UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:

AIR METHODS CORPORATION

LIFENET HELICOPTER ACCIDENT

* Docket No.: CEN11FA599 AUGUST 26, 2011

NEAR MOSBY, MISSOURI

Interview of: BRET KOSKI

Kansas City, Missouri

Thursday,

September 15, 2011

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

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Accident Investigator

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- 1 INTERVIEW
- MR. SILLIMAN: Hey, Bret. My name is Jim Silliman with
- 3 NTSB. And you understand that this is being recorded?
- 4 MR. KOSKI: Yes, I do.
- 5 MR. SILLIMAN: Okay.
- 6 INTERVIEW OF BRET KOSKI
- 7 BY MR. SILLIMAN:
- 8 Q. Would you state your name and your position at Air
- 9 Methods?
- 10 A. My name is Bret Randall Koski, and I'm the lead pilot
- 11 for St. Joseph base with Air Methods.
- 12 Q. And how long have you been working with Air Methods?
- 13 A. About a year and a half now.
- 14 Q. And what's your previous helicopter experience?
- 15 A. I was a flight instructor down in Phoenix, Arizona, then
- 16 I did helicopters tours in Las Vegas.
- 17 Q. And what was the name of the place in Phoenix?
- 18 A. Phoenix? Actually, down in Chandler. It was Quantum
- 19 Helicopters.
- 20 O. Okay.
- 21 A. And I worked for Papillon in Los Vegas.
- Q. And then you went to Air Methods?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Okay. And when you were at Quantum, what kind of
- 25 helicopters were you flying?

- 1 A. Robinson R22.
- Q. Okay. And how about at Phoenix?
- 3 A. Phoenix was -- or you mean, you mean Las Vegas?
- 4 Q. In Las Vegas. I'm sorry.
- 5 A. Las Vegas, yeah. Papillon, both AStar and EC130.
- 6 Q. AStar meaning the AS350?
- 7 A. AS350, yeah.
- 8 O. And air -- what was the second one?
- 9 A. EC130.
- 10 Q. EC130, okay.
- 11 A. Yeah.
- 12 Q. And as a flight instructor in Phoenix at Quantum, did
- 13 you practice autorotations?
- 14 A. Oh, yeah.
- 15 Q. And how did you execute the autorotations?
- 16 A. Just with a, like a power recovery at the end. I think
- 17 the only full downs we did were part of our CFI training.
- 18 Q. Did you roll the throttles to a flight idle position?
- 19 A. We were able to in the R22, yeah.
- 20 O. Okay.
- A. Yeah.
- 22 Q. When you were with Papillon, did you have experience --
- 23 have opportunity to practice autorotations in the Aerostar or the
- 24 EC130?
- 25 A. Yeah, both. Yeah, the AS350 and EC130.

- 1 Q. And the AS350, was that a B2 or a B3 model?
- 2 A. They were all B2s out there, for the most part. We
- 3 didn't have any B3s, but we had some different variations of the
- 4 B2.
- 5 Q. In any of those B2 models, did you -- did any of those
- 6 have a flight idle position?
- 7 A. They did not.
- 8 Q. How did you practice autorotations in the B2 while you
- 9 were at Papillon?
- 10 A. You just basically enter the autorotation while you're
- 11 at full throttle, and that's pretty much all there is to it.
- 12 Recover down at the end, you know, down the bottom.
- 13 Q. So explain how you do -- how would you enter the
- 14 autorotation?
- 15 A. Just lowering the collective all the way.
- 16 Q. Okay. So you didn't try to establish a flight idle
- 17 position where you'd take the flight idle or the throttle out of
- 18 the flight gate?
- 19 A. No. We did it, yeah, with the fuel flow control lever
- 20 in the flight gate.
- 21 Q. How did that compare to your experience with the
- 22 practice that you did doing autorotations in the R22?
- 23 A. I'm not going to say -- well, it's kind of hard to
- 24 compare the two because they're such different aircraft. I guess
- 25 I could say the R22 was probably more of a more realistic feel. I

- 1 could compare it better with the EC130 that I flew up in Papillon
- 2 just because you can roll the throttle into the idle detent with
- 3 the EC.
- 4 Q. Explain the comparison.
- 5 A. Well, just by disengaging the, you know, the engine,
- 6 taking the power away from it, you're obviously going to be in a
- 7 different flight characteristic, you know, a different, different
- 8 envelope, I would say. But --
- 9 Q. What would be the -- the sensations, pitch roll, yaw,
- 10 what would the differences between the B2, where you do not take
- 11 the throttle out of the flight gate, compared to the EC, where you
- 12 can -- EC130, where you can put it into a flight idle position?
- 13 A. As far as sensation and everything goes, I would say
- 14 they're fairly similar. It's not going to be that much different.
- 15 Even when you have the throttle in the flight gate on the AStar,
- 16 it's -- you're still in an autorotation. But I'd say the recovery
- 17 at the end is going to be the significantly different part, so --
- And whereas in the EC, you know, when you can roll the
- 19 throttle off your -- I would say, and a little bit more control of
- 20 your rotor RPM in a more realistic fashion than you are on the
- 21 AStar, when the -- you know, if you start pulling in power, then
- 22 the engine's coming back on automatically. So --
- Q. Yeah. In your training in the Robinson, did they talk
- 24 about low rotor inertia?
- 25 A. Yes.

- 1 Q. And how about in your training with the 350 B2?
- 2 A. Yeah, that as well.
- 3 Q. Could you explain what -- the significance of low rotor
- 4 RPM than low inertia rotors would have for you in an autorotation?
- 5 A. Well, if it gets too low, to a certain point, they say
- 6 there's no getting it back. I'm not sure what the exact number is
- 7 on the AStar, but I know you have a certain envelope. And it's a
- 8 pretty good amount of time, I mean, I guess, comparatively.
- 9 Q. Yeah.
- 10 A. You know, you don't have 5 minutes to figure out that
- 11 you need to go into the autorotation, but -- yeah, if it gets to a
- 12 certain point, you're just not flying anymore.
- 13 Q. How many seconds do you -- would you anticipate just
- 14 from your experience?
- 15 A. It depends on your, what type of flight attitude you're
- in, you know, if you're climbing or if you're descending or, you
- 17 know, whatnot, how much power you have pulled and pitch you have
- 18 pulled, but there's probably a couple seconds at least to --
- 19 Q. So you have to make a pretty quick decision if you --
- 20 A. Um-hum.
- 21 O. -- to lower the collective?
- 22 A. Yeah. Yeah, you don't have much -- you don't really
- 23 have time to think about it. It's a muscle, you know, a muscle
- 24 memory type of deal.
- 25 Q. How about your muscle memory as far as your pitch

- 1 attitude in a autorotation compared to a full -- where you bring
- 2 it down to flight idle --
- 3 A. Um-hum.
- 4 Q. -- to leaving the throttle at 100 percent; is there a
- 5 change in the pitch where you have to establish that right away or
- 6 not?
- A. I was going to say that's probably pretty similar.
- 8 Yeah, the feel and everything in the autorotations are fairly
- 9 similar.
- 10 Q. Okay. Do you feel more comfortable working at Papillon,
- 11 since you had both those aircraft --
- 12 A. Um-hum.
- 13 Q. -- that you would have a better experience or a better
- 14 recognition of a autorotation or be able to have a better chance
- 15 of recovering from an autorotation in the EC130 since you did --
- 16 A. Right.
- 17 Q. -- put it down to flight idle as opposed to leaving it
- 18 on 100 percent?
- 19 A. That's kind of hard to say. Of the three aircraft that
- 20 I've flown, I would say probably I've done equal amount of
- 21 autorotations in the AStar and the EC130, but I feel most
- 22 comfortable in the R22 just because I did probably thousands of
- 23 autos in it both as a student and flight instructor. So that, to
- 24 me, I think my muscle memory -- you know, just what I've tuned in
- 25 to do, would be the best. But --

- 1 Q. The transfer that you'd have from doing all of those
- 2 autorotations in the R22, do you think that would transfer into
- 3 recognition in either a B2 or other aircraft?
- 4 A. I would say, most definitely, yeah. It just, it gets
- 5 drilled into your head so much.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. So, yeah.
- 8 Q. You've been with the company, Air Methods, for how many
- 9 years?
- 10 A. About a year and a half. I started December of 2009.
- 11 Q. And you're the lead pilot at St. Joe?
- 12 A. Um-hum.
- 13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You have to answer out loud.
- 14 Don't nod your head.
- MR. KOSKI: Oh, okay.
- 16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's getting taped, so make sure
- 17 you give an oral answer and wait until he finishes his question.
- 18 MR. KOSKI: All right.
- 19 BY MR. SILLIMAN:
- Q. Yeah. So you've been the lead pilot for about a year
- 21 and a half?
- 22 A. Yeah. Well, actually, no. Lead pilot since, I'm going
- 23 to say, January.
- Q. And why did you become lead pilot?
- 25 A. The last lead pilot went up to another base. He

11

- 1 transferred out and I was kind of the next in line for the
- 2 position. I mean, not really in seniority, but I know some of the
- 3 other guys don't want the added responsibility and stuff, and
- 4 so --
- 5 Q. You were willing to take the added --
- 6 A. Oh, yeah.
- 7 Q. -- responsibility?
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. Okay. And when did the accident pilot, James
- 10 Freudenberg, come on -- get assigned to St. Joe base?
- 11 A. I don't have an exact date for you there or time frame.
- 12 I was out on medical leave from a motorcycle accident. But I know
- 13 he was hired on while I was out, so it would have been before
- 14 January --
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. -- I'm pretty sure.
- 17 Q. Did you have any experience with him, flying with him at
- 18 all?
- 19 A. I do not.
- Q. From reputation, talking to flight crew, the medical
- 21 crew, do you have any -- what is -- what was his reputation?
- 22 A. I really didn't hear anything, you know. I didn't
- 23 really have --
- 24 Q. No negative comments from the medical crew?
- 25 A. No, no negative comments, nothing, you know, nothing,

- 1 nothing at all that would make me, you know, especially as a lead
- 2 pilot, you know, think about any extra training or anything, you
- 3 know.
- 4 Q. With the experience that the medical crew guys had and
- 5 the team work that they've established all these years, do you
- 6 feel confident that they -- if they had seen a negative trend or
- 7 tendency in the pilot, that they would notify you?
- 8 A. I would say definitely.
- 9 Q. Yeah?
- 10 A. Yeah, because they've been there a long time.
- 11 Q. How many -- and what was your -- what has your training
- 12 been in AS350 B2 at Air Methods? How often -- when was -- when
- 13 did you get your initial training?
- 14 A. Initial training was January of 2010.
- 15 Q. And that's when you first got hired?
- 16 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 17 Q. During the initial training, how many times did you
- 18 execute autorotations?
- 19 A. Oh, it's hard to say. Probably a dozen times or so --
- 20 O. Okay. And --
- 21 A. -- if not more than that.
- 22 Q. How often do you get training in the helicopter to
- 23 practice maneuvers and emergency procedures?
- A. About every 6 months.
- 25 Q. And at the 6-month mark, how many autorotations do you

- 1 get to use -- practice then?
- 2 A. Probably about another dozen or two.
- Q. Okay. How many -- when you went up for training on the
- 4 recurrent at 6 months, what was the length of the flight? Was it
- 5 an hour and a half, 2 hours?
- 6 A. I'm going to say a couple of hours, at least.
- 7 Q. Two hours?
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. And it was just one flight?
- 10 A. Yeah. The one I did, yeah.
- 11 Q. And so in that 2 hours, you might do what kind of
- 12 maneuvers?
- 13 A. Pretty much all of the emergency procedures that we
- 14 would do, then a couple of instrument approaches, instrument
- 15 proficiency, stuff like that.
- 16 Q. And that would include autorotations?
- 17 A. Yeah, autorotations, hydraulics off, stuff like that.
- 18 Q. And in the autorotations, you would lower the
- 19 collective, but you wouldn't take it to a flight idle gauge --
- 20 A. Right.
- Q. -- or a position like that?
- 22 A. Right. Yeah, that's --
- 23 Q. So how many training opportunities have you had in the
- 24 last year and a half? You had your initial training, and then --
- 25 A. Yeah. Mine might be a little bit different because I

- 1 was out for so long on medical. A year and a half, probably, I
- 2 want to say, four.
- 3 Q. Four?
- A. My initial hire, and then a couple since I've been back.
- 5 Q. Okay. So a year and half and you had the initial, and
- 6 then maybe two, possibly three, training days --
- 7 A. Um-hum.
- 8 Q. -- lasting all of about 2 hours each for training?
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. Do you train when you come back from a flight? I mean,
- 11 for instance, do you -- after a mission and you're going back to
- 12 St. Joe, do you get to practice an instrument flight or an
- 13 instrument approach into the base?
- 14 A. Yeah, we can do -- to a certain extent, we can practice
- 15 the instrument approaches. You know, we're not going to be, you
- 16 know, going under a hood or anything or putting the goggles on,
- 17 but, yeah, we can practice those.
- 18 Q. And is your aircraft equipped with an ILS receiver?
- 19 A. It is, yeah.
- Q. So you can practice an ILS approach into St. Joe if you
- 21 need to?
- 22 A. St. Joe, if I remember correctly, doesn't have the ILS.
- Q. Where would you practice an ILS then if you were going
- 24 to do that?
- 25 A. I can't remember. Where'd we go? The instrument

- 1 training that I've done with the company has actually been at
- 2 other airports as far as an ILS is concerned. I think I've just
- 3 done the GPS into St. Joe.
- 4 Q. Oh, so you have a GPS on board?
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. You can fly with GPS into St. Joe?
- 7 A. Yeah.
- Q. Okay.
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. How often have you done that just as a -- to keep kind
- 11 of your currency up?
- 12 A. Oh, on a back from. Probably, about a half a dozen
- 13 times.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. Not a whole bunch.
- 16 Q. Does -- is the company aware that you're doing the GPS
- 17 approach into the --
- 18 A. Oh, yeah.
- 19 Q. So, they do --
- 20 A. Yeah. They even -- they suggest and support it, you
- 21 know --
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. -- to keep proficient.
- Q. All right. Are you an instrument-rated pilot?
- 25 A. Yes. Yeah.

- 1 Q. Do you fly instruments in the B2?
- 2 A. I do not.
- 3 Q. Do they -- are you current as an instrument pilot?
- 4 A. No.
- 5 Q. Okay. However, if you got into a situation where you
- 6 went IFR --
- 7 A. Um-hum?
- 8 Q. -- inadvertently, you'd feel comfortable that you could
- 9 recover?
- 10 A. I do, personally. Definitely.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. And shoot an actual instrument approach if you need to?
- 14 A. Um-hum, yeah.
- 15 Q. Are you night vision goggle qualified?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. And where did you get your night vision goggle training?
- 18 A. That was up in St. Joe.
- 19 Q. Did you get any night vision goggle training at Quantum
- 20 or at Papillon?
- 21 A. No, it's my first experience with it.
- Q. How much night vision goggle training at St. Joe or
- 23 through Air Methods have you received?
- A. As far as flight time?
- 25 Q. Yes.

- 1 A. Probably about at least 5 hours, including the check
- 2 ride.
- 3 Q. Okay. Have you done autorotations using the goggles?
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. And when was that training done?
- 6 A. Oh, I'm going to say March --
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. -- this year.
- 9 Q. It seems like James, Gary, and you received night vision
- 10 goggle training in March of this --
- 11 A. I want to say we were --
- 12 Q. -- of 2011.
- 13 A. Yeah, we were all the same class, I think.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. Yeah.
- 16 Q. And where was that training held?
- 17 A. St. Joe.
- 18 Q. With your helicopter?
- 19 A. No, I believe it was a different helicopter. Ours
- 20 hadn't been certified yet.
- Q. But November-352-Lima-November, your helicopter that's
- 22 based at St. Joe, is now equipped for --
- A. Yeah.
- Q. -- night vision goggle operations?
- A. Yeah.

- 1 Q. Do you use night vision goggles on your night flights?
- A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. Do you find that the night vision goggles are helpful in
- 4 flying night missions?
- 5 A. Definitely.
- 6 Q. Would you --
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. -- prefer to fly with night vision goggles or unaided?
- 9 A. I would prefer to have the goggles, definitely, as a
- 10 tool.
- 11 Q. Okay. How much training recurrent-wise do you -- are
- 12 you required to get for the night vision goggles at Air Methods?
- 13 A. I'm not sure, actually. I'm not sure what the actual
- 14 book says.
- 15 Q. But you fly with them routinely now?
- 16 A. Um-hum, yeah.
- 17 Q. And does your medical crew also have night vision goggle
- 18 devices on their helmets?
- 19 A. For the most part, they do.
- 20 O. Okay.
- 21 A. It kind of depends on the cycle that we have with
- 22 getting the goggles certified and stuff, but for the most part,
- 23 they'll be equipped as well.
- Q. Now, both your -- the two medical people we talked to
- 25 yesterday that were a team, and then --

- 1 A. Um-hum.
- Q. -- Randy and Chris were a team.
- 3 A. Um-hum.
- 4 Q. Were they qualified on night vision goggles as medical
- 5 crew?
- 6 A. Yeah, they were.
- 7 Q. So both those teams are qualified?
- 8 A. Um-hum.
- 9 Q. So if you flew with those people that night, then you'd
- 10 have three people on board with night vision goggles?
- 11 A. Yeah, assuming we had three pair of goggles available.
- 12 Q. Okay.
- 13 A. Yeah.
- 14 Q. So that confuses me. So you don't have a full
- 15 compliment of goggles at the --
- 16 A. We have three pairs that we can use, so one for each
- 17 crew member.
- 18 Q. Uh-huh.
- 19 A. But they have to be inspected, I want to say, every,
- 20 about every 6 months.
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. So -- or 180 days. So we'll send -- we try not to send
- 23 all three of them in the same time.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. We kind of stagger it a little bit so that we have, you

- 1 know, one pair go out and come back. A couple of weeks later,
- 2 we'll send the next pair in. That way, we always have at least
- 3 two pair so the pilot and at least one medical crew member can
- 4 have a set.
- 5 Q. Okay. But typically, you're going out with three pair?
- A. Yeah.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. Concerning the operation of the helicopter, when you fly
- 10 -- say, you're coming back. You're the p.m. pilot, and so, in the
- 11 morning, you're -- you know, you've flown a flight, say, 3 in the
- 12 morning. You've gone out. You've come back. It's 6:00, and the
- 13 new crew's coming on at -- or a new pilot's coming on at 6:30.
- 14 What do you do for fueling in that situation?
- 15 A. Basically, when we get back from a flight -- now, this
- 16 will be different for every base. But in St. Joe, when we get
- 17 back from a flight, we'll go ahead and fill it up. We've got a
- 18 truck there from the FBO that they let us use.
- 19 Q. Okay. And do you fill it up at that point?
- 20 A. Yeah. When I land, I fill it up, yeah.
- 21 Q. And what kind of fuel load to you typically leave on the
- 22 helicopter?
- 23 A. Average, probably around about 70 percent.
- Q. Okay. And how much endurance does that give the
- 25 helicopter?

- 1 A. A little over 2 hours.
- Q. And that's a routine practice at the base?
- 3 A. Um-hum, yeah.
- 4 Q. Did you see James Freudenberg do the same practice?
- 5 A. Yeah. It was pretty much standard.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. You know, we'd all fill up to about 70.
- 8 Q. All right. What -- when you come into the base in the
- 9 morning, what's your basic practice for briefing the crew and
- 10 getting their helicopter ready for a flight?
- 11 A. The -- well, the pilots will sit down together and go
- 12 through weather, aircraft status, fuel status, fuel load, any
- 13 maintenance due items, anything coming up, PR, public relations
- 14 flights, anything like that, and then, you know, you log in, get
- 15 your weight and balance. We have a flight release -- I don't know
- 16 if you're familiar with that or not -- that we get through the
- 17 company. And then you take any of that pertinent information and
- 18 you can have a little brief with the med crew, you know, let them
- 19 know how much weight we can carry for the day because it varies
- 20 with, you know, a pilot and, you know, how much, I guess, patient
- 21 weight you can carry. So --
- 22 Q. Okay. Have you ever turned down a flight?
- 23 A. Oh, yeah.
- Q. What do you turn down the flight for?
- 25 A. Mostly weather. I'm going to say turning down flights,

- 1 probably 90, 95 percent is weather.
- 2 Q. Okay. Do you brief the flight crew -- or the medical
- 3 crew on the status of the airplane or your status of your decision
- 4 making through -- in the course of a flight?
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. And what normally, things would you talk about that need
- 7 to be briefed?
- 8 A. What do you mean, like in flight or like on the ground?
- 9 Q. In flight or on the ground.
- 10 A. Well, pretty much, everything pertaining to the flight,
- 11 you know, most specifically, weather, any maintenance that we have
- 12 coming up, just so they know too. They get a hold of their
- 13 superiors and -- so we're not surprising somebody with taking the
- 14 aircraft out of service.
- 15 Q. How often have you contacted OCC?
- 16 A. Actually, not that often.
- 17 O. What things would you contact OCC for?
- 18 A. If I was at -- you know, off airport somewhere, you
- 19 know, at a scene or maybe at a remote hospital and I wanted to
- 20 get, you know, any additional weather information, stuff like
- 21 that.
- 22 Q. Who do you talk to at OCC when you call them?
- 23 A. I don't know any of their actual names, but I know they
- 24 always have an EMS helicopter pilot on duty up there and at least
- 25 two people.

- 1 Q. Is that the person who's talking to you, or do they have
- 2 to say, "Standby, I'll talk to our resident pilot", so to speak?
- 3 A. Yeah, they'll be there actually physically in the OCC on
- 4 the phone with you, yeah.
- 5 O. Okay. Do they make decisions or do they just advise
- 6 you?
- 7 A. It's an advisory role.
- Q. Okay.
- 9 A. Yeah, the decision's always going to be up to the pilot.
- 10 Q. How about when you contact LifeCom or AirCom?
- 11 A. Um-hum.
- 12 Q. What kind of information are you looking for or trying
- 13 to pass to AirCom?
- 14 A. Like, when we take off, we give them all the -- well,
- 15 not all of the information, but all the information they ask for,
- 16 you know, how many people are on board, where we're headed, how
- 17 much fuel we have, our ETE. And we also have a risk assessment.
- 18 We have a little matrix in the company that we, you know, pass on
- 19 to them to let them know, you know, how we feel about the flight
- 20 and --
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. -- you know, that. And then once you're in the air,
- 23 they're a great asset for even a, you know, a quick weather check
- 24 or, you know, coordinates for a scene call, ground contact
- 25 information if we're going into a scene. They can relay patient

- 1 information for the med crew.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. So --
- 4 Q. Have you -- do they provide any type of advisory role as
- 5 far as decisions for helicopters or for what you need to do as a
- 6 pilot?
- 7 A. Well, they'll let us know if there's weather or
- 8 something on its way if we haven't called and told them
- 9 specifically that we're going to, you know, be changing our status
- 10 for weather or something like that.
- 11 Q. Yeah.
- 12 A. But for the most part it's going to be on the pilot --
- 13 Q. Okay.
- 14 A. -- to make those decisions.
- 15 Q. Okay. Have you ever been in a situation where you got
- 16 low on fuel?
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. And how low were you?
- 19 A. Probably right about before we get our low fuel light.
- 20 I'd say anywhere from, oh, probably about 15 to 20 gallons.
- Q. And what percentage of fuel is that?
- 22 A. That would be about 11 to 12 percent.
- 23 Q. Eleven or 12 percent?
- A. Yeah.
- 25 Q. What happened at that point for you?

- 1 A. Well, at that point we're at -- you know, I was at the
- 2 airport, you know, getting fuel, so -- that was my destination.
- 3 Q. Would you continue flying if you saw the low fuel light
- 4 come on?
- 5 A. A very, very limited amount of time. Our -- I'm going
- 6 to say the emergency procedure or the information coming from the
- 7 manufacturer says that you have about 18 minutes, I believe it is,
- 8 on board and I wouldn't -- I'd be looking for somewhere to land.
- 9 That's what you look for.
- 10 Q. Would you have to -- if you actually landed at an
- 11 airport and you're getting -- and say that you had the low fuel
- 12 light come on --
- 13 A. Um-hum.
- Q. -- and, you know, the airport was just short -- or your
- 15 landing zone was just shortly, you know, nearby and you landed,
- 16 but the light had come on and maybe it had been on only for less
- 17 than even a minute or something.
- 18 A. Um-hum.
- 19 Q. Would that require an ASAP report?
- 20 A. I would submit one.
- 21 Q. Okay.
- A. Yeah.
- Q. And what would happen if you did that, issued a ASAP
- 24 report?
- 25 A. In my experience -- I don't want to say nothing is going

- 1 to happen. There might be a little bit of disciplinary action,
- 2 but nothing severe. You're not going to lose your job or you're
- 3 not going to get, you know, a -- what word am I looking for?
- 4 They're not going to take your pay away or, you know, say you
- 5 can't work for a week or something like that.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. You know, it's more of, in fact, just the opposite, I've
- 8 found, with the whole company. It's more of like an at-a-boy, you
- 9 know, hey, thanks for making that decision, you know, instead of
- 10 continuing on, pushing on into a situation you shouldn't have.
- 11 So --
- 12 Q. Now, had you landed with, say, and you had like very
- 13 little fuel on board --
- 14 A. Um-hum.
- 15 Q. -- sent in the ASAP, and -- I mean, there is very
- 16 little, like, for instance, in this flight, if you had -- the crew
- 17 had made it to Mosby but with almost no fuel, what -- issued an
- 18 ASAP report, would that raise more questions?
- 19 A. It possibly could, but --
- Q. As a lead pilot, what would you be -- how would you --
- 21 you know, if one of your guys did that, then how would you be
- 22 looking at it and how would you -- what would your role in that
- 23 whole process be?
- 24 A. That would probably go right over me, actually, but I'd
- 25 be concerned.

- 1 Q. Yeah.
- A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. Had the flight crew decided to stay at Harrison County
- 4 Community Hospital and call a fuel truck or some other decision,
- 5 what would the company -- you know, what's the policy on that?
- 6 And then, say, they an issued an ASAP report. What would --
- 7 what's your sense of things there?
- 8 A. I would think they would have, you know, supported the
- 9 pilot's decision to do that. Well, actually, most definitely.
- 10 Q. Yeah.
- 11 A. Yeah, err on the side of safety, definitely.
- 12 Q. What's your, you know, the -- when you go in and
- 13 preflight an airplane, what are you looking for as far as fuel?
- 14 A. Well, it all depends on the flight. A medical flight
- 15 out of St. Joe, I'd be looking for about 70 percent on a fuel
- 16 gauge.
- 17 O. So you'd check the fuel gauge?
- 18 A. Um-hum.
- 19 Q. Anything else you'd check?
- 20 A Just checking the, like a fuel sample --
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. -- you know, something like that. But -- yeah, that's
- 23 really about it.
- Q. The caution panel, it has the night and day switch.
- A. Um-hum.

- 1 Q. Can you see the lights during the day if it's in the
- 2 night position?
- 3 A. No.
- 4 Q. Okay.
- 5 A. If you are really concentrating and looking at it hard,
- 6 you might be able to spot one, but I think the -- I'm going to say
- 7 it's a low fuel pressure light is bright no matter what, but --
- 8 and the fire light, but everything else is dim to the point where
- 9 if you weren't consciously, you know, staring right at it, you
- 10 wouldn't notice.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. And even then, it would be kind of iffy, I would
- 13 say --
- 14 O. Okay.
- 15 A. -- if the switch is in the night position.
- 16 Q. You have the ASAP program. Do you have other safety
- 17 programs?
- 18 A. The AIDMOR.
- 19 Q. What is that?
- 20 A. I can't name that off for you, what that stands for.
- 21 It's a lot like the ASAP.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. An example would be if, you know, if I get a call and I
- 24 check my weather and it looks good. We all hop in the aircraft.
- 25 We're all comfortable flying, and we take off and find out, you

- 1 know, the weather's bad and we turn around. That would be
- 2 something I'd fill out the AIDMOR for.
- Q. Okay. Do you have a FOQA program in -- at Air Methods?
- 4 A. A what?
- 5 Q. A FOQA program?
- 6 A. I'm not sure what that is.
- 7 Q. Okay. Then you don't have it, but --
- 8 MR. BRENNER: Good answer.
- 9 MR. SILLIMAN: Yeah.
- MR. BRENNER: That's an honest --
- BY MR. SILLIMAN:
- 12 Q. I'm not even sure what the acronym is.
- 13 A. I know we have like Silent Whistle and stuff where like
- 14 we can call if we --
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. -- if we have an issue, not just, you know, aircraft
- 17 related in flight, but anything we see --
- 18 Q. Okay.
- 19 A. -- you know, if we have a maintenance decision or
- 20 something we don't agree with or if we think, you know, we see
- 21 something out of line that we don't like.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- MR. SILLIMAN: Malcolm?
- 24 BY MR. BRENNER:
- 25 Q. What are the responsibilities of a lead pilot?

30

- 1 A. As far as a lead pilot compared to --
- 2 Q. A regular lineman.
- 3 A. -- like just a line pilot? No. I really have just a
- 4 little bit more paperwork, kind of keep everything organized in
- 5 the office, make sure all the -- I know it's, you know, it's the
- 6 PICs responsibility in the end to make sure all the charts and
- 7 stuff are up to date, but that's still kind of something that I'd
- 8 keep track of. Then, for the most part, we're in control of the
- 9 schedule at our base. I know it's been a little bit different the
- 10 last couple of months, so we've had people coming in from other
- 11 bases to help out, but -- yeah.
- 12 Q. Okay. What about discipline or training? I think you
- 13 mentioned training.
- 14 A. As far as training goes, the only training that I would
- 15 be involved in is an actual, like a base orientation or -- well,
- 16 same thing, like, taking a pilot up for an area orientation. Any
- 17 one of the pilots on duty can do that though. So as far as being
- 18 the lead, there's not much more other than a little bit of
- 19 paperwork and you get a cool name.
- 20 O. Who decides on discipline? Yeah, it is a cool name.
- 21 A. That's more, I'm going to say, the -- like the area
- 22 aviation manager or area chief pilot.
- Q. And who are they? Who are the two?
- 24 A. At the time of the accident --
- 25 Q. Yeah.

- 1 A. -- Randy Vandenhul was the area manager, and Joe Lemma
- 2 (ph.) was the area chief pilot.
- Q. Okay.
- 4 A. I know they have different -- I think the company uses
- 5 different terms for those, but --
- 6 Q. Tell me about James.
- 7 A. Well, like I said, he came in while I was out on my
- 8 medical. I never flew with him or anything. We didn't -- I've
- 9 never really hung out with any of the pilots or anything outside
- 10 of work, so I don't really have much to say. He always seemed
- 11 like he was in a good mood, happy to be there, happy to help out,
- 12 but --
- 13 Q. Any anecdote you can tell me?
- 14 A. Not really.
- 15 Q. Okay. Tell me about the risk assessment you told me you
- 16 used.
- 17 A. Um-hum. We have a -- it's kind of matrix. I don't have
- 18 one right here in front of me. But it's a tool that helps a pilot
- 19 kind of do like a self-assessment, a risk assessment on, you know,
- 20 various aspects pertaining to the flight, you know, your own
- 21 mental status -- oh, what do I want to say -- like stamina, you
- 22 know, how long have you been on shift?
- 23 O. Sure.
- 24 A. Is this your ninth night in row that you're working on?
- 25 You're late in shift, are you tired? And then it also deals with

- 1 aircraft and, you know, how new the aircraft is to you, location,
- 2 you know, if you're flying at a new base. And then, of course,
- 3 weather, you know, if they're getting close to our minimums or --
- 4 and basically, the further down on the list you get, I guess, the
- 5 more of those that apply to you, the higher you're risk
- 6 assessment's going to be. So --
- 7 Q. Is it helpful?
- 8 A. I would say so, definitely.
- 9 Q. Give me an example.
- 10 A. It's -- actually, a real good example, you know, flying
- 11 up in Cherokee, Iowa. I've been up there helping set our new base
- 12 and, you know, the first night on shift, and in a helicopter that
- 13 I've flow before, but it's a new mission and stuff like that. So
- 14 I had a night shift and a night call, so it helps to kind of sit
- 15 down, excuse me, and just go through all that stuff, all the
- 16 different factors that could affect your flight, you know, how
- 17 tired are you, how, you know -- I'm new to the area. I'm, you
- 18 know, flying a new aircraft. I've got a medical crew that's new.
- 19 So, you know, I think it actually really helps a lot.
- 20 O. What do you do with the number then?
- 21 A. You just pass it on to AirCom, you know, and, of course,
- 22 you're keeping it in your, you know, in the back of your head as
- 23 well. We also have a flight log that we're filling out. We'll
- 24 record it on that.
- 25 Q. What if it's towards the top of the scale? Any

- 1 difference?
- 2 A. Yeah. You're going to be a little bit more cautious.
- 3 And if you get to the point where you do need to turn down a
- 4 flight, I've never had any repercussions, negative or anything
- 5 like that from turning down a flight, but you could always use
- 6 that kind of as a backup and say, hey, I was looking through
- 7 this --
- 8 0. Sure.
- 9 A. -- and I'm showing that my risk assessment is way up
- 10 here; we decided as a crew that maybe it's not a good idea to go
- 11 fly.
- 12 Q. All right. Are you required to talk to someone else for
- 13 a second opinion?
- 14 A. You're not, no. That's left up to the pilot.
- 15 Q. Have you ever done that?
- 16 A. Not up here, not at Air Methods.
- 17 Q. Okay. Now, you said you turn down flights 90 to 95
- 18 percent due to weather.
- 19 A. Um-hum.
- Q. What's the other 5 to 10 percent?
- 21 A. Just like crew condition, basically going through that
- 22 risk assessment. You know, I had a day where I did, I think it
- 23 was three or four flights and the -- you know, you could tell the
- 24 crew was getting tired and, you know, I was tired. It was in the
- 25 summer, so, you know, we decided that we weren't going to do

- 1 anymore.
- 2 O. How did the company take that?
- 3 A. Just fine. That's -- when I worked in the Canyon, we
- 4 were kind of pressured and pushed to take flights that I wouldn't
- 5 say were dangerous, but were maybe out of -- maybe a little bit
- 6 out of the envelope for what we should have been doing just for a
- 7 tour. And I was the lead pilot down there as well and, you know,
- 8 if we cancelled for weather, I'd get two or three phone calls
- 9 from, you know, different managers, people in the company asking,
- 10 you know, why did you turn it down, what's -- you know, are you
- 11 sure you couldn't have gone, stuff like that. But when I got up
- 12 here, the first couple that I turned down for weather, you know, I
- 13 was kind of, you know, stuck in that mentality, you know, always
- 14 watching my back. And so I'd print out a -- you know, print out
- 15 what the weather radar looked like, print out the forecast, print
- 16 out the current conditions. But, you know, never got a call,
- 17 never got anything other than, you know, hey -- you know, an e-
- 18 mail from, you know, Randy Vandenhul, Area Manager, or something,
- 19 or even the chief pilot saying, hey, thanks for making that
- 20 decision. So we have a lot of support.
- 21 O. That's nice to hear.
- A. Yeah.
- Q. And you said the ASAP reports too that you might get an
- 24 attaboy.
- A. Um-hum.

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- 1 Q. Who would give you an attaboy?
- 2 A. I've got one -- I've gotten them from the chief pilot
- 3 for --
- 4 Q. What for?
- 5 A. -- just turning around for weather. So --
- 6 Q. Have any pilots been fired?
- 7 A. Not that I know of. Not that I know of from just kind
- 8 of limited experience, less than 2 years with the company, so --
- 9 Q. How's the workload at AirCom?
- 10 A. I'm actually not sure. I only see the one side of it.
- 11 There's been very, very few times when I've called them on the
- 12 phone -- never on the radio, but sometimes I call them on the
- 13 phone just looking for a little bit of information or to update
- 14 them on our weather where, you know, they sound kind of busy.
- 15 Q. Yeah.
- 16 A. But -- yeah.
- 17 Q. Okay. How -- tell me, you mentioned that you once got
- 18 down to 11, 12 percent fuel --
- 19 A. Um-hum.
- Q. -- when you got to the airport. How did that happen?
- 21 A. Just the amount of fuel that we carry and the distances
- 22 that we fly. So it all -- you know, one day you could make the
- 23 flight just fine, and the next day, with the weather and stuff
- 24 being a little bit different you can find yourself in a situation
- 25 like that. It's not something that you would intentionally go out

- 1 and try to accomplish.
- Q. Well, you land at the airport; you're low on fuel. What
- 3 are your options? You have to fly another leg.
- 4 A. Well, get fuel. That's the only option to me.
- 5 Q. Have you ever refueled with a passenger on board?
- 6 A. I have not.
- 7 Q. Do you know other pilots that have?
- 8 A. Yeah. Actually, we had one just a couple of weeks ago
- 9 up in Cherokee, Iowa.
- 10 Q. What happened?
- 11 A. It was kind of a -- not a routine call. They were going
- 12 from Cherokee up into, I want to say Rochester, Minnesota. So
- 13 it's about 180 nautical miles from, you know, point A to point B
- 14 where you can actually end up getting more fuel. So he made a
- 15 decision to stop, you know, mid-flight and refuel up. But I
- 16 believe what they did there is actually took the patient out while
- 17 the fueled the aircraft. I wasn't actually there. I'm not sure
- 18 what they did, but --
- 19 Q. What are the procedures for that?
- 20 A. As far as getting the patient out or --
- Q. I don't know. I understood the company had procedures
- 22 if you had to fuel with a patient on board.
- 23 A. Yeah. My own is to have the patient outside of the
- 24 aircraft. If that's not possible, have them in a position where
- 25 they could be easily removed if we had an issue. But I don't, I

- 1 personally don't like doing that.
- Q. What kind of things have you reported to Silent Whistle?
- 3 A. Have I reported?
- 4 Q. Yeah.
- 5 A. I haven't called them.
- 6 Q. Oh, you haven't?
- 7 A. No.
- 8 Q. Oh. That's a great name.
- 9 Is the base up to full staff, pilots?
- 10 A. I'm going to say no. It's kind of a gray area right
- 11 now. At the time of the accident, the two full-time pilots were
- 12 myself and Gary. We also have a third full-time pilot who's out
- 13 on medical right now. And Andy Worley (ph.), I believe you guys
- 14 will --
- Q. Yeah.
- 16 A. -- probably be talking to, he is now a St. Joe pilot.
- 17 O. Oh.
- 18 A. So once -- if we get -- what's the -- if we get Steve
- 19 back on line, we'll have four pilots again.
- Q. Any talk that they might close the base?
- 21 A. I haven't heard.
- 22 Q. What -- how would you characterize pilot pay in the
- 23 company?
- 24 A. Probably pretty standard through the industry. I
- 25 haven't really gone up and looked.

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- 1 Q. How would you characterize pilot morale?
- 2 A. Oh, I don't know. I think we're all pretty happy. We
- 3 go out and do what we love to do every day.
- 4 Q. How would you characterize the turnover rate of pilots?
- 5 A. Lately, it's been -- oh, I'm not going to say
- 6 significant, but we've had quite a few people coming through.
- 7 Q. And how about turnover of managers?
- 8 A. They just changed, but I've had the same area manager
- 9 for -- you know, since I started. I think they actually changed
- 10 just about a week ago with the acquisition of Omni.
- 11 Q. How's the quality of new hires?
- 12 A. Fairly good so far, from what I've seen.
- 13 Q. How's the training?
- 14 A. The training that I went through, I thought was
- 15 excellent. It was -- I'm not going to go as far as to say it was
- 16 better than, you know, what I've had in the past, you know, down
- 17 doing tours. It was probably about on par.
- 18 O. Why was it excellent?
- 19 A. Just the amount of stuff that we get to do.
- 20 O. Okay.
- 21 A. You know, you don't get to go out and practice the, you
- 22 know, like we talked before, practice the emergency procedures
- 23 that often, so it's always kind of nice to go out and do that.
- 24 And then the -- actually, I flew with Jay Watson. I think you
- 25 guys just spoke with him.

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- 1 Q. Yeah.
- 2 A. But, you know, they always -- they'll give you the
- 3 opportunity to ask for more. Even in our basic indoc, they say if
- 4 at any time you feel you need more training, you can always call
- 5 somebody up and they can try to get something arranged.
- 6 Q. How's the equipment?
- 7 A. I think, pretty good. We're kind of getting everything
- 8 standardized.
- 9 O. How's the maintenance?
- 10 A. At St. Joe, excellent. I'm not familiar with too many
- 11 other bases. Cherokee, the one that just started, I'd say the
- 12 same thing.
- 13 Q. All right. Promotion opportunities?
- 14 A. Yeah.
- 15 Q. What kind of opportunities?
- 16 A. I was lead pilot within a year.
- 17 O. Sure.
- 18 A. So not much for promotion. But there's that and, you
- 19 know, being a check airman, CCE, company check -- or was it
- 20 certificate compliance examiner? I'm not sure how much further it
- 21 would go or how much more I would want personally.
- 22 Q. How's the financial condition of the company?
- 23 A. I'd say they're probably doing pretty good. When I
- 24 started back in December, I should have bought some stock.
- 25 Q. How's the relationship between the company and the

- 1 pilots union?
- 2 A. I think they're in kind of limbo right now. I'm
- 3 actually not a member of the union, so I try to stay out of all
- 4 that.
- 5 Q. How many pilots are members?
- 6 A. I'm not sure. I heard, way back at basic indoc,
- 7 something about 90 percent, something like that. So --
- 8 Q. Quality of the airport restaurant?
- 9 A. The airport restaurant?
- 10 Q. I just want to make sure he's still --
- MR. SILLIMAN: I'm not hungry.
- MR. KOSKI: It's actually a nice one.
- 13 BY MR. BRENNER:
- 14 Q. Actually, you know, they had that special. It sounds
- 15 pretty excellent.
- 16 Has the company undergone significant expansion or
- 17 scaling back since (indiscernible)?
- 18 A. I would -- well, I'm going to say yes, especially with
- 19 this new acquisition with Omni. I think we just got about another
- 20 90 to 100 aircraft, plus all the crews that go with it.
- O. Does that affect you?
- 22 A. I think the only effect that it's on us is the, just the
- 23 change of, excuse me, management. But as far as down on the base
- 24 level, I haven't seen any change at all.
- 25 Q. Has the company experienced previous accidents?

- 1 A. I believe so. I'm not familiar with any of them, but I
- 2 think they have.
- 3 Q. Do they talk about them in recurrent?
- 4 A. In what?
- 5 Q. In recurrent training?
- 6 A. Not so much recurrent training, but like your basic
- 7 indoc, definitely, and we went through a couple of slideshows.
- 8 Q. Any pilot issues come out of that?
- 9 A. What do you mean specifically there?
- 10 Q. Oh, just a previous accident or incident where you
- 11 learned something about pilot things or pilot procedures or
- 12 something the company changed or anything.
- 13 A. Well, I know the company, excuse me, will change their
- 14 policy, you know, post-accident and, unfortunately, that's how a
- 15 lot of changes are initiated.
- 16 Q. I didn't write it down fast enough. You had mentioned
- 17 the two managers that are next level supervisors.
- 18 A. Um-hum.
- 19 Q. Who was the first one you mentioned?
- 20 A. If I had an issue or something at the base level, I
- 21 would call Randy Vandenhul, at least at the time of the accident.
- 22 That's since changed, but --
- 23 O. What are his strengths?
- 24 A. What are his what?
- Q. What are his strengths?

- 1 A. Trends?
- 2 Q. Strengths, strengths, strengths.
- 3 A. Oh, his strengths.
- 4 Q. Strengths.
- 5 A. I'd probably go out on a limb and say everything. He's
- 6 probably the best boss I've ever worked with. Very knowledgeable
- 7 and, you know, just a lot of experience in the industry and very
- 8 helpful, you know, all the time. He's one of those -- you know, a
- 9 lot of people say, hey, call me anytime you have a question or
- 10 anything, but he's one of those who, literally, you can call him
- 11 anytime. You know, 2:00 in the morning, he might not answer, but,
- 12 you know, he'll get back to you.
- 13 Q. How often does he come to the base?
- 14 A. Probably -- hard to say. I was out for about 9 months
- 15 with that motorcycle accident, and so I don't know how often he
- 16 was there, you know, in that time, but I've seen him out there a
- 17 couple times.
- 18 Q. And then you said then above -- the next level up --
- 19 A. Um-hum.
- 20 O. -- after Randy, who's that?
- 21 A. Is that Joe Lemma?
- 22 Q. Joe Lemma, yeah. What are his strengths?
- 23 A. Pretty much, the same. They're not identical,
- 24 obviously, but one thing that really helps is they, you know, they
- 25 work together great. So --

- 1 Q. What are the occasions you talk to him rather than
- 2 Randy?
- A. Joe, actually, in case Randy's unavailable. You know,
- 4 if I had a specific question about, you know, taking a flight, you
- 5 know, or a rule or regulation that I wasn't perfectly clear on, if
- 6 I called Randy and couldn't get a hold of him, I'd -- if it was
- 7 something important, immediate, I would try Joe.
- 8 Q. Has that happened? Have you had to call Joe?
- 9 A. I don't believe I've ever called him about something
- 10 like that.
- 11 Q. Okay. How about Randy?
- 12 A. Randy? Yeah.
- 13 Q. What did you call him for?
- 14 A. We had a flight that was -- I think, there was another
- 15 helicopter service that was out of -- or that was out on a call,
- 16 so we got a call there at the base that was fairly, I'd say,
- 17 significantly out of our normal, you know, flight area and I just
- 18 wanted to call up and make sure, you know, get approval --
- 19 Q. Sure.
- 20 A. -- make sure that's something that we could do.
- 21 Q. And did he approve it?
- A. Yeah, yeah.
- O. What time was that?
- 24 A. Oh.
- 25 Q. Time of day? What time of the night, I guess --

- 1 A. It was during the day, yeah, but it was probably around
- 2 noon or something like that.
- Q. Um-hum.
- 4 A. So, yeah.
- 5 Q. What about OCC; when would you call them?
- 6 A. Like I said before, if I'm out on, you know, at a remote
- 7 base or, you know, somewhere where I can't check the weather, you
- 8 know, and need some extra information, I call them up.
- 9 Q. See, I was picturing Mr. Watson, I guess, as my model of
- 10 who I'd want on the other end of the phone.
- 11 A. Yeah.
- 12 Q. I mean, then what I'm picturing, you've got someone like
- 13 him --
- 14 A. Well, that's what I was going to --
- 15 Q. -- on OCC; I could see calling him --
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 Q. -- if I had questions about anything, any of these
- 18 things (indiscernible). It is a common -- it doesn't sound like
- 19 that's the common --
- 20 A. Well, I would --
- 0. -- there's a chain before that.
- 22 A. Well, yeah. You know, you ask, you know, when we call
- 23 OCC or when we call AirCom. But if we have -- or Randy Vandenhul.
- 24 But before any of that, you know, I've got a couple of great CCEs
- 25 that I call, you know, especially Jay, you know, for the AStar.

- 1 And I've got another guy if I have an EC130 question, you know, I
- 2 call him up first. So --
- 3 Q. Have you ever done that?
- 4 A. Yeah.
- 5 Q. Tell me about it.
- A. Just maintenance issues, you know, something you're not
- 7 familiar with on an aircraft and, you know, before you go calling
- 8 everybody or putting yourself out of service, you know, you can
- 9 call them and see what, you know, see what their opinion is on it.
- 10 Q. Was it helpful?
- 11 A. Oh, yeah. Yep. Yeah, I think we have a great support
- 12 system.
- 13 Q. Does the company have a safety office?
- 14 A. A safety office?
- 15 Q. Yeah. Safety director, office? I don't know.
- 16 A. I don't know if they have an office. I know we have
- 17 a -- you know, we have a whole, you know, safety management
- 18 system, so --
- 19 Q. Well, what does that consist of?
- 20 A. I'm going to say the, you know, the AIDMOR, ASAP, the
- 21 Silent Whistle program, you know, all of that put together.
- Q. Is there somebody in charge of that?
- A. I'm not sure, actually.
- Q. How are relations with the FAA?
- 25 A. I think they're pretty good. As far as the company

- 1 goes?
- Q. Yeah.
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. How often do you see an inspector?
- 5 A. Compared to how often I saw them before, fairly
- 6 frequently actually. And all I fly --
- 7 Q. Before, you mean on your previous job?
- 8 A. Yeah, yeah, down in the Canyon or out at my flight
- 9 school. But, yeah, they'll come up and check on the aircraft,
- 10 check on the pilots, make sure you've got, you've got your
- 11 certificate and everything you need.
- 12 Q. That, for a lead, is real important, isn't it?
- 13 A. Yeah.
- 14 Q. And how often have they been coming around?
- 15 A. I would say probably about every other month or so.
- 16 BY MR. SILLIMAN:
- 17 O. Who were those?
- 18 A. I forget his name. But he'll come up from the office
- 19 down here in Kansas City --
- 20 O. Okay.
- 21 A. -- come up to, go up to St. Joe there.
- Q. Okay. Was it Marvin Moore, or --
- 23 A. You know, I don't think Marvin has been up there.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. Shoot, I wish I could remember who it was.

- 1 Q. That's fine. I'm just --
- 2 A. Because Marvin's the -- he's kind of the helicopter guy,
- 3 isn't he?
- 4 O. I think so.
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 BY MR. BRENNER:
- 7 Q. How reliable are the fuel gauges?
- 8 A. I haven't had any bad experience with them, but, like
- 9 anything else, I mean, it's, you know, it's a mechanical device,
- 10 so --
- 11 Q. Did you ever start a shift where the plane had not been
- 12 refueled --
- 13 A. Yeah.
- Q. -- or was not at 70 percent?
- 15 A. Yeah.
- 16 Q. How often?
- 17 A. Oh, probably only a couple of times.
- 18 O. Tell me about it.
- 19 A. You know, you just turn the power on during your
- 20 preflight and notice it doesn't have fuel and -- or not -- you
- 21 know, is lower than what you'd like, and I just put what I want in
- 22 it, bring it up to what I'm comfortable with.
- Q. How come the pilot didn't refuel it?
- 24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Whoa.
- 25 BY MR. BRENNER:

- 1 Q. Oh, did I read that in? I'm sorry. Good. Here's my
- 2 control here. How come it wasn't to the level you like?
- 3 A. Yeah, I don't know. I wasn't there, so I --
- 4 Q. Okay, you just got it.
- 5 A. Yeah. I can't speculate there.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 MR. BRENNER: All right, I think I'm good.
- 8 BY MR. SILLIMAN:
- 9 Q. Well, I'm sure I'll think of them later, but you've
- 10 answered a lot of good questions, that's for sure. Yeah, thanks
- 11 for your coming in and helping out on this investigation. And do
- 12 you have any questions for us or the process?
- 13 A. I do not, actually.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. Other than do you know if there's a transcript from, you
- 16 know, the radio calls that he would have made or the phone calls
- 17 that the pilot would have made to --
- 18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'll talk to you about that.
- MR. KOSKI: Okay.
- MR. SILLIMAN: We'll actually make transcripts, yeah.
- MR. KOSKI: Okay.
- 22 MR. SILLIMAN: Well, I'm going to turn this off then.
- 23 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: AIR METHODS CORPORATION

LIFENET HELICOPTER CRASH

AUGUST 26, 2011

NEAR MOSBY, MISSOURI Interview of Bret Koski

DOCKET NUMBER: CEN11FA599

PLACE: Kansas City, Missouri

DATE: September 15, 2011

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 hearing.

Karen M. Galvez

Transcriber