

ERA12MA122

Human Performance Factual Report

Attachment 4

Interview with SK Jets Former Director of Maintenance (1998-2011)

(9 pages)

## Interview Summary

Interview: Wayne Bradbury, Former Director of Maintenance, SK Logistics  
Date: August 8, 2012  
Location: Telephone Interview  
Time: 1400 EDT  
Present: William Bramble (NTSB), Robert Gretz (NTSB)

During the interview, Mr. Bradbury stated the following information.

He was the owner of and accountable executive for Dixie Jet and Rotor Service, LLC in Lakeland, Florida. He held an A&P certificate, FAA inspection authorization (IA), and was a private pilot with single and multi-engine airplane instrument ratings. His total flight time was about 700 hours. He was not a commercial pilot and he was not actively flying.

He began his aviation career performing heavy helicopter maintenance in the U.S. Army from 1976 to 1979. He subsequently worked in general aviation maintenance from 1979 to 1980, and was then director of maintenance (DOM) for a corporate flight department, BL Aviation Group, from 1980 to 2003. BL aviation operated helicopters and jets (including Learjets and Hawkers). In 1992, Mr. Bradbury started Dixie Jet & Rotor Service as a side company while he continued to run the flight department for BL. He was involved with hiring pilots and arranging for maintenance. He also coordinated maintenance for a hydroplane boat team. After 2003, Mr. Bradbury began focusing primarily on the Dixie Jet and Rotor Service business. They became an Agusta Service center with factory-trained mechanics and they worked on a variety of fixed-wing jet aircraft as well.

Mr. Bradbury became acquainted with Mr. Smith and SK Logistics around 1998. He was SK Logistics contract DOM for SK Logistics from 1998 until late August or early September 2011. During that time Mr. Bradbury's company, Dixie Jet and Rotor Service, performed most of the maintenance on the SK Logistics helicopters and some of the jet aircraft. The fact that his company was performing the maintenance made it easy for him to be the DOM. He frequently flew back and forth between Lakeland and St. Augustine so he could provide oversight of SK Logistics maintenance and meet with the FAA. He had also served on the SK Logistics team that assisted the NTSB with two investigations of SK Logistics accidents, one involving a Twinstar helicopter that crashed in the Atlantic and another involving a Learjet that experienced a dual-engine flameout and hard landing during approach to St. Augustine.

When Mr. Bradbury became SK Logistics DOM, the company only owned two aircraft, an Agusta 109 and a Bell 206. Mr. Smith and another pilot were the company's only pilots. SK Logistics supported the Mayo transplant business and provided occasional charters in the Jet Ranger. In the fall of 1999, Mr. Smith wanted to expand into jet transportation, so Mr. Bradbury helped SK Logistics acquire a Learjet 25. Mr. Smith then hired an experienced Learjet pilot named David Nichols. Mr. Smith and Mr. Nichols flew the jet charters together, and Mr. Smith flew the helicopter charters by himself. Next, a client named Dr. Holton bought a Lear 55 and arranged to have it managed by SK Logistics. After that, SK Logistics bought a Lear 31 to provide transportation for another customer. Next, SK Logistics purchased Dr. Holton's Lear 55 and Dr. Holton bought a Lear 60 (N909SK) and arranged to have SK Logistics manage it. In 2005, SK Logistics bought a second Lear 60 that it owned. As the fleet grew, so did the number of employees and size of the company's facilities. Originally, Mr. Smith had a trailer parked next to an FBO, but then SK Logistics bought its own hangar and later bought a bigger hangar and a couple more Lear 31s. (The Lear 31s were purchased in the following order: 531SK Lear 31A, N93SK Lear 31, N38SK Lear 31A.)

The company was doing a lot of flying for Sentient, a charter broker that provided most of the trips for the three Lear 31s, the two Lear 60s, the Lear 55, and a leased Beechjet. When the economy slowed down in 2008, those flights disappeared overnight. Mr. Smith discontinued the contract on the Beechjet to cut costs. Then in 2010, Dr. Holton's Lear 60 needed a costly 6000-hour landing inspection, but no maintenance reserves had been accumulated for that inspection. Dr. Holton decided he no longer needed to use the airplane, so in March 2010 SK Logistics mothballed it for him. Dr. Holton was unaware that the airplane needed over \$200,000 in repairs at that time. The Lear 25 was already gone because it had crashed. Mr. Smith tried to continue finding flights for the three Lear 31s, but it was a difficult. There were a lot of planes sitting around with nothing to do. That was when SK Logistics started to get behind on its maintenance service contracts.

The company maintained Honeywell Maintenance Service Plans (MSPs) for its Lear 31s and its Lear 55. The company had a different plan for its Lear 60, through JSSI. Under such contracts, the company normally set aside 200 to 250 dollars per flight hour per engine and paid its maintenance service providers at the end of the month. In January 2009, however, a Honeywell representative began contacting the company to inquire about missed payments. Honeywell tried to work out a payment plan for SK Logistics, but SK Logistics missed its payments and eventually Mr. Smith had to come up with a lump sum of \$350,000 in order to keep the company's maintenance service contracts. After that, things changed at the company. When airplanes had maintenance issue, there was no money to fix things. Maintenance work started to back up and Mr. Smith's relationship with Mr. Bradbury became combative.

SK Logistics hired a couple of its own mechanics to do inspections. However, the company ran into trouble in January 2010 when N808SK, the Lear 60 the company owned, had a gear inspection and the gear needed about \$110,000 worth of work that the company could not afford. The landing gear were sent to an outside company for repair, the airplane was parked on jacks in an SK Logistics hangar, and the company that had the gear was frequently emailing Mr. Bradbury to ask when they would be paid. The airplane sat in the hangar on jacks for about a year. Between September and December 2011, the bank forced SK Logistics to sell that airplane to a buyer who got it fixed and flew it to Stuart, Florida in December 2011. Asked to identify the Lear 60 that had been leaking fuel on the hangar floor when investigators visited SK Logistics in January 2011, Mr. Bradbury said that was Dr. Holton's airplane N909SK, the one that had been mothballed. Asked why it was leaking fuel, Mr. Bradbury said it was because someone had tried to change a dome nut in a wing panel and had drilled a hole where they shouldn't have. There was no logbook entry for that work, so he suspected someone unqualified had attempted to perform the work.

Things became critical in 2011. There were a lot of signs of financial problems. The two Lear 60s were parked and nothing was really happening with them. The company parked one of the Lear 31s (N38SK) and began cannibalizing it to keep the other two flying. That made Mr. Bradbury nervous. The bank came in and looked at the parked Lear 31 with the missing pieces, went through its log books, forced the company to fix the airplane, and then repossessed it, along with N93SK. SK Logistics had co-owned N38SK with a business partner, but that partner began having financial troubles even before SK Logistics did. In September 2011, Mr. Bradbury was looking at all of these things and seeing a growing list of costly maintenance jobs coming due in the near future that he did not believe the company could afford, so he resigned.

Asked what he knew about the Agusta 109 that was down for maintenance at the time of the accident, Mr. Bradbury said it was pretty simple, Mr. Smith had hit the tops of trees in N109SK when he was landing in the fog. It was an Agusta 109A, serial number 7130. To repair that helicopter, Mr. Smith bought N35SK, an Agusta 109 Mark II, and had Mr. Bradbury's company combine the two aircraft and build up N35SK. Mr. Smith did not pay for the last of that work, which was not abnormal because Dixie Rotor and Service allowed Mr. Smith terms and he had always paid eventually in the past. After that, however, Dixie Rotor did some work on N35SK and had trouble getting SK Logistics to pay for it. When that aircraft came up on some additional maintenance, an AD to install a containment mod on the engines, Mr. Bradbury explained to Mr. Smith that Dixie Rotor would not do the work until they had been paid advance and paid in full for all past work. Mr. Smith brought the helicopter down to Dixie Rotor in September 2011 and Mr. Bradbury's company started doing the work and sent the turbines up for inspection, and the company that was doing the inspection placed the work on hold while waiting for Mr. Smith to come up with the money to pay for it. Mr. Smith was trying to refinance, but he was having difficulty doing so. In addition, when the helicopter had landed at the Dixie Rotor facility, the nose gear actuator bolts had come loose and the gear partially retracted when they pulled the helicopter into the hangar. That did not hold up the other maintenance, however, because the nose gear issue was covered by Mr. Smith's insurance. The work was on hold because of the engine work.

Mr. Smith was using N95SK, a Bell 206, on a contract. During the fall, he would have that aircraft on contract with Eglin Air Force Base doing fire control. He knew that in the fall he would not have the Agusta back because he did not have the money for the engines, and he knew N95SK was going to have to go back to Eglin, so Mr. Smith contacted one of Mr. Bradbury's customers and got him to lease SK Logistics the accident helicopter because he would not have any helicopter for Mayo and they were very demanding. Mr. Smith told Mr. Bradbury that he had some financing arranged and he would have the Agusta refinanced by January 2012. After the accident, Mr. Bradbury heard from the lender that it was the lienholder for N95SK and N531SK, Putnam County National Bank, and they were going to increase his line of credit on those airplanes to allow him to fix the Agusta. Once he got the money, it would take Dixie Rotor about three weeks to fix it. So he had a plan. He would have had the Agusta up by end of January. Mr. Smith and Mr. Bradbury talked daily and Mr. Smith told Mr. Bradbury that he was going to ask Mayo to give him a guaranteed minimum number of flights because the Agusta had a lot of time-limited mx items.

Mr. Bradbury stated that the "last piece of the puzzle" leading to the accident was easy to identify. Mr. Smith had started depending more and more on his chief helicopter pilot, Aaron Dyess, to take the Mayo Clinic flights. Then, on the Friday before Christmas, Mr. Dyess gave Mr. Smith two weeks' notice. He did it then so that he could help Mr. Smith cover the period between Christmas and New Year's Day, which was a very busy time of year for the Mayo Clinic flights. At that time, Mr. Smith told Mr. Dyess not to worry about his two weeks' notice, because his services were no longer required. That put Mr. Smith on the hook as the company's lone helicopter pilot for any Mayo Clinic calls. Mr. Smith called Mr. Bradbury about 8PM on Christmas Day and relayed the story. He sounded a little agitated about Mr. Dyess's resignation, as if it had hurt his pride or something, but he said he did not need Mr. Dyess to handle the flights. Mr. Bradbury said that, in retrospect, he believed that the sequence of events leading

to the accident began on Friday, when Mr. Smith became the company's sole helicopter pilot for the Christmas holidays. Asked why he thought Mr. Smith did not keep Mr. Dyess on over the holidays, Mr. Bradbury said he might have let him go right away to because it could be disruptive for the other employees to have an employee hanging around who had quit. Mr. Smith did not normally do that with the jet pilots because they were often on the road, but it might have been different for a helicopter pilot. Mr. Dyess might have more information about the conversation he had with Mr. Smith. Mr. Bradbury was not aware of the details beyond the few things Mr. Smith had told him.

Asked to describe the 2007 accident involving the Agusta in more detail, Mr. Bradbury said he did not witness it, but witnesses told him Mr. Smith took off to fly a team to Mayo Clinic, turned around and came back, attempted a visual approach to the SK Logistics hangar in fog, and dragged the tail rotor through a row of 10-foot trees that separated the SK ramp area from an adjacent property. A tip weight on the tail rotor came loose and went through the fuselage, and the helicopter shot up in the air and then came back down hard. Mr. Smith was able to walk away from it. Mr. Bradbury said it was his understanding that the company was required to change its weather minimums in the wake of that accident. Company procedures were also changed so that someone could not dispatch themselves. Asked whether he thought the accident could have been classified as a taxi accident, Mr. Bradbury said he had spoken with a pilot who saw Mr. Smith land and he had seen the bushes cut in half quite a ways from the edge of the concrete. Mr. Bradbury did not believe that could have occurred from taxiing in because the damage was "over in the grass." Asked whether it was typical for Mr. Smith to shoot an approach directly to hangar, Mr. Bradbury said yes, every minute was precious for Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith should have shot an approach down the runway, but he did not. Mr. Smith called him some time the day of the accident and said that they had had an issue with the Agusta. After Mr. Smith described what had happened, Mr. Bradbury flew to SGJ the next day, inspected the aircraft and told Mr. Smith he had to report it as an accident. Mr. Smith disagreed, so Mr. Bradbury called an NTSB investigator himself that day and told him there had been an unreported accident. He then put the investigator on the phone with Mr. Smith. Mr. Bradbury said this did not endear him to Mr. Smith, but Mr. Smith could not bring too much pressure to bear on Mr. Bradbury because Mr. Bradbury had no FAA violations and the FAA liked him. Asked whether he was aware of conflicts between Mr. Smith and SK Logistics pilots around that time, Mr. Bradbury said he had his "hands full keeping [Mr. Smith] on the straight and narrow." He stated that there were always rumblings from pilots about duty time and other issues, but he had let the director of operations handle those issues.

Mr. Bradbury was asked if he had any concern about Mr. Smith's safety-related decision making. He stated that, "When the money was good, [Mr. Smith] was good." Before the company began experiencing financial problems, Mr. Smith had left day to day decisions to the three managers in the company, the chief pilot, director of operations and DOM. Their decisions were final and not second-guessed. After economy turned south, however, they were second-guessed. The classification of the 2007 accident involving the Agusta was one such example. 2011 was a bad year. Things were going poorly for the company. They were losing people, they had airplanes parked and there was no money to fix them, they were not paying Dixie Rotor for work performed, and the relationship between Mr. Bradbury and Mr. Smith was combative. Airplanes were being cannibalized to keep others flying and Mr.

Smith was using his own maintenance department more and more, but Mr. Bradbury was still required to oversee the maintenance operation. Mr. Bradbury had Evan Tucker, an SK Logistics employee who worked at the SK Logistics facility, overseeing work for him, but Mr. Tucker resigned because the company credit cards were maxed out and he was having trouble paying for maintenance. As a result, Mr. Bradbury restricted the ability of SK Logistics maintenance personnel to return aircraft to service. Mr. Bradbury and Mr. Smith began to argue about this, and that ultimately caused Mr. Bradbury to send his letter of resignation to the FAA.

After Mr. Bradbury resigned, Mr. Smith brought in a new DOM, Andrew MacQueen, who did not have previous experience maintaining helicopters and jets in a Part 135 operation. The new DOM had no idea what he had gotten himself into. The new DOM would not ground airplanes like Mr. Bradbury would. Mr. Bradbury's communication with Mr. Smith was somewhat strained after that. Mr. Bradbury still spoke to Mr. Smith regularly because they were close friends, however, and warned him that he was running out of money and should walk away from company, but Mr. Smith was convinced that he could save it. He did not seem to recognize that there was a lot of maintenance coming due in 2012 that the company could not afford. In early 2012, for example, the 3, 6, and 12 month, and 300-, 600-, 1,200-, and 2,400-hour inspections were coming due for the Lear 31, N531SK. Mr. Bradbury tried his best to get Mr. Smith to walk away from the company at that point, but Mr. Smith would not do it.

Mr. Bradbury and Mr. Smith remained friends and decided to avoid talking about SK Logistics and just focus on personal topics because Mr. Bradbury did not agree with many of Mr. Smith's business decisions by that point. Mr. Smith was generally upbeat when the two men spoke the day before the accident, and he told Mr. Bradbury he had spent a very enjoyable day with his family. They talked about that quite a bit. Mr. Smith mentioned that he had a flight coming up, which was how they ended up talking about Mr. Dyess's resignation. However, they did not dwell on that topic.

Asked whether Mr. Smith had ever mentioned anything about having difficulty sleeping or taking sleep medications, Mr. Bradbury said no. Mr. Smith was used to being up late at night from running the show all those years, and he seemed able to operate with less sleep than other people. He would nap quite a bit, but he never indicated that he took any sleeping pills. He might have needed to sleep less than 6 hours per night. Mr. Bradbury would sometimes stay at the Smith's house and they would often stay up until 2300 or 2400 talking, and Mr. Smith would always head for work the next morning at 0600 or 0700. Mr. Smith was a very hard working individual. Sleep was optional for him.

Asked to describe Mr. Smith's managerial style with the company's pilots, Mr. Bradbury said he liked Mr. Smith personally, but Mr. Smith's business style was "corrosive." The pilots were on call all the time. They wanted to get paid for being on call, and Mr. Smith did not want to pay them for that, so they were always arguing. Some of them did not like to do that. In late 2010, Mr. Smith and Mr. Fernandes made a decision to lay off Mr. Nichol, the Lear 60 captain who had started the business with him, because he made more money than everyone else. Mr. Bradbury disagreed strongly with that decision because Mr. Nichols was a good pilot and a company man and had offered to take a pay cut and be retrained on one of the smaller Lears, but Mr. Smith overruled Mr. Bradbury and let Mr. Nichols go. Things at SK Logistics

went from being happy-go-lucky to no fun. Everything was great until the money ran out. The worst of the financial problems occurred in 2011.

In January 2012, after the accident, Mr. Smith's wife asked Mr. Bradbury to come look at the company's airplanes and consider resuming his role as DOM because the new DOM had disappeared around the time of the accident and she had fired him. Mr. Bradbury came to St. Augustine with his chief inspector, examined the aircraft, found numerous maintenance issues, and grounded the whole fleet. They examined N139SK (Lear 55), N531SK (Lear 31), N95SK (Bell 206), and N909SK (the Lear 60 that was mothballed in the hangar). N531SK had missing rivets on its delta fin. N95SK had a failed transmission isolation mount. N139SK had numerous issues, including a windshield that looked burned because the windshield heat was not working properly and brakes that were leaking hydraulic fluid. All of these discrepancies had appeared on the new DOM's watch. Asked whether he thought the new DOM did not ground the airplanes over these discrepancies because of pressure from Mr. Smith, Mr. Bradbury said Mr. Smith could bring a lot of pressure if you let him. The new DOM was not prepared for that, and Mr. Bradbury did not think he was adequately qualified. At one time Mr. Smith had been the director of operations and chief pilot and the FAA had made him give up those hats to Leigh McIntosh and Gary Fernandes because the FAA understood that sometimes the financial side of the business could erode over into the airworthiness side.

Mr. Bradbury was asked to comment on the adequacy of FAA oversight of SK Logistics before the accident. He said he could only comment on the period leading up to September 2011. Until that point, the Orlando FSDO had kept a close watch on Mr. Smith. Mr. Bradbury attributed that to the Payne Stuart crash which had happened on the Orlando FSDO's watch. From the time SK Logistics started out, Mr. Smith was a one-man show plus David Nichols, but as the company grew, so did the oversight. SK Logistics had very good documentation for safety, operations, and maintenance, but that stuff was as only as good as the person who was reading it and performing the steps that were specified in the book. In 2011, those steps started to become blurred. The company manual was more restrictive than Part 135, but the company started pulling back from some of those self-imposed requirements. Mr. Bradbury had warned Mr. Smith that that would become an issue when ARGUS came back to do another inspection. Mr. Bradbury did not think that the Orlando FSDO had ever turned a blind eye toward SK Logistics. When Mr. Bradbury was DOM, the FAA maintenance inspector, Gary Veedak, would drop in every couple weeks to examine maintenance records and sometimes Mr. Bradbury would be required to fly up to St. Augustine immediately to accommodate a visit. Mr. Meadows had also been aggressive, but it was Mr. Bradbury's understanding that SK Logistics had had a change of inspectors after September 2011.

Mr. Bradbury was asked if he was aware of any informal policy in the 2006/2007 time period directing pilots to avoid writing maintenance issues in aircraft maintenance logs so that the company could first decide how to deal with a maintenance problem. He said that on the ten-year anniversary of the company's founding they had a safety stand down where they addressed this issue. He had had a continuing problem getting pilots to write discrepancies so that dispatch would call him. Mr. Smith always told Mr. Bradbury it was the pilots who were not writing down the discrepancies, but Mr. Bradbury suspected there was pressure being brought to bear on them because the company knew

what would happen if dispatch called Mr. Bradbury over a maintenance issue. He would ground the airplane. Mr. Bradbury and the FAA maintenance inspector, Mr. Veedak, knew that a company could not fly a Lear 31 50 hours in a month and not have a maintenance discrepancy. That was a continual problem. Mr. Bradbury and Mr. Veedak's attempt to fix that was to counsel the company pilots if nothing was reported for a while. When Mr. Tucker left, Mr. Bradbury felt that he had no eyes on the ground at the SK Logistics facility, so in 2011 he had to fly up to St. Augustine all the time to look at the airplanes. The FAA could only inspect what they see. Mr. Bradbury encouraged maintenance write-ups.

Asked what he knew about the Lear 25 accident involving the dual-engine flameout, Mr. Bradbury said the copilot was flying in the pilot's seat, he came in high and hot, and Mr. Bradbury's thought was that he had chopped the throttles and the detent springs were a little weak and he accidentally moved the throttles to idle cutoff. When he and the NTSB tried to reproduce this, however, they had to pull the triggers under the idle cutoffs to get the throttles to move to the idle cutoff position. Then they disassembled the quadrant and shipped it off to another facility. Mr. Bradbury stated that he knew the airplane had plenty of fuel on board. He had prevented anyone from moving the airplane, but it was blocking the airport, so after he received permission from the NTSB, SK Logistics moved the airplane to its hangar. Mr. Bradbury was there within a couple of hours and, after running the engines, he defueled the airplane personally, preserving the fuel in new, clean 50-gallon drums so that it could be tested. The wings were not leaking any fuel. The fuel filters were clean, and they found nothing wrong with the rigging or any other items they inspected.

Asked whether he knew Jim Holmes or Darrin Felton, Mr. Bradbury said he knew Holmes but not Felton. Holmes was a company pilot for a short period. He was a very competent helicopter pilot with an A&P license. He was very knowledgeable. He had a conflict with management however because Mr. Smith had hired a pilot who had had a male to female sex change operation. She was not a very good pilot, and she and Mr. Holmes did not get along. While she was out doing some training with Mr. Holmes, they broke a window on 95SK. Mr. Bradbury fired her because she was not a competent pilot. He heard that she had accused the company of sex discrimination. Then the company claimed that Mr. Holmes had given a ride to a buddy in one of the helicopters while they were out on a training flight, but Mr. Holmes had a different story. He and the transsexual pilot just did not get along.

Asked whether he knew Brian Bowie, Mr. Bradbury said yes, Mr. Bowie was around during the good times. Things really started going downhill at the company in 2010 and went off cliff in 2011. Brian was the director of operations and chief pilot. He had some trouble keeping the manuals organized, but he could write MELs pretty well. Mr. Smith tried to keep Mr. Bowie at the company but he took a job with one of Mr. Bradbury's customers.

Mr. Bradbury was asked if he thought SK Logistics was providing ARGUS with accurate information. He said no. The paperwork for ARGUS was very complicated and it took vast manpower to create and maintain. SK Logistics had hired a safety officer, Jim Vines, to manage that effort. He was a company helicopter pilot who had taken an airline job but continued to work as safety officer for SK Logistics in a part time capacity. He was very good at the job and helped the company earn its ARGUS platinum rating, but Mr. Smith subsequently terminated him to save money. That change negatively affected the

safety culture of the company. When Mr. Vines left, the safety program became nonexistent. Mr. Bradbury did not think SK Logistics could have passed another ARGUS review. Asked whether Leigh McIntosh was subsequently hired as the company safety officer, Mr. Bradbury said yes. He said Ms. McIntosh wrote good manuals and tried to do the job, but she was flying all the time. She had a lot on her plate. He did not see her do much with the safety program.

Mr. Bradbury was asked how much money SK Logistics needed to come up with to get the Agusta 109 repair finished. He estimated about \$100,000 because one engine was going to cost \$12,000, the other \$17,000, and SK Logistics still owed Dixie Rotor \$70,000 from when they had rebuilt the helicopter after the 2007 accident, and there were some other discrepancies Mr. Bradbury had found on the helicopter that also needed to be fixed. Asked why he thought Mr. Smith did not pay for the Agusta repairs himself if the helicopter was so crucial to his business, Mr. Bradbury said it was because Mr. Smith just did not have any money left. Mr. Bradbury thought Mr. Smith began to cover some of the company expenses using his personal assets in 2007, when things started going downhill. Mr. Bradbury said that when attorneys representing the family of the medical technician who was killed in the accident went after the company it was bankrupt and when they went after Mr. Smith's estate, they found that he did not have any money for them either. He was tapped out.

When asked to describe the turning point when the company stopped growing and began to decline, he said that by 2007, the company had grown to 30 or 40 pilots and 10 jets and they were flying about 50 hours per month in each jet and then all of a sudden it stopped. Asked whether this might have coincided with the 2008 stock market crash, Mr. Bradbury said yes. Sentient could confirm the timing of the downturn. Asked to describe the first sign of financial trouble at the company, Mr. Bradbury said it was when the company began to miss MSP and JSSI payments. That was his first indication. Brent Rosenberry at the Honeywell MSP program could confirm when that began. He had exchanged numerous emails with Mr. Rosenberry after the company fell behind because Mr. Rosenberry was under the mistaken impression that Mr. Bradbury could do something about it. By January 2009, Mr. Bradbury was getting contentious emails from Mr. Rosenberry and by February 2009, things were gloomy at SK Logistics. In December 2008, the company that did all of SK Logistics heavy maintenance, Precision Jet in Stuart, Florida, stopped doing work on the company's airplanes because they were not getting paid. About a year later, they sued the company for unpaid bills and were later compensated through proceeds of the sale of N38SK, N93SK and N808SK when those airplanes were repossessed. N93SK was repossessed in November 2010, N38SK was repossessed some time in 2011, and N808SK was parked in December 2009 and repossessed in September 2011.

Mr. Bradbury said the event that started him thinking about resigning as the DOM occurred in April or May 2011 when SK Logistics brought the Bell 206 N95SK to Dixie Rotor for a main rotor head strap replacement. This was after Mr. Tucker had left SK Logistics. The helicopter's logbooks looked okay, but the helicopter did not. For example, Mr. Bradbury noticed a failed isolation plate that should have been detected during a 50-hour inspection. An SK Logistics mechanic was supposedly servicing aircraft at the work site at Eglin Air Force Base but there were numerous discrepancies with the helicopter that should have been documented and repaired. As a result, what was supposed to have been a strap changed

turned into a complicated repair. These things occurred after Mr. Bradbury had started turning up heat and reducing SK Logistics' return to service authority, which he had begun doing in March 2011.

Mr. Bradbury's primary suggestion for preventing the accident would have been for Mr. Smith to walk away from the company in September 2011 because the company was not going to be able to survive the bills resulting from upcoming maintenance that would be required in early 2012. Mr. Smith had wanted to pay Dixie Rotor what the company already owed, but he could not. They had tried to figure out various ways he could pay for it, but eventually he turned a blind eye. Between the Agusta work and another past bill, SK Logistics owed Dixie Rotor about \$100,000 for past, present, and requested work. SK Logistics would soon owe \$100,000 in JSSI and MSP maintenance payments for N531SK and \$100,000 for N139SK. In addition, a visual inspection of N531SK indicated to Mr. Bradbury that its windshield heat was not working and had burned the windshield, which would require a \$100,000 repair. Those were the only two company airplanes left because the Lear 60, N909SK was mothballed and N808SK had been repossessed. Mr. Bradbury added that he thought the oversight of the financial health of Part 135 operations could be strengthened, but it would be difficult for FAA inspectors to do that because they were not accountants and he was not aware of any existing regulations that would address such issues. Asked whether he thought maintenance service plan providers could notify the FAA if an operator was missing payments, Mr. Bradbury said missed payments would provide a hint that something was going on, but if a contract was canceled, that was a sign of something very serious, because rather than paying \$200 per hour per engine, the operator could be on the hook for lump sums costing hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Asked what he thought had happened during the accident, Mr. Bradbury said Mr. Smith was known to fly south down the river when weather was bad (because there were no power lines) and then fly due west to Gainesville. He had heard the helicopter deviated to the south during that west leg and the chin bubble was ripped off as the helicopter hit the trees. Mr. Bradbury did not know why Mr. Smith did not pull up on that collective when that occurred. He flew straight down to the ground chopping pine trees all the way down. No one could find the new DOM on the night of the accident when Mr. Smith's flight became overdue, so SK Logistics had called Mr. Bradbury for help. He later notified the new DOM, who had not been checking his voice mail messages.

The interview concluded at 1630.