 week when the weather was bad, 300 calls.

19 Q. Any of those calls ever related not necessarily just to get  
20 your approval, but related to a disagreement between the OCA and  
21 the PIC as far as what the flight should be rated or how it  
22 should be conducted and you were called on to resolve that  
23 conflict? How -- did that ever happen?

24 A. I don't think that ever happened. I think generally if it  
25 got to my level, but wasn't designated as an RA-3, it would be

1 people asking for clarification on a procedure or a regulation,  
2 never a disagreement between two people.

3 Q. If I took a random captain at Hageland and said what  
4 actions would you take if you were en route and you  
5 inadvertently entered IMC what would he tell me? What would you  
6 hope he would tell me?

7 A. Are we talking about an airplane on a VFR flight?

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. Turn around.

10 Q. Okay. As a percentage of all your VFR flights at Hageland  
11 can you give me -- do you have any idea of how many times that  
12 happens, a VFR flight launches and then ends, has to turn around  
13 because of either inadvertent IMC or the weather at their  
14 destination has gone down?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. How common is that?

17 A. I'd say anytime between 5 and 30 times a week. We keep  
18 track of all of those.

19 Q. Okay. Not knowing how many flights you have a week, would  
20 you say that's 10 percent of VFR flights, 30 percent typically  
21 might be turn around, less than 10 percent?

22 A. Less than 10 percent.

23 Q. Okay. But it's not -- you wouldn't say it's uncommon for  
24 them --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- for that to happen?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. How did you learn about -- let's see. You were the  
4 chief pilot at the time of the accident?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Is that right? But you'd only been in the position for a  
7 short period.

8 A. Thirty-six hours. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. How did you learn about the accident?

10 A. I was sitting at home with two friends and Luke Hickerson  
11 called me and told me it was time to go to work.

12 Q. Did you go to the OCC?

13 A. No. OCC's in Palmer. We went to our Ravn resource center  
14 which is located in Anchorage where Mr. Lowell stood up the  
15 incident command center.

16 Q. Okay. During your tenure as -- it's a pretty short tenure,  
17 so during your tenure as chief pilot have you ever had to  
18 discipline or dismiss any pilots for flight performance related  
19 issues?

20 A. No, not for flight --

21 Q. Professionalism issues.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. But -- okay. Let me tie those together. Professionalism  
24 in performance of flight duties?

25 A. No.

1 Q. No. No? Okay.

2 A. No.

3 Q. Do you have any historical knowledge of that happening  
4 since you've been at Hageland? When you were in your previous  
5 positions were you aware of pilots being dismissed for poor  
6 performance or, you know, unprofessional performance in flight  
7 operations?

8 A. Let me think about that for a minute.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. I actually at this time can't think of anybody that was let  
11 go for a flight performance related issue.

12 Q. Okay. Okay. That's all I have for now, Erin.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Thank you.

15 A. You bet.

16 Q. Pass it to Katherine.

17 DR. WILSON: Thanks.

18 BY DR. WILSON:

19 Q. I might jump around a little bit trying to fill in some of  
20 the gaps in my mind --

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. -- with the line of questioning, so --

23 When you're looking to hire a new pilot is there a minimum  
24 flights hours that you're looking for?

1 A. Yes. It's whatever the commercial minimums are, which is  
2 200.

3 Q. Okay. Have you been --

4 A. Perhaps 190. Maybe it's 190. It's whatever the FAA issues  
5 as commercial certificate at that point.

6 Q. Okay. Hageland doesn't have a requirement above that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Are you the only person who's involved in hiring  
9 pilots, or --

10 A. No.

11 Q. No. Who else is involved?

12 A. My assistant chief pilot, the director of operations, the  
13 director of training. The last time we hired we also invited  
14 the chief pilot of the Corvus certificate to join us as well.

15 Q. Okay. And then who has the ultimate say in which pilot  
16 gets hired?

17 A. That's a good question. To be honest with you, we haven't  
18 got there yet because we've all been in agreement on who to hire  
19 and who not to hire.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I would say hopefully me, but again, we haven't got to that  
22 yet, so --

23 Q. Okay. Are you the chief pilot for all airplanes at  
24 Hageland?

25 A. Yes.



1 Q. Okay. And are you currently a check airman?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. When did you become a check airman?

4 A. In June of this year.

5 Q. What training did you get to be a check airman?

6 A. I sat down with one of our current check airmen. We did  
7 ground training, we did flight training and then I took a check  
8 ride with a fellow from the FAA in Dallas.

9 Q. Okay. Who do you report to as the chief pilot?

10 A. The director of operations.

11 Q. Okay. The -- what were your duties as the director of  
12 flight standards?

13 A. Duties as flight standards were serving on the ASAP  
14 committee, participating in safety meetings, writing flight  
15 standards manuals or beginning to write flight standards  
16 manuals, coordinating with check airmen and flight instructors  
17 for training schedules and then I wrote the pilot schedule for 3  
18 or 4 months as well.

19 Q. Okay. Lots of questions just popped in my head to follow  
20 up. Safety meetings --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- tell me about those.

23 A. We have a biweekly safety meeting where we discuss all of  
24 the WBAT and safety reports that come into the system. You also  
25 have a quarterly ops safety committee meeting where we discuss

1 things kind of more at a higher level and those happen four  
2 times a year.

3 Q. Okay. In terms of pilot scheduling, what goes into the  
4 process of scheduling pilots?

5 A. Can you be a little more specific?

6 Q. Well, so we know pilots are on for 15 days.

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. They typically have the duty day of 12 to 14 hours?

9 A. Yes, 14 hours.

10 Q. And then how are flights scheduled? So what are you  
11 scheduling, what flights are going to fly --

12 A. No.

13 Q. -- on a particular day?

14 A. No, that happens at a base level.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. All I'm scheduling is which pilots are assigned to which  
17 aircraft --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- and ensuring that when I do schedule them that whatever  
20 I schedule them for complies with the 135 regulations when it  
21 comes to flight and duty and days off.

22 Q. Okay. Do you know who at the base does the scheduling of  
23 flights?

24 A. It's different at every base. We've got departure control  
25 agents at every base.

1 Q. Okay. Why'd you leave flight standards?

2 A. Because they offered me the job as the chief pilot.

3 Q. Okay. And who do you report -- who did you report to at  
4 flight standards?

5 A. Director of operations as well.

6 Q. Okay. You said you had -- you knew the PIC, but how did  
7 you know him?

8 A. So I was part of the -- his initial new hire ground school  
9 and spent most of the time in that ground school. And I also  
10 saw him lots of times. Actually I just recently seen him in  
11 Bethel. Saw him a couple months before that in Palmer.

12 Q. When he was delivering aircraft?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Think you might have said that. It --

15 A. That's okay.

16 Q. -- didn't sink in. Since the accident have you heard  
17 anything, either good or bad, about either of the pilots  
18 involved?

19 A. What -- can you be a little more specific, please?

20 Q. What they were like as a pilot, people surprised, not  
21 surprised that they were involved.

22 A. Everybody at the company was very surprised.

23 Q. How about anything about the route of flight that they were  
24 on in between those two villages, any -- have people come  
25 forward saying anything like, wow, yeah, the terrain there is

1 really challenging, weather rolls in really fast in that area,  
2 anything about going between those two villages?

3 A. No. I do know that Tim and Drew chose a different route  
4 than Sam and Natoshia did. But as far as anything beyond that,  
5 no.

6 Q. Is that unusual that two flights would be flying in such  
7 close proximity to each other and would go different routes?

8 A. Is that unusual. I would say not necessarily.

9 Q. Okay. When would be times when you might see flights going  
10 separate ways?

11 A. If weather was a factor. If something was deferred on your  
12 airplane and that was a factor. If maybe the two airplanes were  
13 in too close of a proximity and one decided to let the other one  
14 go on first. Those are a few examples I can think of.

15 Q. Okay. The RA-3 calls that you get, what's the decision  
16 making process or what's your thought process when you receive a  
17 call, they're looking for the approval, you would say yes or no,  
18 that they can release the aircraft or the flight?

19 A. Usually after asking some questions, yes.

20 Q. Okay. Anything else? Like what are you trying -- what are  
21 you basing your decision off of?

22 A. I guess that's going to depend call to call. Because I  
23 take all kinds of different calls from that RA-3. So if you  
24 could be a little more specific with me I could probably give  
25 you a more concise answer.

1 Q. And are you doing your own risk assessment, or what are you  
2 trying to gather additional information for? So let's say there  
3 was an issue with weather.

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. What would you be interested in getting information from  
6 the pilot and the OCA about?

7 A. Figuring out -- so again, don't want to put my foot in my  
8 mouth here, so if I could have a more specific example I could  
9 give you an exact example of the kind of questions I ask.  
10 Because generally if the weather is below minimums it's not  
11 going to get to me. That's a no-go.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. So I'm just thinking an example that we have an RA-3 right  
14 now is if the crosswind is above a certain amount.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So an example in that case, I would ask the pilot and the  
17 OCA what's the wind, what's the crosswind, what's the recent  
18 reported condition of the runway? Do you have a recent reported  
19 condition of the runway? If we're in the wintertime, okay,  
20 we're not going to go until we figure out what the traction on  
21 the runway is. Are the lights working? Is it nighttime? Has  
22 anybody else been in and flown there? Are you comfortable with  
23 this flight?

1           And if all those go the right way then yes, I'm going to  
2 release the flight if every -- and if the OCA and pilot are both  
3 comfortable then I'll release the flight.

4 Q.    Okay.  So I think you said that you hadn't received any  
5 calls where maybe the OCA and the pilot disagreed on whether it  
6 should be a VFR versus an IFR flight.

7 A.    No.

8 Q.    But what if somebody had called you with --

9 A.    Okay.

10 Q.    -- that disagreement, what sort of information would you be  
11 interested in getting from them?

12 A.    What the reported weather was at the destination, as well  
13 as where they're departing from.  What's the weather in between?  
14 Do we have any pilot reports?  Is there a reason you want to go  
15 IFR?  Is there a reason you want to go VFR?  Let's talk through  
16 the process here.

17 Q.    Okay.  Does the company encourage pilots to go IFR versus  
18 VFR on a route, or is it totally up to the pilot and the OCA to  
19 make that decision?

20 A.    Today?

21 Q.    Be -- at the time of the accident.

22 A.    It was completely up to the pilot and the OCA to make that  
23 decision.

24 Q.    And how about today?

25 A.    We encourage pilots to go IFR.

1 Q. Okay. Is there any sort of criteria when you would  
2 encourage that, like a certain distance that they're flying  
3 or --

4 A. Anything over 20 nautical miles.

5 Q. Okay. You said that if a pilot got into inadvertent IMC, I  
6 believe you said that they should turn around?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Do you think that's clear to all pilots, that that is what  
9 would be expected of them?

10 A. I think it is 100 percent crystal clear, yes.

11 Q. Okay. And then you said that turn arounds are kept track  
12 of?

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. How do you do that?

15 A. The OCC manager does that, sends out a report once a week  
16 to all the managers.

17 Q. And it's of pilots that turned around --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- or went back to base or --

20 A. Yes, uh-huh.

21 Q. Okay. Now they don't have direct communication with  
22 pilots, so would that -- the pilots would alert the base that  
23 they're turning around and then the base would alert OCC --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- that they turned around?

1           Okay. On the day of the accident when you came into the  
2 command center, what was your role? Did you have -- were you  
3 given any duties to do as a part of the investigation?

4 A.    Uh-huh.  Yep.

5 Q.    Okay.

6 A.    Dave gave me the chief pilot checklist.

7 Q.    Okay. What does that include? Just eye level; it doesn't  
8 need to be every specific item.

9 A.    To be honest with you, I don't remember.

10 Q.    Okay. In your interactions with Tim Cline, what was his  
11 personality like?

12 A.    Very self-assured, very laid back. He was really grateful  
13 to work at Hageland. Every time I talked to him he just said it  
14 was really nice to work for a company that didn't push him out  
15 the door, which is kind of the history where he came from. Very  
16 friendly. Yeah.

17 Q.    Okay. Ever hear him referred to as a cowboy pilot?

18 A.    No.

19 Q.    Do you attend the same training that pilots attend?

20 A.    Yes.

21 Q.    Okay. So initial training and recurrent, it's once a year?

22 A.    Uh-huh.

23           THE REPORTER:  Yes?

24           MS. WITT:  Yes.

25           BY DR. WILSON:



- 1 Q. Training for the risk assessment process, is that done in  
2 every recurrent training?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. Okay. Do you think it's clear to pilots how to use the  
5 form, how to do an accurate risk assessment?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Is weather included in your recurrent training?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. What types of weather information is covered?
- 10 A. All kinds of aviation weather.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. That's required by the FARs.
- 13 Q. Changing weather --
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. -- conditions? Okay. CFIT avoidance?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. Okay. Is that in ground school, or in a simulator?
- 18 A. Both.
- 19 Q. Okay. How about crew resource management?
- 20 A. Online recurrent ground school and initial.
- 21 Q. Okay. Is it also observed in simulator training?
- 22 A. Observed in simulator training.
- 23 Q. Is that an item that a flight instructor would be looking  
24 to --
- 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- check off?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Ever flown in an airplane where any of the flight  
4 instruments were inoperative at takeoff, particularly on the  
5 right side, in the SIC position?

6 A. Have I personally?

7 Q. Uh-huh.

8 A. No.

9 Q. Ever heard of that being an issue?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Do you feel that pilots feel comfortable reporting any  
12 safety concerns that they might have?

13 A. Absolutely.

14 Q. Yeah. Have you ever reported one?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. What was it about?

17 A. I was flying the line it was either this year -- yeah, it  
18 was this year. And I noticed that the efficiency in Anchorage  
19 wasn't as good as it could be because we didn't have a radio in  
20 the cargo office. So it was extremely frustrating to try and  
21 turn quickly when we had no communication from the aircraft into  
22 the freight office that was going to prepare our loads for us,  
23 so I put a safety report in about it.

24 Q. How'd the company handle that? Do you feel like they  
25 responded to it adequately?

- 1 A. They're putting a radio in, so yeah.
- 2 Q. Okay. Good.
- 3 A. I think so.
- 4 Q. Since the accident have you been involved in any  
5 discussions about changes to policies or procedures?
- 6 A. Have I been involved in discussions about changes to  
7 policies and procedures. Yes.
- 8 Q. Okay. What sort of things were being discussed?
- 9 A. We're not discussing any particular policies or procedures  
10 being changed until we've done more investigation.
- 11 Q. Okay. Has there been any talk of highlighting any issues,  
12 either in a newsletter or getting any word out to pilots about  
13 things to consider when flying between two villages, anything  
14 like CFIT avoidance or inadvertent IMC?
- 15 A. I would say when it comes to that Luke and I did a system  
16 tour on both shifts with the purpose of informing the pilots and  
17 making sure they understood what the company expectation was. I  
18 would say that was highly successful. And I would say that is  
19 -- that's the answer to your question.
- 20 Q. And that's been since the accident?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. Okay. Where -- was that done at all the bases?
- 23 A. All the bases.
- 24 Q. Thanks, Erin. I think that's I have.
- 25 A. No worries. All right. Great.

1 MR. FRANTZ: Shaun.

2 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

3 Q. Hey, Erin.

4 A. Hi.

5 Q. Only have a few here. You've done great answering most of  
6 my questions as we've kind of gone along.

7 A. Awesome.

8 Q. Sounds like your thing's getting a little empty. Do you  
9 need more water, or are you good?

10 A. I'm good.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

13 Q. Okay. So you mentioned flying the 1900 and the Navajo --

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 Q. -- King Air and that. Do you have 208 time?

16 A. I do.

17 Q. Do you know about how much ballpark?

18 A. A little over 2 years. So --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah, I'm going to guess somewhere around 1,000, but don't  
21 quote me on that.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I haven't updated my logbook in a long time.

24 Q. I know the feeling.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. Have you ever flown this route, this Quinhagak --

2 A. No.

3 Q. -- Togiak?

4 A. I have not, no.

5 Q. Have you flown anything down there around these Caribou --  
6 not the Caribou Hills, but the mountains down there?

7 A. So I flew -- when I flew the 1900 for Frontier we did a  
8 Dillingham-Togiak route, so I was familiar -- I'm familiar with  
9 Togiak, familiar with Dillingham, but not Quinhagak to Togiak.

10 Q. Okay. You mentioned the scheduling of the pilots.

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 Q. And you said the scheduling of the flights happens at the  
13 base level.

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 Q. What I'm kind of wondering -- so you get the shift --

16 A. Yep.

17 Q. -- and if I understand this right, correct me if I'm wrong  
18 here, that the base -- not dispatch. What did you --

19 A. Departure control agents?

20 Q. Departure control agents.

21 A. Uh-huh.

22 Q. So they build the flights. Excuse me. Who looks back -- I  
23 understand that the OCA can look back at the day prior for  
24 flight time and things like that. Whose responsibility is it to  
25 make sure that quarterly and annual times are not exceeded?

1 A. That's actually the chief pilot's responsibility. So I  
2 don't -- I would never schedule somebody if they weren't going  
3 to have 13 days off in the quarter.

4 Q. Okay. And what about the hourly aspect of that in the --  
5 within the quarter?

6 A. That's also monitored by me.

7 Q. By you.

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. So how often do you look at that?

10 A. Twice a month.

11 Q. Okay. So the people scheduling the aircraft, is their work  
12 ever sampled or supervised? Who kind of watches over that?

13 A. The person scheduling the flights. They -- so you're  
14 talking about is there a station manager at every base; is that  
15 your question?

16 Q. Correct. Is there somebody out there that's actually  
17 watching, monitoring that, you know, this makes sense, what's  
18 going on? I know the OCA sees it in the morning, they see the  
19 trip.

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 Q. Is there anybody looking at who's actually building those?

22 A. I don't think I really understand the question.

23 Q. Okay. Sorry, we're watching two accidents right now.

24 A. No.

25 Q. That's why I'm looking at my phone.

- 1 A. No, you're fine.
- 2 Q. So the control agent that's out there, when you put a pilot  
3 out there for 2 weeks, for the 15 days, do you assign them to an  
4 airplane?
- 5 A. No.
- 6 Q. Okay. So you just put them out -- okay, you're in Bethel  
7 for 2 weeks, here you go.
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. Okay.
- 10 A. Do you mean an aircraft type or an airplane specific?
- 11 Q. Specific.
- 12 A. No, I do not.
- 13 Q. Okay. So then it's up to the dispatch control agent --
- 14 A. Um-hum.
- 15 Q. -- to assign the crew to the airplane, to the route?
- 16 A. The departure control agent can't assign a pilot to an  
17 aircraft, but they can assign an aircraft to a route.
- 18 Q. Okay. Then who actually assigns the pilot to that route?
- 19 A. The departure control agent.
- 20 Q. Okay. So that's what's confusing me because you just said  
21 that the departure control agent can't schedule a pilot to an  
22 airplane, to a route, but they can schedule the airplane to the  
23 route --
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. -- but then they also schedule the pilot to the route.

1 A. I am --

2 Q. Do you see what I'm saying?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. We'll move on from it. It's okay.

5 Do you spend any time in OCC?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Do you sample kind of what -- how they're doing their job?

8 A. Since I've been the chief pilot, no.

9 Q. Okay. That's all I have.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. Sorry for the confusion.

12 A. No, no, that's okay.

13 MR. WEST: I know this is going to shock all of you, but I

14 have nothing.

15 MR. FRANTZ: Wow. You're right.

16 MR. WEST: I have nothing.

17 MR. FRANTZ: We're shocked.

18 MR. LOWELL: And equally shocking --

19 MR. WEST: Not dismayed, but shocked.

20 MR. LOWELL: Equally shocking, I have a question.

21 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Dave.

22 BY MR. LOWELL:

23 Q. Erin, when you hear the term inadvertent flight into IMC,

24 what does that mean to you? When you hear those words what does

25 that mean in actual real --



1 A. That -- if we're talking about a flight on a VFR flight it  
2 means I am looking ahead. I see that I'm either going to fly  
3 into a cloud or I inadvertently fly into IMC conditions and I  
4 turn around and go back.

5 Q. Okay. So it means to you actually flying into the cloud.

6 A. Not necessarily. It could also be a maneuver to avoid  
7 inadvertent flight into IMC.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So -- yeah. Does that --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- is that a good clarification?

12 Q. Absolutely.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Absolutely. That's all I have.

15 BY MR. FRANTZ;

16 Q. Okay. I have a couple quick follow-ups.

17 A. Okay.

18 Q. Are any of the -- are there any standard VFR routes between  
19 any Hageland destinations?

20 A. No.

21 Q. If a pilot decides he's going VFR between two points, is it  
22 entirely up to him to determine what route he will take between  
23 those two points? What line, how many different lines, you  
24 know, direct, whatever. That -- is this call based on his  
25 knowledge of the weather and the terrain?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Does the OCA -- is an OCA ever solicited for any input on  
3 that, or does the -- do you feel an OCA would ever be qualified  
4 to offer any input in that decision about what route to take on  
5 a VFR flight?

6 A. Absolutely.

7 Q. An OCA would be qualified and it would be not -- it would  
8 not be uncommon for a pilot -- a PIC to ask an OCA what do you  
9 think about this particular route?

10 A. I don't know about common or uncommon, but I do know that  
11 the OCA has tools -- the same tools that the pilots have. So  
12 perhaps if a pilot hasn't looked at weather cams, but he's  
13 looked at departure and arrival weather, there could be  
14 something the OCA could contribute, hey, I just pulled up the  
15 weather cams at this location, it looks like they're not great,  
16 or something like that. But as far as an OCA being a part of go  
17 from this waypoint to this waypoint to this waypoint, no.

18 Q. Okay. If I pulled the same random pilot off the line, a  
19 PIC, and said how would you respond, you're flying a Caravan in  
20 flight and you get an EGPWS warning? What are your -- in your  
21 trained -- or what are your immediate actions to that warning?

22 A. Okay. My first question is what are the conditions I'm  
23 flying, am I VFR or IFR?

24 Q. You're VFR.

1 A. You're VFR. Can you assure that you're going to clear the  
2 terrain? So you're in VMC. Because there's two procedures.  
3 There's a procedure for when you can -- when you know that  
4 there's a false warning, and there's a procedure for when you're  
5 in the clouds and you are unsure whether it's a true or a false  
6 warning.

7 Q. And what --

8 A. Which is why that distinction is important.

9 Q. What if you're not in the clouds and it's a true warning?  
10 By -- what do you mean by false -- I'm not sure what you mean by  
11 false warning.

12 A. I don't know how familiar you are with the way that the  
13 EGPWS's are certified for a Part 135, but there are a lot of  
14 erroneous warnings that happen with the TAWS systems with the  
15 way they're certified for 135 operations. So my question to you  
16 is, if I take off and I'm in visual meteorological conditions,  
17 or am I in instrument meteorological conditions. Because there  
18 is a distinction.

19 Q. What -- okay, I'm not sure what you mean by -- the  
20 configuration of the system is determining -- or is producing  
21 erroneous terrain warnings?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And how is the pilot to determine whether it's erroneous or  
24 not if he's VMC? Just by looking outside?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So he might get a terrain warning, look outside and say I'm  
2 not anywhere near that terrain?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. So these erroneous warnings are just accepted as a -- I  
5 guess I'm confused. There's a way that they're configured, the  
6 configure is configured only for 135 operations that causes  
7 erroneous terrain warnings, warnings of terrain when the pilot  
8 or the aircraft is not in the proximity or in what would the  
9 system would normally consider a dangerous or a warning  
10 proximity or the terrain, but you might -- it might still give  
11 you a warning?

12 A. Yes. That's 100 percent correct.

13 Q. And do you know why that is or what is the --

14 A. Because of the way the -- because of the way they're  
15 certified. I would say talk to Honeywell. They can walk you  
16 through the whole scenario as they talked us through it. It's  
17 the way that the FAA makes the units be certified, the rules  
18 that those units are certified under. And yes, they produce  
19 many erroneous warnings.

20 Q. An erroneous -- you're using that term as distinct from  
21 what people often term nuisance warnings. When you say  
22 erroneous --

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. -- it's not a nuisance warning that, yeah, I know I'm close  
25 to the ground, so shut up --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- push the button?

3 A. No. I'm saying I'm at -- I'm at 7,000 feet and level  
4 cruise flight, the ocean, I'm flying over the ocean and I get an  
5 erroneous warning saying that I'm going to run into terrain.

6 Q. And that's -- is that in your experience here, or in these  
7 aircraft is that common?

8 A. Yes. It is common.

9 Q. How many times has it happened to you personally, what you  
10 would consider completely erroneous warning?

11 A. Since when?

12 Q. Since you've been at Hageland.

13 A. This time?

14 Q. How about forever?

15 A. Maybe 100.

16 Q. And so if you're VMC, all you do is verify that you're not  
17 in proximity, you're -- dangerous proximity to terrain, you're  
18 okay?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. If you're IMC what are your actions?

21 A. Visual -- excuse me -- escape maneuver. Because even  
22 though you think you might know where you are, you're going to  
23 listen to the warning. Even if you've heard it 100 times in  
24 visual conditions, at that exact moment you know you're in IFR  
25 conditions. So our company policy states if you're in visual

1 meteorological conditions and you verified that it's an  
2 erroneous warning you can cancel the warning. If you're in  
3 instrument meteorological conditions, escape maneuver.

4 Q. And --

5 A. Max power, pull up.

6 Q. Okay. You receive -- does the system provide you with a  
7 visual terrain display that turns different colors as it gets --  
8 as you get closer and your --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- speed and --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- and or altitude and the terrain are all calculated  
13 together and the system says caution or warning?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So you have that picture there in front of you --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- as well as the terrain warning, caution or the terrain  
18 warning?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. But sometimes --

21 A. The avionics in the plane is -- are phenomenal.

22 Q. When you get the -- when you get one of these erroneous  
23 warnings, do you also get a red or yellow picture of the terrain  
24 on the terrain display even though --

25 A. Generally not.

1 Q. So that --

2 A. But -- it does happen sometimes though, but generally not.

3 Q. So the warning you're getting, is this -- you're talking  
4 about the aural warning --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- that says caution, terrain?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. That's -- and then you can look at the picture, or if  
9 you're VMC you can look outside and say that's an erroneous  
10 warning?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. Interesting. Okay.

13 BY MR. WEST:

14 Q. I have a follow-up to that. Just -- yeah, if you're flying  
15 IFR, you're under air traffic control at this point, you must be  
16 flying in minimum vectoring altitude. I mean, I wouldn't think  
17 you'd be near any terrain. That would be a nuisance warning to  
18 me.

19 A. Absolutely. But the way the company policy stands right  
20 now, if you receive a warning and you're in instrument  
21 meteorological conditions --

22 Q. Yeah, but you could be nailed for -- I mean, that to me  
23 would be a violation right there of air traffic control  
24 procedures if you all of a sudden decided to pull up, even in  
25 Alaska. I would have to -- as an FAA person I'd have to warn

1 you of that kind of procedure. I don't -- I just -- I would  
2 have to have you check with air traffic on that one.

3 A. Okay. Well, I --

4 Q. Minimum vectoring altitude means that no matter where you  
5 are and you are under air traffic control procedures you are in  
6 safe flight.

7 A. Well, let me give you a scenario, not that we want to dig  
8 into a rabbit hole. We just recently in the last 6 months had  
9 an air traffic controller give our -- one of our pilots a  
10 minimum vectoring altitude that was 3,000 feet too low.

11 So I will tell you I think it's a good company policy the  
12 way that we have it written. It's there to protect the pilots  
13 and I would say if we are responding to a warning, whether it be  
14 TCAS or EGPWS, and we cannot see outside and verify that we're  
15 free of terrain, I will encourage my pilots to execute an escape  
16 maneuver.

17 Q. Well --

18 A. And perhaps if little Ace had done that, their folks would  
19 be alive today.

20 Q. Yeah, hopefully they'll -- in contact with air traffic and  
21 you can tell them what's going on.

22 A. Of course.

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. And by no means am I saying we just do what we want --

25 Q. Yes. Of course.



1 A. -- and guys can deal with it. It's -- but if my pilot's in  
2 the clouds and can't see where they're going and they get a  
3 terrain warning, I want them to not treat that as a nuisance  
4 warning.

5 Q. Yes, absolutely, and you would declare an emergency and  
6 that'd be perfectly logical to do so.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. But I would find that -- you know. Man, if that's what's  
11 going on with a Honeywell product. Anyways. And pilots -- with  
12 the TCAS, and all pilots believe exactly what's going on with  
13 TCAS, and I -- that's one of the best inventions that ever came  
14 out. So I -- okay. I believe what's going on with that.

15 BY MR. FRANTZ:

16 Q. So one more question about the erroneous warnings. Is that  
17 something that's covered in initial ground school training for  
18 pilots, that the system can produce these erroneous warnings?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And then -- okay. I have nothing else. Thank you.

21 A. Okay.

22 MR. FRANTZ: We'll go around one more time, see if --

23 MS. WITT: Okay.

24 MR. FRANTZ: -- anybody else has any follow-ups.

25 DR. WILSON: I do.

1 MR. FRANTZ: Katherine.

2 DR. WILSON: A few.

3 MS. WITT: Okay.

4 BY DR. WILSON:

5 Q. Were you notified the day -- either before the accident or  
6 the day of the accident that the SIC had changed for the  
7 accident flight?

8 A. No.

9 Q. So if there was -- if a pilot was to switch, is that at the  
10 base level?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. Have you learned since the accident that the SIC  
13 changed prior to the flight?

14 A. What do you mean, changed?

15 Q. So the person who was -- the SIC originally scheduled for  
16 the accident flight, sometime between the night before and the  
17 departure, switched with the SIC that was on the accident  
18 flight.

19 A. I'm not aware of that. It is not uncommon for copilots to  
20 not fly with one captain the whole shift. I am aware that the  
21 copilots switched captains, but not when it was done or if there  
22 was a reason behind it, just that he was flying with a new  
23 captain that day --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- let's put it that way.

1 Q. Is there a minimum altitude above terrain that is in --  
2 A. Yeah.  
3 Q. -- the manual?  
4 A. Yes.  
5 Q. What is that?  
6 A. 500 AGL.  
7 Q. Okay. Thank you.  
8 A. Yeah, you're welcome.  
9 MR. WILLIAMS: I have nothing.  
10 MR. FRANTZ: Eric?  
11 MR. WEST: I have nothing.  
12 MS. WITT: Okay.  
13 MR. FRANTZ: No?  
14 MR. LOWELL: No.  
15 MS. WITT: Okay.  
16 MR. WILHELM: Dave, go big, ask a second question.  
17 MR. LOWELL: No, I'm all out.  
18 MR. WILHELM: Okay.  
19 BY MR. FRANTZ:  
20 Q. Okay, Erin. We're done. Thank you.  
21 A. Okay. Thank you.  
22 Q. Is there anything -- let me just wrap up. Is there  
23 anything that we didn't ask that you think we should have that  
24 could bring us anymore information about this accident?  
25 A. Not that I can think of, no.

1 Q. Thank you for pondering that though. It's more than we get  
2 from most.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. Anything else you want to add?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Thank you though.

8 Q. Okay. Thank you. Again, we'll give you our contact  
9 information --

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. -- so feel free to contact us if something that you think  
12 could be relevant comes up --

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. -- in the future. Thank you.

15 A. All right. Great, I'll give you my card too.

16 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. We can go off the record.

17 (Whereupon, at 3:52 p.m., the interview was concluded.)  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:     FLIGHT 3153, AIR TAXI AND COMMUTER  
                          ACCIDENT, OCTOBER 2, 2016  
                          TOGIAK, ALASKA  
                          Interview of Erin Witt

DOCKET NUMBER:        ANC17FA001

PLACE:                 Anchorage, Alaska

DATE:                  December 7, 2016

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared  
to the recording accomplished at the interview.

---

Nicolette Hernandez  
Official Reporter

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

FLIGHT 3153, AIR TAXI AND COMMUTER \*  
ACCIDENT, OCTOBER 2, 2016, \*  
TOGIAK, ALASKA \*

Docket No.: ANC17FA001

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: GREGORY CRANE

NTSB Offices  
Anchorage Federal Building  
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I N T E R V I E W

1 MR. WILLIAMS: All right. The recording is going.

2 Katherine, do you want to start off? Are you on the line?

3 DR. WILSON: Yes, I am.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

5 DR. WILSON: It helps if I turn my phone off of mute.

## INTERVIEW OF GREGORY PHILLIP CRANE

7 BY DR. WILSON:

8 Q. So thank you, Greg, for joining us today. You've met  
9 everybody in the room, heard who's on the phone. Really  
10 quickly, to give you an understanding of the interview, what to  
11 expect, this is a routine interview that we do as a part of any  
12 investigation. It would be -- so it's normal for us to  
13 interview the director of training, training instructors, anyone  
14 who might be involved in the organization that was involved in  
15 an accident.

16 So we're going to ask you some questions. We'll go around  
17 the room, slash, phone. Each person will have a turn to ask you  
18 questions. Please answer to the best of your recollection. If  
19 you don't know, that's okay. You can tell us you don't recall,  
20 or you can get back to us with an answer later. If you don't  
21 understand a question, please ask us to repeat it.

22 We've talked about recording and you, Marc and you have  
23 said that that is okay. You are entitled to have one  
24 representative of your choosing sit with you during the  
25

1 interview. If, for the record, you could state who that person  
2 would be?

3 A. Mr. Marc Wilhelm.

4 Q. Okay. Great. So again, you're here as the expert, as the  
5 director of training. We're here to learn from you, so just  
6 please answer the questions as honestly and to the best of your  
7 recollection as you can. Do you have any questions before we  
8 get started?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I can sometimes be a nervous Nellie, so if I ask you to  
12 repeat the question, just bear with me. But I'm willing -- I'm  
13 trying to fully cooperate with you folks and so I'm -- yeah, my  
14 intention is to cooperate. I'm not being -- what's a good word?  
15 I lost all my words. There you go. Case in point. All right.

16 Q. That's okay. We'll take it one step at a time and if you  
17 need to take a break or anything like that, just let us know.

18 A. All right. Thank you.

19 Q. We'll start with easy questions, though. Could you state  
20 your full name?

21 A. Gregory Phillip Crane.

22 Q. Okay. And your position and organization?

23 A. Director of training for Hageland Aviation Services,  
24 Incorporated.

25 Q. And how long have you been in that position?

1 A. Two and a half years.

2 Q. Have you held any other positions with Hageland?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. If you could give me a brief Cliffs Notes version of  
5 your career leading up to being hired up by Hageland 2½ years  
6 ago?

7 A. All right. I've been in this industry for 32 years. I  
8 flew for 28½ of those. I have just shy of 20,000 hours. I  
9 underwent training at Big Bend Community College. Upon  
10 graduation, I served as an intern or a junior instructor, and  
11 then from there -- and that was for five quarters, which was the  
12 maximum allowed. From there, I went directly into IFR 135 cargo  
13 operations.

14 Went -- changed companies and went into the charter  
15 business, and then back to cargo, and then I ended up flying for  
16 the Forest Service on a contract, which was a exclusive use and  
17 control contract of not less than 180 days. And then from there  
18 I -- that business actually went out of business and that's why  
19 I started my own FPO. And then the college made contact with  
20 me, wanted me, invited me back, and I jumped at the opportunity.  
21 And which I worked there for 16 years as a senior instructor.

22 Okay. Throughout my career, I have served as -- and really  
23 I never accepted a job where I couldn't teach at. That's always  
24 been my first love. But I've served as HE pilot, director of  
25 operations. I was a designated pilot examiner; an ACR, airman

1 certification representative, for the college, which is a  
2 certifying officer for the FAA. And I think I hit all of the  
3 main points.

4 Q. Okay. Great. And as the director of training at Hageland,  
5 what are your duties and responsibilities?

6 A. All right. Well, in preparation for this question, I did  
7 print out from our GOM, if you don't mind? Is that all right?

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. From the GOM, or general operating manual, it states that  
10 my duties and responsibilities are to report directly to the  
11 charge of operations; participates in the selection and trains  
12 company instructors and check airmen; is responsible for the  
13 content, currency and distribution of the operations, OTM; and  
14 ensures that the operations training manual, maneuvers and  
15 procedures manual, and training courses meet FAA requirements;  
16 administers the company's approved training program and initiate  
17 needed revision to the operations training manual as needed; and  
18 finally, serves as a ground training instructor when  
19 appropriate.

20 Q. Great. Any other responsibility that you have or duties  
21 that you perform that aren't listed in the GOM?

22 A. Sure. Things like correspondence for the new hire pilots,  
23 correspondence with company pilots for recurrent ground school,  
24 helping set up hotel reservations, organizing different guest  
25 speakers. I'm responsible for the computer-based training

1 sites. I serve on the CMT. And I'm sure there's others, but  
2 that's what comes to mind right off.

3 Q. Great. And did I hear correctly, as you read from the GOM,  
4 that you report directly to the director of operations?

5 A. That is correct.

6 Q. Okay. How many staff are in the training department?

7 A. Staffers, in reference to instructors or --

8 Q. Instructors, any admin. Who do you -- how many people do  
9 you oversee in the training department?

10 A. Primarily the ground instructors, and primarily the ground  
11 instructors only.

12 Q. You only oversee the ground instructors?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Directly.

16 Q. How many ground instructors are there?

17 A. That depends. It just depends --

18 MR. WILHELM: Well, just wait for another question.

19 MR. CRANE: Okay.

20 DR. WILSON: I couldn't hear. What did you say, Marc? I'm  
21 sorry.

22 MR. WILHELM: Well, I just said wait for another question.

23 I'm -- he, he wasn't -- he said it depends and then wasn't quite  
24 sure what else to say.

25 BY DR. WILSON:

1 Q. Okay. So what does it -- what does the staffing level  
2 depend on?

3 A. Instructor availability.

4 Q. Are the instructors not full-time instructors?

5 A. We draw from our flight instructor base, which also serves  
6 as ground instructors, and so it would be dependent upon their  
7 work shift and availability outside that shift.

8 Q. And who oversees them as flight instructors?

9 A. Our chief pilots.

10 Q. Okay. Do you have any direct reports to you?

11 A. I'm sorry, say that again?

12 Q. Do you have any direct reports to you? Does anybody report  
13 directly to you?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. So walk me through the -- we'll start with initial  
16 training. What portion of the initial training are you  
17 responsible for?

18 A. The computer-based training, assignments, and then I  
19 organize the in-person ground school. And in the past I've  
20 taught certain portions of that ground school.

21 Q. Would it be the same for recurrent training or are there  
22 different responsibilities for recurrent training?

23 A. No, it's very similar to recurrent.

24 Q. Okay.

1 A. Let's see. About the only difference, the initial new  
2 hire, I also organize the simulator training prior to the  
3 applicants entering their flight training phase.

4 Q. Are you involved in development of any of the training?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. Walk me through the process of how a training module  
7 is developed, validated to make sure that it's training what you  
8 want it to train, all the way to deployment.

9 A. All right. Let's see. In respect to the new hires, for  
10 instance, a CBT course would be designed around the regulatory  
11 requirements. I would organize and prepare that course. And  
12 then I submit it to the chief pilot and/or the director of  
13 operations for approval, and then I publish it on the website.

14 Q. What are the hourly requirements for ground school, initial  
15 training and recurrent training?

16 A. Just the ground school portion?

17 Q. Um-hum, yes.

18 A. Okay. For the general subjects, so that I don't misquote,  
19 I'd have to look that up.

20 Q. Okay.

21 MR. WILHELM: Do you have that?

22 MR. CRANE: Yeah, I do.

23 MR. WILHELM: Hey, Kath, Greg's going to go ahead and look  
24 that up, if you just give him a moment?

25 DR. WILSON: Okay.

1 MR. CRANE: General subjects for initial is 22½ hours.  
2 General subjects for recurrent is 8 hours.

3 BY DR. WILSON:

4 Q. Do -- in initial and/or recurrent training, is CFIT covered  
5 in ground school?

6 A. In both.

7 Q. Explain for me what is provided to pilots regarding CFIT.

8 A. Okay. There's a online course, actually developed and  
9 published by probably the -- or the Department of  
10 Transportation, and it comes from -- which one -- the Flight  
11 Safety Foundation. So Flight Safety Foundation in cooperation  
12 with the Department of Transportation, FAA, provides a very  
13 detained PowerPoint presentation, which I incorporate into the  
14 CBT, and then simulator training is also required.

15 Q. Is the ground school and simulator portion required under  
16 Part 135 or is it required as a part of the Medallion Foundation  
17 Shield?

18 A. It is required under the Medallion requirements, the  
19 Medallion Star.

20 Q. Okay. Is CFIT training required -- I'm sorry. Is CFIT  
21 training provided as a part of every recurrent training?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And how often is recurrent training?

24 A. Once a year; annually.



1 Q. Is CFIT covered also within the simulator training for  
2 initial training?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Tell me about that scenario? What is trained in the  
5 simulator?

6 A. Simulator training, with the new hires, first and foremost  
7 would be getting them familiar with the layout in the systems,  
8 so enhancing -- its the SIT training, so systems integration  
9 training. And then once the applicant becomes comfortable, we  
10 provide different scenarios, starting with IFR.

11 Examples would include issuing a holding clearance with an  
12 altitude that is too low for the conditions, for the area; also  
13 vectors and a highering terrain. Others could be a planned trip  
14 to a destination with a change in the weather, weather  
15 deteriorating in the destination, forcing the pilot to turn  
16 around. And then providing different scenarios from there,  
17 whether it's vectoring into terrain, holding instructions,  
18 issuing lower than authorized altitudes. The purpose is to make  
19 it as realistic as possible.

20 Q. Is this training scenario, is it a CFIT-specific scenario  
21 or how is it documented on the --

22 A. Yes, it is.

23 Q. -- what's the word I'm looking for --

24 A. For the Medallion Star --

25 Q. -- your checklist or, you know, the --

1 A. Yeah. For the Medallion Star it's documented as CFIT  
2 training, but CFIT scenarios are implemented throughout their  
3 simulator training so it's just not one session. They receive  
4 multiple sessions on CFIT avoidance.

5 Q. Okay. And where does the Medallion Foundation require that  
6 the CFIT training be indicated? Is it on a specific form?

7 A. We use company forms, either the training form or, more  
8 often, the check ride form.

9 Q. All right. Give me one second. I'm just looking something  
10 up.

11 Is the form that CFIT training is listed on, is it an FAA-  
12 approved form?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Does training -- does ground school training cover  
15 crew resource management?

16 A. It does on the -- yes. Yup.

17 Q. Okay. Is theorem presented in terms of a two-person crew  
18 or a single-person crew?

19 A. Well, it's first presented on the CBT, and then it's going  
20 to be trained in the simulator as a -- as both. It could be  
21 either one person or two -- multi-crew environment.

22 Q. Okay. Does ground school training cover pilots and how to  
23 perform the risk assessment?

24 A. A risk assessment in regards to?

25 Q. That they're required to perform before each flight?

1 A. Okay. Okay. I'm sorry, say the question again?

2 Q. Pilots are required to complete a risk assessment prior to  
3 each flight, and my question is whether they receive training  
4 for that in ground school on how to perform their risk  
5 assessment?

6 A. Yes, they do.

7 Q. Is that also a CBT or is that something that's discussed by  
8 a ground school instructor?

9 A. That's actually in-person ground school instructor.

10 Q. Okay. Is inadvertent flight into IMC covered in ground  
11 school?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Is that a part of the CFIT training or a separate module?

14 A. Actually both. It is definitely covered by the CFIT, but  
15 we also hold those discussions in person during the ground  
16 school.

17 Q. And what is a pilot trained to do if he or she encounters  
18 inadvertent IMC?

19 A. Well, that depends on the situation. First and foremost,  
20 to not encounter the condition in the first place, to avoid, if  
21 at all possible. And then it would go into the varying escape  
22 maneuvers.

23 Q. What are the escape maneuvers that are trained?

24 A. Well, such as if the pilot is straight and level and  
25 penetrates obscuring phenomenon, the best course of action is

1 usually a 180 back out. But they can climb, they can perform  
2 climbing turns. If they're descending, then the best course of  
3 action is often a escape maneuver with a maximum climb and/or a  
4 climbing turn.

5 Q. Okay. Do you observe ground school training?

6 A. Yes, I do.

7 Q. How often do you do that?

8 A. Every ground school.

9 Q. In what capacity are you observing it?

10 A. Well, sometimes I --

11 Q. Are you doing an evaluation -- oh, I'm sorry?

12 A. Yes. Sometimes I participate as a ground school  
13 instructor. Other times, I am sitting and just observing and  
14 evaluating the ground school and effectiveness.

15 Q. Okay. Do you also attend ground school? Do you maintain  
16 currency at Hageland?

17 A. No, I do not.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, I lost -- the reason why I quit flying after 28½  
20 years is I lost my medical certificate.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So --

23 Q. You also sit in on --

24 A. Let me, let me back it up. I do not maintain recency as a  
25 pilot in flight, but I do maintain recency for the ground

1 instruction. I complete all the CBT courses. I attend all the  
2 ground schools.

3 Q. Do you observe simulator training as well?

4 A. I have in the past, yes.

5 Q. Okay. What criteria are you using when you're evaluating  
6 instructors to ensure that there's standardization and that they  
7 are training what they have been trained to train?

8 A. First of all, the chief pilot is very explicit in the  
9 expectations of all instructors. There's guidelines in the OTM.  
10 And then in the past, even if a candidate -- company instructor  
11 candidate holds a CFI certificate, we are still requiring them  
12 to undergo fundamentals of instruction training. So the FOI  
13 8900, chapter 19 and 20, the training programs and check airman,  
14 as well as professionalism, responsibilities, expectations.

15 Q. Are instructors required to keep any documentation  
16 following either a ground school class or a simulator session?

17 A. Required by law? I don't believe so. But the company does  
18 maintain those files, those records.

19 Q. Okay. Does the company encourage instructors to create  
20 some sort of documentation, including notes?

21 MR. WILHELM: If you need clarification ask -- yeah,  
22 absolutely.

23 Yeah, I mean, the question, Kath and Marc, I don't think  
24 the witness quite understands the question.

25 BY DR. WILSON:

1 Q. Okay. So you have an instructor. There's a ground school  
2 class. What documentation does the instructor have to keep?

3 MR. WILHELM: And that's the instructor, as opposed to the  
4 company?

5 BY DR. WILSON:

6 Q. Correct. So I'm the ground school instructor; I have a  
7 class. Do I make any documentation at the end of the class  
8 about the students that I've just taught? Pass/fail, this  
9 person seemed to know, answer questions very well? Any  
10 documentation about the students that attended the class?

11 A. Yes. It's on the training form. It's usually pass/fail,  
12 but the instructor can also include different comments.

13 Q. And that would be per individual, correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Per trainee? Okay. And is that the same for the simulator  
16 training as well?

17 A. Yes. Different form, but nonetheless there is a record  
18 maintained by the company.

19 Q. Okay. So the instructor, either the ground school or the  
20 simulator instructor, completes the training form, may or may  
21 not put notes in it, and then that record is held by the  
22 company; is that correct?

23 A. That is correct for simulator and flight training. Notes  
24 will be -- are usually included. I don't recall ever seeing  
25 those type of training forms without comments or remarks. The

1 attendance form for the ground schools are usually without  
2 remarks, but they have grades on them, pass/fail.

3 We also discuss the students as a group overall, and then  
4 any individuals -- yeah, I don't think I've attended a ground  
5 school that we haven't really met and exchanged notes, so to  
6 speak, about the classroom and the individuals.

7 Q. All right. Is there a means that trainees can provide  
8 feedback on the training that they received? So can the pilot  
9 provide feedback on their training?

10 A. Yes. We have evaluation forms that we submit. They're  
11 anonymous and they return it to us at the end of the day.

12 Q. Okay. You mentioned that the CFIT training was put  
13 together by the Flight Safety Foundation; is that correct?

14 A. That is correct.

15 Q. Is that -- what is the process of Medallion approving that  
16 training? Is that -- does Medallion suggest using the Flight  
17 Safety Foundation training or does Medallion leave it up to the  
18 operator to determine how they train for CFIT?

19 A. Medallion provides the requirements and then we comply with  
20 those requirements. But to my knowledge, it's up to the various  
21 companies on how to comply or, you know, what training material  
22 and programs would be provided.

23 Q. Okay. Does Medallion come in and approve the training to  
24 ensure that it meets their requirements?

25 A. Yes, through various audits.

1 Q. How often do those audits occur?

2 A. Annually.

3 Q. To your recollection, has Medallion provided any feedback  
4 from those audits regarding the CFIT training?

5 A. Yes. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. What sort of feedback has been provided?

7 A. Give me just a moment.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Deb Walker conducted the last CFIT audit, and she's -- as I  
10 understand, from what she told me, she's the originator of that  
11 program. And so she, in a review and audit of our program, she  
12 provided various comments and suggestions for consideration, not  
13 that they were required, but just kind of food for thought  
14 items.

15 Q. And is Hageland required to respond to those -- to that  
16 feedback, whether they will be implementing the suggestions or  
17 not implementing them?

18 A. No, since it was in person. It was just a verbal exchange  
19 of ideas. We are responsible to comply and meet the  
20 requirements of the audit points every year.

21 Q. So has there been anything documented about the CFIT  
22 training, or it's only been verbal?

23 A. In regard --

24 Q. Suggestions for improvement.



1 A. That's all been verbal, just because it's -- it was her  
2 opinion and it was just ideas. It was -- yeah, just ideas  
3 exchanged.

4 Q. Okay. So there's been no formal documentation then of  
5 suggestions for improving or making changes to the CFIT program?

6 MR. RICCIARDI: Hey, Kath, this is Adam. If I can just  
7 interject on the Medallion topic? So the shield manager for the  
8 company, for Hageland, is the director of safety, and under the  
9 scope of the Medallion program, the Medallion Foundation audits  
10 one of the five stars recurrently in a 5-year rotation. So  
11 after receiving the shield, Hageland's requirement is to then  
12 satisfy a internal review of each of the five stars annually;  
13 however, Medallion audits one of each of the five stars once  
14 every 5 years.

15 I just wanted to include that, as far as a statement. I  
16 don't know if that helps satisfy your question, but I did want  
17 to make that known.

18 DR. WILSON: Okay. Well, my question -- I think my  
19 question still remains. If Hageland -- or if Medallion has come  
20 in and audited the CFIT Star, has there been any formal -- was  
21 there any formal suggestions made on improvements to the CFIT  
22 training?

23 MR. RICCIARDI: Yes. Both verbally and in documentation.  
24 However, documentation is usually initially provided within a

1 period directly after Medallion having audited it; it being the  
2 program, CFIT, in question.

3         So it's done at time of the out-brief of -- Greg mentioning  
4 Deb Walker being the last audit that was conducted on the CFIT.  
5 She will both provide a verbal listing of the corrective actions  
6 or recommendations that she would make based on her evaluation  
7 of our alignment to the Medallion's points. And then at time of  
8 that, usually via email, there will be a discussion on her  
9 verbal recommendations that she made at the time of the out-  
10 brief.

11         DR. WILSON: Okay. So then -- so, I mean, I don't want to  
12 get off on a sidebar by interviewing you, Adam, but so I'm  
13 interested in knowing what was documented that required Hageland  
14 to respond? Because I believe either you or Greg said that if  
15 there is something that's documented, then Hageland -- if it's  
16 written documentation, then Hageland is required to respond to  
17 that.

18         MR. RICCIARDI: Yeah, that would've -- that piece right  
19 there would've been provided to Greg, as being the CFIT Star  
20 manager.

21         BY DR. WILSON:

22 Q. Okay. So I guess my question then to Greg would be what  
23 was the -- what was documented regarding the CFIT Star and that  
24 needed -- excuse me. What was documented regarding the last  
25 audit of the CFIT Star and what was Hageland's response to it?

1 A. We complied and made changes to the recommendations of that  
2 audit.

3 Q. Okay. What changes were made?

4 A. Let's see. I believe the -- one of the recommendations was  
5 to align the lesson in the OTM with the CFIT manual. So the OTM  
6 was lacking a couple of the scenarios, and the recommendation  
7 was to include that in the OTM, just to align the two manuals.

8 Q. Okay. Do you recall any other changes that were made?

9 A. Well -- not right off. I keep a record of all the  
10 revisions, but I don't have that with me and I -- honestly I  
11 don't recall right off.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I have been audited by our safety program. I've been  
14 audited by Medallion. And like, I don't know, through all --  
15 through that process, I just can't recall which ones were the  
16 last recommendations.

17 Q. Since the accident, have there been any discussions  
18 regarding changes to training that you're aware of?

19 A. If you don't mind, may I take a break?

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

21 DR. WILSON: Sure.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I'm going to pause the recording  
23 here, if I can figure out --

24 (Off the record.)

25 (On the record.)

1 MR. WILLIAMS: We're back recording.

2 BY DR. WILSON:

3 Q. Okay. Thanks, Greg. I think the question where we left  
4 off is I was asking about any discussions of changes to training  
5 since the accident?

6 A. Well, the company is always interested in continuous  
7 improvement, and we have looked at the CFIT training, and we've  
8 kind of reorganized that simulator training specifically. I  
9 don't know if I would say we've enhanced or added to it, but  
10 we've just reorganized it and made it what I think is more real-  
11 world scenarios.

12 Q. All right.

13 A. You know, and the idea of, yeah, just having the pilots IFR  
14 proficient, or somewhat, before we begin the CFIT training.

15 Q. Okay. And you also cover training for the operational  
16 control center and the departure control agents, or do you only  
17 cover -- or oversee the training for pilots?

18 A. Only the training for pilots.

19 Q. Okay. Did you know either of the accident pilots?

20 A. I knew both of them.

21 Q. In what capacity did you know them?

22 A. Just from -- let's say, the SIC, Drew Welty, I only knew  
23 him from the initial ground school, and that he hadn't worked  
24 for the company for very long. And then the PIC, Tim Cline, I  
25 knew from the new-hire ground school, in addition to a recurrent

1 ground school. And occasionally he came through Palmer, where  
2 I'm stationed, a couple different times, and I had the  
3 opportunity to kind of visit with him a little bit.

4 Q. Okay. Ever hear anybody complain about him -- either  
5 Mr. Cline or Mr. Welty, concerns about them as a pilot?

6 A. No. No.

7 Q. Did you have a chance to review their training records?

8 A. I'm sure I did. Specifically, I can't recall any  
9 particulars, but I -- all the training records have been  
10 forwarded to me from Anchorage, and so I've reviewed those in  
11 the past.

12 Q. Okay. Since the accident, do you recall if you've reviewed  
13 them?

14 A. I have, for the purpose of providing our previous director  
15 of safety the required records that you folks requested.

16 Q. Okay. Do you recall if anything stood out from them?

17 A. No. And I would say --

18 Q. It's not a trick question, just --

19 A. Yeah. That would be the records primarily from the CBT  
20 that I printed off, is kind of more of what I'm referring to.

21 Q. Okay. Regarding the CBT, is there a exam at the end of the  
22 CBTs or is it -- are pilots just required to watch the modules?

23 A. There are exams. Specifically to CFIT, there's the  
24 PowerPoint presentation and then a exam with other types of

1 training, like the basic indoc. There may not be a test after  
2 every module, but 99 percent of the time there is.

3 Q. Okay. Is training for the GPWS covered in ground school?

4 A. It's part of the --

5 Q. Or a CBT?

6 A. Yeah, CBT.

7 Q. Okay. Is there a discussion within the training about  
8 procedures for inhibiting the GPWS, whether it's allowed or not  
9 allowed, and if it is allowed, when is it allowed?

10 A. I don't believe that's covered specifically in the in-  
11 person ground school, but that is -- that would be covered by  
12 the flight instructors.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And in compliance with the company policy.

15 Q. Okay. Do you know is there a company policy regarding  
16 inhibiting the GPWS?

17 A. Or TAWS equipment. Yes.

18 Q. Um-hum. Okay.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Do you know what the policy is?

21 A. If the pilot is -- as I understand it, if the pilot is  
22 operating VFR, in VFR conditions and they have a annunciation,  
23 they may -- I guess assuming that they're confident of their  
24 position, they may inhibit the TAWS. If they're in IFR

1 conditions, then they must execute an escape maneuver and comply  
2 with the TAWS warning.

3 DR. WILSON: Okay. All right. Thanks, Greg. I think  
4 that's all the questions that I have.

5 MR. CRANE: Okay.

6 DR. WILSON: Marvin, do you have any questions?

7 MR. CRANE: Who's the next individual?

8 MR. WILHELM: Marvin Frantz.

9 MR. CRANE: Marvin? Okay.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Are you still there, Marvin?

11 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. Yeah.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Okay.

13 MR. FRANTZ: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Yup. We can hear you now.

15 BY MR. FRANTZ:

16 Q. Hi, Greg. Sorry I was having a little trouble unmuting.  
17 My name is Marvin Frantz. I'm an operational factors  
18 investigator with the NTSB. And I have just a couple questions,  
19 probably maybe zeroing in a little more on some training, but a  
20 lot of it's already been covered by Katherine.

21 So let's start where we've just covered, we just left off.  
22 But I just want to clarify that the CFIT training that pilots  
23 receive at Hageland is -- consists of ground school and, I  
24 understand, a sim session or sim training. And the ground

1 school is a PowerPoint that was prepared by the Flight Safety  
2 Foundation. Is that correct?

3 A. That is correct.

4 Q. Okay. About how long does that PowerPoint last?

5 A. Oh. It's over 100 slides.

6 Q. Let me rephrase --

7 A. Yeah, it's over 100 slides.

8 Q. Okay. Is that -- okay. All right. Is that presented in a  
9 classroom situation by an instructor to a group, or is that  
10 PowerPoint something that's given to the individual pilots to go  
11 through on their own?

12 A. In the past it has been given to groups of individuals, but  
13 more often than not -- or at least in the last couple years,  
14 through my training, it's been on the CBT. So I would assign  
15 them the CBT CFIT training for the initial new hire and  
16 recurrency.

17 Q. Okay. So when they do the PowerPoint, or when they do the  
18 training via the CBT, is there any opportunity for discussion or  
19 questions on anything in that CFIT PowerPoint, or is that not  
20 possible because they're probably sitting in front of their  
21 computer at home doing it?

22 A. Okay. Well, kind of both. Yes, they are sitting in front  
23 of a computer, you know, it's all automated. But I do receive  
24 questions from our pilots pertaining to different slides or if  
25 they think there's an error in the slide or for clarifications.



1 So though the CBT is kind of a closed program, so to speak, you  
2 know, they still have the opportunity to be in touch with me.

3 Q. Okay. Is there -- is the requirement for Medallion for the  
4 ground training a specific time? Is there a time requirement  
5 for ground, the CFIT ground training?

6 A. Not that I'm aware of.

7 Q. How about for the sim part? Is there a time requirement  
8 for that for Medallion?

9 A. Not that I'm aware of.

10 Q. Okay. The sim training -- well, speaking strictly for the  
11 208, the sim training, the CFIT training in the simulator, where  
12 is that done? What simulator do you guys do that in?

13 A. At the University of Alaska, Anchorage. The university  
14 owns and operations a Level B Caravan simulator.

15 Q. And a new-hire pilot -- well, let's, I'll say -- yeah, say  
16 a new-hire pilot that's going into an SIC position in the 208,  
17 how much time in total, including CFIT, typically how much time  
18 does he spend in that simulator as part of his flight training?

19 A. Approximately 4½ hours.

20 Q. Okay. And the CFIT training in the simulator, how long is  
21 that, that portion, to meet the requirements for the Medallion  
22 Star? How many, how much time or how many scenarios, or however  
23 you measure it, are required in the simulator for the pilot?

24 A. Yeah. It's not really based on a required time. And that  
25 goes along with 135 requirements, where it's training to

1 proficiency. But we incorporate a number of different  
2 scenarios. And in my opinion, it's a very robust training  
3 program.

4 Q. Is that simulator equipped with a G1000 avionics package?

5 A. No, it is not.

6 Q. What sort of TAWS equipment does that simulator have?

7 A. I'm trying to visualize the panel. It has a GX60 and -- I  
8 don't know if that's the visual screen or if there's an  
9 additional that adds a DSB, but -- I'm not sure right off.

10 Q. Okay. Is there a visual display of terrain that changes  
11 color as the terrain becomes more threatening to the flight?

12 A. I believe so. I know for sure that there's a moving map  
13 visual screen. I just don't recall right off if it does change  
14 colors.

15 Q. Okay. And is there an aural warning voice that gives  
16 terrain alerts and cautions and warnings in the simulator?

17 A. Not that I recall.

18 Q. So how does the -- how does an instructor provide CFIT  
19 training in the simulator without TAWS equipment or a TAWS  
20 warning? Is he -- well, just -- could you just briefly describe  
21 what an instructor would go through with a student in the sim  
22 when he was trying to satisfy the CFIT requirement?

23 A. In a sim in general, and I'll take this to the Medallion  
24 sims as well, is that if there is not TAWS equipment or GPWS,

1 that the instructor will simulate that aural role -- I can't  
2 pronounce that -- the warning indications.

3 Q. Okay. And I don't know if I asked you this or not. I'm  
4 sorry. About how long typically do you think, how long would a  
5 pilot spend actually doing CFIT scenarios and training in the  
6 simulator? Is it all accomplished in one sim session?

7 A. No. It's integrated through a number of different  
8 sessions.

9 Q. Okay. And the CFIT training, you said that was recorded --  
10 when a pilot completes CFIT training, that was recorded on  
11 company forms, not any particular form from Medallion; is that  
12 correct?

13 A. That is correct.

14 Q. Okay. And the GPWS, do you know specifically what TAWS  
15 equipment is installed in Hageland's 208s; 208, you know, the B  
16 and the, again, the EX? Do you know what each airplane has as  
17 far as TAWS equipment?

18 A. I know that the Legacy aircraft, that these have a  
19 Honeywell TAWS system.

20 Q. Those systems, are they trained specifically? Are they  
21 part of the aircraft ground school that pilots will get use of  
22 those systems?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Is that training on the GPWS or on the TAWS systems, is  
25 that specifically CBT training for the pilot?

1 A. Actually, it is included in the CBT, but there's  
2 discussions in ground school and also during their flight  
3 training and sim sessions. So we really kind of hit it on every  
4 facet.

5 Q. And what are the pilots trained to do if they're in flight  
6 and they receive the aural terrain alert from whatever TAWS  
7 system they have on their aircraft?

8 A. Okay. Yeah, the company policy is that if the pilot is in  
9 VFR conditions and is confident of their position, then they may  
10 inhibit the TAWS and continue VFR. If they are in IFR  
11 conditions, then they will comply with the TAWS alert and  
12 perform an escape, an appropriate escape maneuver.

13 Q. Okay. And what is that escape maneuver?

14 A. Well, again, it depends on the situation. Usually with  
15 TAWS it's going to be a climbing maneuver. It could be climbing  
16 straight ahead. It could be a climbing turn, you know, usually  
17 where the pilot thinks there is lowering terrain.

18 Q. Okay. And let's talk about inhibiting the warning if the  
19 pilot is VFR or he's VMC, and he gets a warning but he  
20 recognizes that there's no terrain threats at the moment so he  
21 inhibits the warning. Is there any guidance for when he should  
22 uninhibit the warning and therefore bring the system back  
23 online, so to speak?

24 A. I don't know specifically.

1 Q. Do you know if it's in any aircraft checklist or if it's  
2 trained at all in the ground school that the pilots get to check  
3 that the TAWS system -- either test the TAWS system or to check  
4 that it's not inhibited? Do either of those things exist in a  
5 checklist that you're aware of for anything that's talked about  
6 in ground school?

7 A. I want to say that that would be -- I'm trying to think  
8 back if -- let's see. Give me a second to collect my thoughts.

9 Q. Sure. Sure.

10 A. I know what I want to say, but I don't know if that's  
11 concrete. I would think it's in the checklist. We do have  
12 certain discussions in ground school and then that would be  
13 followed up with the flight instructor. And as part of the  
14 flight instruction, you know, as the director of training, I'm  
15 more of an oversight, manuals, meeting FAA regulatory  
16 requirements and such. I'm really not down in the trenches with  
17 the instructors.

18 Q. Sure. Sure.

19 A. So you know, with that --

20 Q. So --

21 A. -- understanding, that's why I'm just kind of struggling  
22 with that question.

23 Q. Okay. Let me just --

24 MR. WILHELM: No, let me, let me --

25 MR. FRANTZ: -- let me try it another way.

1 MR. WILHELM: -- let me just interrupt for a second though.

2 Greg, if you don't --

3 MR. FRANTZ: Sure.

4 MR. WILHELM: -- know something, you know, you can just  
5 feel free to say --

6 MR. CRANE: Yeah.

7 MR. FRANTZ: Yeah, it's fine.

8 MR. WILHELM: -- you don't have to guess.

9 MR. CRANE: Yeah. Well, let's say I don't know and move  
10 on.

11 BY MR. FRANTZ:

12 Q. Yeah, that's fine. I don't know is fine, Greg.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. So if I'm a new student and I'm in flight instruction in  
15 the 208 and I'm in the airplane with an instructor and I get a  
16 terrain alert but it's a VFR day and I, you know, I know why I  
17 got the alert and I'm not endangered. So the instructor says  
18 you can -- it's okay, it's company policy or it's allowed for  
19 you to, you know, push the button and inhibit that. So okay, I  
20 push the button and I inhibit and the warning stops.

21 Will the instructor then tell me anything about when I  
22 should -- how or when I should reinhibit that system so it can  
23 warn me the next time I'm in proximity of terrain?

24 A. Really, I can't answer that. I can't testify for our  
25 flight instructors and what the --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- yeah.

3 Q. And so since the simulator -- you don't think the 208  
4 simulator has the same GPS as the airplane; is that correct?  
5 Not GPS -- GPWS or TAWS system. Did you say you don't think it  
6 has the same system that's on your aircraft?

7 A. I don't believe so, but I'm not certain either.

8 Q. Okay. So is that something that should be in the flight  
9 training syllabus, that that's something that the flight  
10 instructor should cover when he's actually with the student in  
11 the airplane? Is that your understanding?

12 A. Yes, and it is in the flight lessons.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. That I know for sure. It is definitely in the flight  
15 lessons.

16 Q. Okay. Just one second. I think I'm almost done.

17 Oh, I just want to clarify. A new-hire that's going to be  
18 an SIC in the 208, he would -- did you say he spends 4,  
19 typically 4½ hours he would get of sim training in that  
20 University of Alaska sim?

21 A. That is correct.

22 Q. Okay. In motion?

23 A. Yes. At least all of the simulators lessons that I have  
24 observed have been full motion.

1 Q. Okay. Who conducts, or who's responsible for conducting  
2 training for operational control agents and departure control  
3 agents and village agents? Who gives them training about, you  
4 know, weather and routing and the things that they look at?

5 A. The operations control agents would be trained by the  
6 manager of OCC, Mr. Greg Tanner.

7 Q. Okay. Do you know if -- so do you know if the departure  
8 control agents at the stations, do you know if they get any  
9 formal training in weather or flight routing or anything -- do  
10 they get formal training from anyone, or is it OJT or do you  
11 have any knowledge of that?

12 A. I don't have any knowledge of that.

13 Q. And how about for the village, or the -- yeah, the village  
14 agents, that I understand occasionally will call and give  
15 weather reports and other information about a village, do you  
16 know if they get any training?

17 A. I do not. I can't answer that.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Again, my job is really kind of removed from the front  
20 lines.

21 Q. Oh, yeah. Sure. I understand.

22 MR. FRANTZ: Okay. I think that's all I have for now,  
23 Greg. Thanks a lot.

24 DR. WILSON: Shaun?

25 BY MR. WILLIAMS:



1 Q. Okay. I have a few for you here. Just bear with me. I  
2 may ask you some of the same things, but I'm not trying to do it  
3 on purpose.

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. I just want to make sure I kind of got everything here. So  
6 let's see here. So we've talked about the sim sessions, and who  
7 teaches the sim sessions? Is it the ground instructors or is it  
8 the flight instructors?

9 A. It can be both.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Our ground instructors have also been flight instructors or  
12 are flight instructors, and that's how it currently is set up.

13 Q. Okay. So if the flight instructors report to the chief  
14 pilot and the ground instructors report to you, when they're  
15 doing sim sessions, whose purview does that fall under? Does  
16 that come under you or does that come under the chief pilot?

17 A. The chief pilot more so. I review the records and such,  
18 but the chief pilot would be directly involved.

19 Q. Okay. So talking about the training program revisions, who  
20 writes the training program revisions? Is that --

21 A. The OTM?

22 Q. Yes.

23 A. I do.

24 Q. You do. Okay. Can you describe kind of that process, the  
25 approval process with the FAA and how all that comes to be?

1 A. Sure. Specific to how I do it?

2 Q. You can just kind of give me a top level how this comes  
3 about. When there is going to be a change to the training  
4 program and you say, okay, this needs to be changed, how does  
5 that get from that idea to an approval stamp on there?

6 A. Okay. I will make the revisions or changes, as  
7 appropriate, in the manual. I submit that -- usually I submit  
8 that directly to our director of operations so he has a -- eyes  
9 on it, to look at it. And with his approval, then I would  
10 submit the revisions with a letter to the FAA, to our POI and  
11 assistant POI.

12 Q. Okay. And so then they look at it, review it, and send it  
13 back stamped? Is there a dialogue back and forth kind of  
14 explaining the changes? How does that take place?

15 A. There is usually a dialogue, either in person from the  
16 various meetings or one of the two -- excuse me -- one of the  
17 two FAA inspectors might be in contact with me or the company  
18 and say there's a change to the 8900.

19 For instance, like the tail plane icing. We have to, you  
20 have to address that in the training program, and so I  
21 downloaded the -- I don't know if it was the -- but the 8900  
22 change. Reviewed the manual, noted if I needed to make any  
23 changes, provided my response to the director of operations.  
24 With his approval, then I submit it to the FAA and they  
25 either -- they might approve, but there's always correspondence,

1 whether we're working on it, it looks good, or this doesn't  
2 quite meet the requirements, or this is wrong or, you know.

3       And some of that came from, initially when I was hired on,  
4 some compatibility problems between the computer programs, of  
5 what I was sending and how it was downloaded on their end.

6 Q.    So if there is a disagreement, so between -- you submit  
7 this and the FAA says, no, we don't like that, what happens?  
8 How does that get resolved? Is it just through dialogue? Is it  
9 just you and the inspector?

10 A.    Oh, that -- it really depends on the situation for  
11 resolving it. There is dialogue, phone calls, emails, me with  
12 Luke, as well. With the change, when we brought the EXes on --  
13 let's see -- EXes -- when we provided the revision for  
14 differences, trying to incorporate the 1900Ds, Mr. Gillespe, our  
15 POI, and one of his colleagues -- I'm terrible with names --but  
16 one of his colleagues that specializes in training -- or in  
17 manuals, came out to my office and we sat down and discussed the  
18 changes and different possibilities.

19 Q.    Okay. So what about with the EX? How did that go,  
20 bringing the EX online? Was that a smooth transition with the  
21 training program?

22 A.    A lot smoother. And that's because the heartache was  
23 through the 1900D differences; so once we had that experience  
24 and had it resolved, then the EXs went very smoothly.

1 Q. So with the 1900, who ended up getting involved with that?  
2 Was it just you and the FAA? Did Luke get involved? Did it go  
3 higher? How did that get resolved?

4 A. It was primarily through me, I believe.

5 Q. So how are the pilots trained in route and altitude  
6 selection?

7 A. That would be more through their flight instructors, so one  
8 on one.

9 Q. So one thing I'm seeing, and we've kind of hit on this, is  
10 that basically what the flight instructors can be doing is one  
11 thing, but there's no common denominator into what's under your  
12 purview as ground school and stuff. So how does that work with  
13 the interaction with you and the chief pilot for being the  
14 oversight of the training, to maintain a consistency?

15 A. We communicate. The chief pilot, Erin Witt, provides  
16 recommendations. Yeah, just -- and she provides different  
17 recommendations.

18 Q. Has it always been separated like that?

19 A. Yes. Of course, at least for my time of employment it has.  
20 But sure.

21 Q. Okay. And what about -- so, like, cockpit flows. Is that  
22 -- how do the pilots -- describe the training that the pilots go  
23 through in learning the flows?

24 A. Well, what comes to mind first is the simulator lessons.  
25 But we also provide, at the end of the systems training, in-

1 person ground school, we provide the maneuvers and procedures,  
2 so the flight profiles. They discuss the setup, kind of the  
3 mechanics of how to perform, and then that's followed up in the  
4 simulator.

5 Q. Okay. So for items where there may not be a checklist,  
6 such as the run-up, what we've been told is that it's a flow.  
7 So if there's no checklist for it, how do the pilots learn what  
8 the run-up flow is?

9 A. Well, there's a -- there's definitely a flow, but that's  
10 always backed up with a checklist.

11 Q. Okay. So are you aware of a checklist for the run-up?

12 A. Not specifically.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But I can't say there isn't one.

15 Q. Okay. If there's a revision to a checklist, are you  
16 involved in that design or redesign or change?

17 A. No. Yeah, let's just -- I see some of the revisions to it,  
18 but I'm not in -- I'm not involved intimately with the revision  
19 to it.

20 Q. So we've talked a lot about Medallion earlier on here. And  
21 do they come in? Have you seen them actually come in and sit  
22 through a whole ground school?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. So how does that audit normally go, as far -- like  
25 what's involved with it from your involvement with it, when

1 Medallion comes in like to look at the CFIT training and stuff  
2 like that?

3 A. Okay. When they arrive for the audit, I have already  
4 filled out the audit points and made -- and provided my  
5 responses. Then they come in and do the hands-on look at the  
6 manual, my audit points. They ask questions. And then  
7 thereafter, they provided their recommendations, if any, and I  
8 follow through with implementing those.

9 Q. So they don't ever sit through class or ground school or  
10 anything?

11 A. No.

12 Q. It's mainly just a manual reading? Okay.

13 So it's my understanding now that the company prefers IFR  
14 operations following this accident. Has that changed your  
15 training program at all?

16 A. Not really. I'm trying to think. You know, the sim  
17 lessons were always focused on IFR, IFR proficiency procedures,  
18 CFIT training. So, no.

19 Q. Can you tell me some of the elements that are covered in  
20 risk management, aeronautical decision-making, and the ground  
21 school?

22 A. Well, there's one lesson dedicated to CRM in the operations  
23 training manual.

24 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah, it's covered in the CBT. And then it would again be  
2 addressed in the simulator training and flight training.

3 Q. How often does the FAA observe training?

4 A. The question might be better asked, how often do they not  
5 observe training?

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. On a serious note, yeah.

8 Q. Is it just about every ground school?

9 A. Almost every one.

10 Q. Is it the same person every time?

11 A. No. No, it could be anywhere from one individual to  
12 recently -- forgive me; I don't know his exact title, but the  
13 director of -- the CMO, Mr. Deke Abbott, has been involved and  
14 has been making presentations.

15 Q. And as far as making presentations, is that just going up  
16 and doing a presentation? Does he sit in the back and watch the  
17 whole class?

18 A. You know, for him, by and large it's going to be making  
19 presentations. You know, he observes a little bit, but for the  
20 observation, it's more often our POI or assistant POI.

21 Well, I don't know if I should -- I will (indiscernible).  
22 I have always -- always an absolute, but to my recollection,  
23 I've always offered for the FAA to come in and speak. I believe  
24 it's a really good opportunity for our especially new-hire  
25 pilots to have that interaction with the FAA, since a lot of

1 them have never had interaction before. So in a nice, you know,  
2 kind of easy atmosphere, no intimidation, no -- you know, just a  
3 nice place for a meet and greet and to observe they're just  
4 humans with a job to do.

5 Q. Okay. I have one last one here. Back in May of 2016, so  
6 May of last year, the FAA, the Alaska division manager sent a  
7 letter out to pilots and operators expressing concerns about a  
8 recent spike in CFIT accidents, and that was -- were you aware  
9 of any changes that were made as a result of that letter or  
10 about that time? Changes to your training program regarding  
11 CFIT?

12 A. No. My recollection is that that letter pertained mostly  
13 to and the emphasis was on VFR routes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Kind of similar to our night VFR routes and structures,  
16 just for day VFR.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I know that's an ongoing process though.

19 Q. Okay.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: That's all I have. Kath?

21 DR. WILSON: Great. Eric? Or I'm sorry, is Noreen in the  
22 room?

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, she is.

24 DR. WILSON: Or no?

25 MS. NOREEN: I -- yeah, I just have one --



1 DR. WILSON: Oh, okay.

2 MS. NOREEN: -- quick question.

3 BY MS. PRICE:

4 Q. The routes you fly in the simulator, are they Hageland  
5 routes or are they generic Alaskan?

6 A. They are specific to our operation.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. So all your practice in the simulator are Hageland Alaska  
10 routes?

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. Okay. That's my only question.

13 A. Yeah. And that's the emphasis on the CFIT and simulator  
14 training, to make it more real-world scenarios.

15 MS. PRICE: Thanks. That's it. That's all I have.

16 DR. WILSON: Great. Eric?

17 BY MR. WEST:

18 Q. Hi, Greg. Eric West here. I'm a safety investigator up in  
19 -- or around the corner from you, in Washington, D.C. And I'd  
20 like to ask you a few questions. And I think that -- forgive  
21 me, because I think that maybe even Shaun touched upon this, but  
22 are your training responsibilities strictly dedicated to just  
23 pilot training?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Are those tasks specifically dedicated to ground training?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. That would include initial and recurrent, if I was -- if  
3 I'm correct in some of the questions that were asked earlier.  
4 Am I correct?

5 A. Yes, that is correct.

6 Q. Okay. The risk assessment program was touched upon  
7 briefly. But is this part of the ground school training for the  
8 initial hires? Do you discuss the risk assessment at all?

9 A. Yes, we do.

10 Q. Do you actually physically take the new-hires to the OCC to  
11 show them, in Palmer, to actually bring them there?

12 A. When the opportunity exists.

13 Q. Okay. So it's not built in to your actual program? This  
14 is just an opportunistic thing that might happen occasionally?

15 A. Yes, that would be correct.

16 Q. Okay. Are you, by any chance, a Part 119 required  
17 management person?

18 A. No, I am not.

19 Q. Okay. Is all or most of your flying experience in Alaska?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. Where would you say most of it is, or has been  
22 accomplished?

23 A. Well, I would say -- let's see. The majority is Montana,  
24 Idaho and Washington state.

1 Q. Okay. So lower 48, but would you say that you flew in  
2 areas that had consistently bad weather or that were similar in  
3 nature to Alaska weather?

4 A. Yes. Flying in (indiscernible) for the Forest Service was  
5 definitely -- had some weather challenges.

6 Q. Okay. What I'm trying to get at is that during your ground  
7 school training, and I'm talking both initial and recurrent, is  
8 there -- do you teach any type of weather during the training?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Is that weather exclusive to Alaska or is it a general type  
11 of weather training?

12 A. It's more general in nature.

13 Q. Would this be, this weather training, would it be how do  
14 you get the weather specifically, or is it something that you  
15 would teach about looking out the window to identify certain  
16 weather patterns?

17 A. A good majority of it is meterology. We do meet the  
18 requirements of FAR 135 for enough weather to -- you know, that  
19 phrase. There has been discussions in classroom about the  
20 various weather phenomenon and such.

21 Q. Do you find that most of the new hires in the last 2½ years  
22 that you've been the training manager, come from Alaska?

23 A. Oh, I'm sorry. Say that first part again?

1 Q. Do you find that most of the new hires, pilot new hires, in  
2 the last 2½ years you've been training manager, come from  
3 Alaska?

4 A. It's pretty random. We get pilots from Alaska as well as  
5 all over the lower 48s and Canada.

6 Q. Is there any -- can you throw me a percentage, by any  
7 chance? Would you happen to come up with one in your mind as to  
8 how many -- you know, you can even pick a random class, if you  
9 can think of one, and just give me a percentage of people that  
10 actually have flown in Alaska for any length of time versus  
11 people who haven't?

12 A. All right. Bear with me, but I'm going to take another  
13 break.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely. We're going to hit pause here  
15 for just a second.

16 (Off the record.)

17 (On the record.)

18 MR. WILLIAMS: All right. We're back --

19 DR. WILSON: Okay.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: -- we're back recording.

21 DR. WILSON: All right. Eric, are you still -- do you  
22 still have questions?

23 MR. WEST: I have just a couple more. That's all.

24 DR. WILSON: Okay.

25 BY MR. WEST:

1 Q. Okay. Greg, you still there?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Thank you for bearing with us. All right. So I guess you  
4 got my drift about the weather. I'm just sort of interested in  
5 -- you know, Alaska, to me, is a unique environment and the FAA  
6 has gone to great amounts of trouble to set up all these  
7 cameras, and I know the OCC uses a great deal of -- or has  
8 access to all the cameras all throughout Alaska, so I was hoping  
9 that something like that might've gotten -- or might get taught  
10 in the ground school, but --

11 Let me finish up. I just have a couple more questions  
12 here. Greg, who approves the Hageland pilot training manual?

13 A. The FAA district office. Specifically, our POI.

14 Q. I'm sorry, I -- okay. All right. So the FAA approves the  
15 pilot training manual. So before, there was a lot of confusion  
16 regarding the word approval and the word Medallion used in the  
17 same sentence. So I wanted to make sure that we were very clear  
18 about who actually approves the training manual.

19 So where does the Medallion Foundation fit into the  
20 Hageland pilot training manual? In other words, you have this  
21 program that you fit into the training manual in order to get a  
22 star, and then audits are done on your company and so forth.  
23 And the word approval was thrown around quite a bit about that.  
24 But I just wanted to make it clear that the FAA is the approval  
25 source for the pilot training manual. So where -- how is it

1 that you fit things with the Medallion Foundation into your  
2 pilot training manual?

3 A. All right. Well, the Medallion CFIT program, the manual  
4 itself is a standalone manual, but that --

5 Q. Okay. CFIT is a standalone manual. Thank you.

6 A. For Medallion.

7 Q. Right. Okay.

8 A. But CFIT scenarios in training have been incorporated  
9 throughout the OTM, whether it's a specific lesson, like CFIT,  
10 which it is, or incorporated into the simulator training or  
11 flight training or ground training. So it's integral; CFIT  
12 training is integral within the OTM.

13 As far as Medallion, the Medallion CFIT avoidance manual  
14 standalone just for Medallion purposes. But we use both --

15 Q. Is there anything else, anything else in Medallion that is  
16 integral to the pilot training program, other than CFIT?

17 A. Not at -- not that I am responsible for.

18 Q. Okay. So CRM wouldn't be -- that would be something that  
19 would be flight instructor type stuff, wouldn't it?

20 A. Yeah. That's listed in the ground instruction and flight  
21 instruction segments.

22 Q. Okay. Okay. Then I think that I've hit my quota there. I  
23 said a couple and I'm going to stick with it. So thank you,  
24 Greg. I appreciate it.

25 A. All right. Well, thank you for bearing with me.

1 DR. WILSON: All right. Adam, do you have any questions?

2 MR. RICCIARDI: I just have one.

3 DR. WILSON: Okay.

4 BY MR. RICCIARDI:

5 Q. And it's with regards to -- I know that both Eric and Kat  
6 have touched on it. It's in regards to the flight risk  
7 assessments, Greg. You mentioned -- and I apologize if I  
8 misheard that, but the flight risk assessments, those -- that's  
9 included in both initial and recurrent training?

10 A. Yes, it is.

11 Q. It is? Do you include or invite OCC personnel to sit in on  
12 that?

13 A. In the past, I've invited Greg Tanner to present during the  
14 recurrent ground schools.

15 MR. RICCIARDI: Okay. That's all I have.

16 DR. WILSON: Okay. Great. I don't have any follow-ups.  
17 Marvin, do you have any follow-up?

18 MR. FRANTZ: I do not. Thank you, Greg.

19 DR. WILSON: Okay. Shaun?

20 MR. WILLIAMS: No.

21 DR. WILSON: Eric?

22 MR. WEST: Negative. Thank you.

23 DR. WILSON: All right. Adam, last chance?

24 MR. RICCIARDI: Nope. Nothing, Kat. Thank you.

1 DR. WILSON: Okay. Great. Greg, thank you so much for  
2 coming down to our NTSB offices and sharing what you know about  
3 the training program at Hageland. This is really helpful as a  
4 part of our investigation.

5 Is there anything else that we haven't asked you that you  
6 were hoping we would ask you or other information that you'd  
7 like to share with us that you think might be relevant to the  
8 investigation?

9 MR. CRANE: Hold on one moment.

10 No, I'm fine. Thank you.

11 DR. WILSON: Okay. Well, you've got Shaun's contact  
12 information. I'm sure -- or Marc can always get a hold of one  
13 of us. But thank you again and, on behalf of the NTSB, let me  
14 extend my condolences on the loss of two of your pilots.

15 Again, we appreciate you taking the time to talk to us, and  
16 if you have anything -- if you think of anything later that you  
17 think might be relevant, please don't hesitate to reach out to  
18 us.

19 MR. CRANE: All right. Well, thank you. And thanks for  
20 bearing with me.

21 DR. WILSON: Not a problem. Thanks again.

22 (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:     FLIGHT 3153, AIR TAXI AND COMMUTER  
                          ACCIDENT, OCTOBER 2, 2016  
                          TOGIAK, ALASKA  
                          Interview of Gregory Phillip Crane

DOCKET NUMBER:        ANC17FA001

PLACE:                 Anchorage, Alaska

DATE:

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared  
to the recording accomplished at the interview.

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Karen Stockhausen  
Official Reporter