

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

**INVESTIGATION INTO THE CRASH OF  
ALASKA AIRLINES FLIGHT 263**

Tuesday, August 8, 2000  
9:00 a.m.

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## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 9:00 a.m.

## 3 INTERVIEW OF TIMOTHY C. BENNETT

4 MR. MCGILL: Tim, will you explain your  
5 duties?6 MR. BENNETT: I had collateral duties and was  
7 RFA liaison for the most part, so that the two duties  
8 kind of intermixed with regard to that.9 MR. MCGILL: What specifically did you do in  
10 your role when you visited Alaska Airlines as an  
11 assistant PMI? What -- what did you do daily? What  
12 did you -- what -- what did you do when you went over  
13 there? How often did you go over there?14 Just explain and kind of give us what an  
15 assistant PMI might do and what you did.16 MR. BENNETT: I worked with different  
17 programs, de-icing program is one example, just working  
18 through them with changes in their manuals and  
19 procedures.20 The same thing with the General Maintenance  
21 Manual. I would review various procedures to their  
22 Maintenance Program that may have changed, and I worked  
23 with them with regard to acceptable changes to their  
24 programs, primarily worked enforcement cases, did

1 inspections, facility inspections, again just checking  
2 to ensure their regulatory compliance.

3 MR. MCGILL: Did you look at log sheets?

4 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

5 MR. MCGILL: How often would you look at log  
6 sheets?

7 MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure I could nail down  
8 an exact time frame. It was as required, for the most  
9 part, or if I had a planned inspection to -- to look at  
10 log sheets, and it's kind of hard to put a number to  
11 it.

12 MR. MCGILL: Did you look at, say, a month at  
13 a time?

14 MR. BENNETT: Oh, within a month's time  
15 frame, I would normally probably be looking at some log  
16 pages for one reason or another.

17 MR. MCGILL: Did you notice any trends on  
18 anything? Discrepancies, and how the discrepancies,  
19 the corrective actions are taken?

20 MR. BENNETT: There were concerns with regard  
21 to deferred maintenance. We had some issues with that,  
22 just following their normal procedures of how they put  
23 the paperwork through the system, supervisory sign-offs  
24 for audits, things of that nature that had been brought  
25 to their attention that I had noticed.

1           MR. MCGILL:  What -- what -- do you know if  
2 you said something about deferred --

3           MR. BENNETT:  Hm-hmm.

4           MR. MCGILL:  What -- what did you notice  
5 along that --

6           MR. BENNETT:  Oh, primarily issues on basis  
7 for deferral, you know.  There were an awful lot of  
8 internal codes set up within the Alaska organization  
9 for deferral process, and some of those, I questioned  
10 with regard to, you know, what is your basis for  
11 deferral?  Was there an approved, you know, document?

12          MR. MCGILL:  Were these CDL items or MEL  
13 items?

14          MR. BENNETT:  These -- some of them would  
15 fall outside the realm of CDL/MEL.

16          MR. MCGILL:  Okay.

17          MR. BENNETT:  Passenger convenience, those  
18 type items.

19          MR. MCGILL:  What about the MEL items?

20          MR. BENNETT:  Often, the MEL -- or I won't  
21 say often.  We -- I did find there were some MEL  
22 deferrals that may not have been, you know, strictly  
23 adhered to the way they should have been, and  
24 enforcement cases were open against those.

1           MR. MCGILL: Did you see any escalations of  
2 the MELs?

3           MR. BENNETT: I can't recall MEL escalations,  
4 no. Short-term escalations. There was a problem with  
5 regard to their heavy checks, having to come to us,  
6 going beyond the 10 percent allowed on the ops specs.

7           But with regard to MEL extensions, I don't  
8 recall seeing any.

9           MR. MCGILL: What was the normal reason for  
10 extending on a check? What was -- why was that  
11 necessary, that they would need to extend an interval  
12 for a check?

13          MR. BENNETT: It appeared that -- at least  
14 the reasoning that was said to us was that unforeseen  
15 things would have happened to the previous aircraft of  
16 the aircraft currently in check, which pushed it beyond  
17 its scheduled departure date and consequently impacted  
18 the remaining -- the other aircraft scheduled in.

19          MR. MCGILL: Was there any considerations  
20 ever made that -- for more time needed to be allotted  
21 for --

22          MR. BENNETT: Yes. John Hubbard worked  
23 vigorously with them. Alaska put in force a dock  
24 integrity task force which dedicated a team of folks to  
25 evaluate that system and to try and get it on track



1 because at one point, John Hubbard said he was not  
2 going to authorize any more extensions on that program  
3 until they could get the thing under control with  
4 regard to planning and scheduling and all that.

5 MR. MCGILL: When -- when was this actually  
6 that he wrote that?

7 MR. BENNETT: Probably about a year, year and  
8 a half ago, some place in that time frame.

9 MR. MCGILL: Did you notice any -- because of  
10 a substantial increase in aircraft and utilization  
11 hours on aircraft, did that impact the checks that were  
12 being accomplished by Alaska?

13 MR. BENNETT: I'm not quite sure I know what  
14 you mean by saying that.

15 MR. MCGILL: Well, when you put hours on an  
16 airplane, --

17 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

18 MR. MCGILL: -- it -- that aircraft comes  
19 into check more frequently.

20 MR. BENNETT: Okay.

21 MR. MCGILL: Therefore, --

22 MR. BENNETT: As far as scheduling --

23 MR. MCGILL: -- the aircraft --

24 MR. BENNETT: -- and planning and that sort  
25 of thing?

1 MR. MCGILL: -- planning -- yes, sir.

2 MR. BENNETT: Okay. I can't say that I  
3 necessarily noticed that because I'm not sure that the  
4 -- in the time that I've worked on the certificate,  
5 that the utilization has increased that significantly,  
6 that I would necessarily have seen a trend or -- or an  
7 impact in that area.

8 MR. MCGILL: Do you know how many airplanes  
9 went into check, for instance, in 1996? How many in  
10 '97?

11 MR. BENNETT: Not --

12 MR. MCGILL: In '98?

13 MR. BENNETT: -- without looking it up, no.

14 MR. MCGILL: But you -- do you have those  
15 figures somewhere?

16 MR. BENNETT: Should have, yes.

17 MR. MCGILL: Does anyone -- did someone look  
18 at -- observe the impact of that relationship, I  
19 wonder?

20 MR. BENNETT: I couldn't tell you.

21 MR. MCGILL: You did not?

22 MR. BENNETT: I did not.

23 MR. MCGILL: Do you think Mr. Hubbard did?

24 MR. BENNETT: I don't know for sure, but in  
25 evaluating the -- the process -- the problems that he

1 was seeing with the escalations, I would assume that he  
2 had.

3 MR. MCGILL: The next thing that I would  
4 think about would be the number of maintenance  
5 technicians that were involved in this check process.

6 We're going to increase aircraft through it  
7 at time intervals. Did you notice an increase in  
8 hiring of mechanics to the check process?

9 MR. BENNETT: There was some, yes. I know  
10 that they had made an increase in the Oakland facility,  
11 and I believe there was some up here in the Seattle  
12 facility as well, not necessarily a significant amount  
13 or -- and the ones in Oakland, I -- you know, were  
14 fairly well -- I could -- I could say that they were  
15 dedicated to the base check because that's their  
16 primary function down there.

17 Up here, I'm not sure exactly where all the  
18 folks were allocated between base check or line  
19 maintenance.

20 MR. MCGILL: Was there some difference then  
21 between the people allotted to the check on the Boeing  
22 aircraft versus the people that are on Douglas aircraft  
23 in Oakland?

24 MR. BENNETT: No, I don't think there was a

1 -- that I'm aware of, --

2 MR. MCGILL: Did they cross over?

3 MR. BENNETT: -- there was a difference  
4 between the two.

5 Yes, as far as I know, they do cross over.

6 MR. MCGILL: So, there could be mechanics  
7 working line --

8 MR. BENNETT: No, not necessarily the line  
9 and the base check. Usually the base check folks were  
10 base check folks. They may cross 737 or MD-80.

11 MR. MCGILL: If they crossed that, that means  
12 they would have to be temporarily assigned into, say,  
13 Oakland then?

14 MR. BENNETT: No, no, no. There's folks that  
15 are in the Oakland facility, and there's also mechanics  
16 in the Seattle facility. There's a base check in  
17 Seattle and in Oakland. I mean, there's line  
18 maintenance functions in both areas as well.

19 MR. MCGILL: Okay. Do you think that those  
20 mechanics can do that? They can cross back and forth  
21 into the Oakland facility from the San Francisco  
22 facility and work --

23 MR. BENNETT: From Seattle?

24 MR. MCGILL: Yes.

1           MR. BENNETT: Yeah. If, you know, if the  
2 resources were needed, I know that they've, you know,  
3 --

4           MR. MCGILL: On a temporary basis?

5           MR. BENNETT: Generally, yes, that I'm aware  
6 of.

7           MR. MCGILL: What kind of training then were  
8 -- did you notice that the mechanics are given at  
9 Alaska Airline to qualify them for line maintenance,  
10 for heavy maintenance, so forth?

11           MR. BENNETT: Well, they had those basic  
12 requirements, and I can't reiterate them verbatim out  
13 of the -- the manual. The manual outlines that. The  
14 training, but, generally speaking, they would have to  
15 have minimums of the systems training for each of the  
16 different aircraft types before they could be assigned  
17 to work on those.

18           MR. MCGILL: Did -- did --

19           MR. BENNETT: There were other prerequisite  
20 courses that had to be taken as well.

21           MR. MCGILL: Did -- did the FAA do any  
22 oversight of that, what you just said? Do you know  
23 that as a fact, that before a mechanic is put in on an  
24 MD-80 aircraft, that they are given system training?

1           MR. BENNETT: I can only say I have not  
2 specifically checked to see a particular person that  
3 was in that situation had that training.

4           MR. MCGILL: Who in the FAA would be checking  
5 the training records of the individual maintenance  
6 technicians?

7           MR. BENNETT: It would be one of us in this  
8 unit.

9           MR. MCGILL: How often would you do that?

10          MR. BENNETT: Probably not that frequently.

11          MR. MCGILL: Why is that?

12          MR. BENNETT: Staffing was probably our  
13 biggest problem, our biggest obstacle. We had such a  
14 workload, it was more a matter of prioritizing what had  
15 to be accomplished first.

16          MR. MCGILL: Did you study or look at the  
17 Planning Department and the schedule of the aircraft?

18          MR. BENNETT: No, I did not.

19          MR. MCGILL: Is there someone qualified in  
20 the certificate management area that has expertise for  
21 understanding how the requirements of an aircraft are  
22 considered and put into a planning stage, into a check  
23 procedure?

24          MR. BENNETT: To a small degree, I do, from  
25 my past industry experience, but to answer your

1 question specifically, I'm not sure that anybody is.

2 I mean, we have some folks that were on the  
3 certificate that had -- that were previous employees of  
4 Alaska Airlines that may have more intimate knowledge  
5 about how Alaska does it.

6 MR. MCGILL: Does anyone look at the check  
7 packages themselves and analyze the -- the task --  
8 individual task cards?

9 MR. BENNETT: Now, when you say analyze the  
10 individual task cards?

11 MR. MCGILL: Looking at task cards. For  
12 instance, let's just take the MD-80 aircraft since  
13 that's -- has somebody gone through that C check  
14 package, pulled those task cards, looked how they are  
15 to be performed, so forth?

16 MR. BENNETT: Yes. I have looked at some  
17 packages. I know that the 37 PPM has looked at  
18 packages probably much more than I have dealing with  
19 the Certificate Management Department longer. Yes, we  
20 did look at packages and task cards, non-routine cards,  
21 you know, the entire package, primarily looking for  
22 completeness of the information being accomplished  
23 correctly, that sort of information.

24 MR. MCGILL: When revisions are sent to the  
25 FAA that changes a task card, are they also evaluated?

1 MR. BENNETT: As best as we can, yes.

2 MR. MCGILL: Were there a large number of  
3 task cards that were changed over the last couple of  
4 years?

5 MR. BENNETT: Yes, I would say there was.

6 MR. MCGILL: When escalations are made on  
7 check intervals and which affect task cards inside of a  
8 check, are they looked at?

9 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

10 MR. MCGILL: Does Alaska Airlines show  
11 justification for their escalations of checks?

12 MR. BENNETT: I'm not familiar with working  
13 on escalations. So, I can't honestly say.

14 MR. MCGILL: So, if they increase, and they  
15 check for a 150 or 200 hours, 250 to 300, 350 to 400,  
16 when they increase a C check from -- and then, every  
17 time one of those are approved, then all these task  
18 cards that are associated with that check, are they  
19 also looked at?

20 MR. BENNETT: Yes. As far as I know, the  
21 process -- they do supply the justification, the  
22 background documentation, and the task cards and  
23 related documents are updated to reflect the change.

24 MR. MCGILL: Do you personally evaluate those  
25 changes?



1 MR. BENNETT: I have not.

2 MR. MCGILL: Who does that?

3 MR. BENNETT: The other partial program  
4 managers would normally for each of the different  
5 aircraft types.

6 MR. MCGILL: What kind of training were you  
7 given when Alaska Airlines went into the ATOS system?

8 MR. BENNETT: The ATOS training that was  
9 delivered in Dallas.

10 MR. MCGILL: So, you went to Dallas?

11 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

12 MR. MCGILL: You obviously worked prior to  
13 the ATOS.

14 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

15 MR. MCGILL: What is your perception of ATOS  
16 now that it's -- I believe it was what, October '98,  
17 that Alaska -- how is that working?

18 MR. BENNETT: Not real well.

19 MR. MCGILL: What areas would you think might  
20 be better improved?

21 MR. BENNETT: From my level, I believe the  
22 ATOS philosophy is a good philosophy. It's a very good  
23 certification tool. However, in a day-to-day operation  
24 with an established air carrier, using the job aids  
25 that were given to us, and the information provided on

1 how to execute it, it's very weak.

2 The questions on the job aids are confusing.

3 Just exactly how they wanted the work performed did  
4 not seem the way we should be doing it, especially with  
5 an established carrier, by going out and doing a  
6 systems review of systems that have been in place for  
7 some time as opposed to doing an element performance-  
8 type inspection to see -- let's take a look at the  
9 established system and see if it's actually working,  
10 and then maybe go revisit it from a systems aspect.

11 So, with that respect, that's the way I see  
12 it, as being a problem or kind of cumbersome for us.

13 MR. MCGILL: I've gone through the SAIs and  
14 the EPIs, and I noticed that up to a point right after  
15 the accident, I noticed that I don't know that even  
16 half of them were completed.

17 Can you tell me why, after, you know, a year  
18 and a half or whatever or more, that there was not more  
19 of the SAIs and EPIs looked at?

20 MR. BENNETT: Well, I mean, it was presented  
21 to us quite clearly that this is not like the old MPG  
22 operation, that a good long look at a systems or an SAI  
23 might take quite awhile and would be -- you know, as  
24 I've kind of worked with the program now, it seems a  
25 little bit clearer that, you know, just to do three or

1 four a year was probably a good number, if we could do  
2 that.

3 So, with regard to the 50 some, I guess,  
4 different inspections we have to do, that I think that  
5 might qualify it.

6 MR. MCGILL: But taking that perspective, I  
7 go back then to the point of who is daily looking at  
8 discrepancies on log sheets? Who's looking at  
9 escalations of checks, and who's kind of managing the  
10 store? Who's looking at the big picture of this?

11 MR. BENNETT: That was one of our joint  
12 concerns, among all of us, that it appeared that we  
13 were not out there doing the normal surveillance that  
14 we felt we wanted to do, should do, because we were  
15 working so hard trying to work within the ATOS Program.

16 MR. MCGILL: Would you say that you went to  
17 Alaska daily in your surveillance?

18 MR. BENNETT: Not daily, but I'd be over  
19 there several times a week.

20 MR. MCGILL: Several times a week?

21 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

22 MR. MCGILL: And how long would you stay over  
23 there?

24 MR. BENNETT: Well, it would depend.  
25 Generally at least an hour or two, minimum.

1           MR. MCGILL: Did you participate or sit in on  
2 any of the ground school training?

3           MR. BENNETT: No, I have not been able to sit  
4 down in any training yet.

5           MR. MCGILL: So, the training that you're  
6 talking about of system training given to mechanics and  
7 so forth, you personally have never --

8           MR. BENNETT: Correct.

9           MR. MCGILL: -- observed that? When -- when  
10 a change was made to change the grease from Mobil 28 to  
11 AeroShell 33, --

12          MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

13          MR. MCGILL: -- can you explain how that  
14 process occurred?

15          MR. BENNETT: Actually, the actual change  
16 occurred before or about the time I was coming on board  
17 with the unit. So, I was not involved in the actual  
18 change itself. I was not even aware of it till after  
19 the accident.

20          MR. MCGILL: Do you think that John Hubbard  
21 was -- knew of this -- of the change?

22          MR. BENNETT: I really don't know.

23          MR. MCGILL: Was it required that Alaska send  
24 justification to make that change?

1           MR. BENNETT: I'm honestly not sure either on  
2 that with regard to expendables and that type of --  
3 those items, as far as how far we had to go with the  
4 justification and the documentation, because it was  
5 really not necessarily an approval process that I'm  
6 aware of with regard to those types of materials.

7           MR. MCGILL: Do you know what is required on  
8 the Alaska Maintenance Program? What are the items  
9 that are required for approval versus accepted data?  
10 Do you know offhand?

11           MR. BENNETT: I can't think of one right at  
12 the moment, no.

13           MR. MCGILL: So, it could have been data that  
14 they would have just sent to you, you would have  
15 accepted it, and it was put in place?

16           MR. BENNETT: What was that again?

17           MR. MCGILL: The job card, when it was moved,  
18 the job card was changed, --

19           MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

20           MR. MCGILL: -- and at least you would have  
21 had to receive a revision of this task card or job  
22 card. Earlier, you said you received these things.  
23 Somebody would have had to at least evaluate and look  
24 at that task card to see this change of the grease, is  
25 that --

1           MR. BENNETT: Right, and there should also  
2 have been their in-house process utilizing their MEO-1  
3 form. Any time they make a change to the program, task  
4 cards, things of that nature, they have to go through  
5 that process, and we get courtesy copies of those for  
6 review as well.

7           So, yes, there should have been some  
8 knowledge that there was something changing there,  
9 assuming that was all done through the normal process.

10          MR. MCGILL: The MEO-1 was -- was revised in  
11 December of 199- -- December 18th of 1997, and it noted  
12 the material lubricant change. January 1st of 1998,  
13 the task card that did the lubrication was issued.

14          Does the FAA receive both the MEO-1 and the  
15 task card revision and any data that would substantiate  
16 that -- that change?

17          MR. BENNETT: Normally, I would think we'd  
18 just see the MEO-1 and a draft of the proposed changes  
19 to the, you know, pertinent cards prior to  
20 implementation.

21          MR. MCGILL: If I asked you -- I'm sorry. If  
22 I asked you right now, could you show me documentation  
23 that was sent to you that -- from the FAA that was sent  
24 to you from Alaska to you and their justification of  
25 this change?

1           MR. BENNETT: With regard to this grease  
2 issue?

3           MR. MCGILL: Yes, sir.

4           MR. BENNETT: Yes, I have gone back and  
5 requested and received all the documentation that they  
6 utilized in accomplishing this change.

7           MR. MCGILL: That was kind of after the fact,  
8 though?

9           MR. BENNETT: Definitely after the fact. It  
10 was after the accident with my review of the documents.

11          MR. MCGILL: I assume it was you that wrote  
12 the letter back to --

13          MR. BENNETT: Yes, I was the one involved in  
14 this whole issue.

15          MR. MCGILL: As I recall, that's like April?

16          MR. BENNETT: Yeah. It was the March-April  
17 time frame. It actually came to my attention in March,  
18 and I think we came to a resolve with it in April.

19          MR. MCGILL: In the letter, you stated that  
20 your review showed -- indicated that there was not  
21 enough substantial data given to make this change.

22                 What was the data that they gave to make that  
23 change?

24          MR. BENNETT: The only data I received was  
25 fairly extensive. So, I mean, I'm not capturing

1 everything, I'm sure, as I say this, but primarily I  
2 was looking for Douglas recommended a particular MIL  
3 SPEC for their general purpose grease to be utilized on  
4 the flight controls, including the jack screw, and with  
5 the data that I had for review, there were numerous  
6 spec sheets and an awful lot of information that I'm  
7 not really extremely knowledgeable of, but I might --  
8 what I was trying to ascertain was does this grease  
9 meet that MIL SPEC with regard to whatever properties,  
10 and that's where I kind of fell out of my realm of  
11 expertise and tried real hard to find some expert  
12 within the agency and didn't have much luck.

13 MR. MCGILL: So, it's kind of safe to say  
14 really what you received was MIL SPECS of --

15 MR. BENNETT: Their --

16 MR. MCGILL: -- the 8130 -- 8133 MIL SPEC of  
17 the --

18 MR. BENNETT: 81322.

19 MR. MCGILL: 22 versus the one for --

20 MR. BENNETT: Boeing Spec.

21 MR. MCGILL: -- Boeing that worked on -- that  
22 was designed for Boeing aircraft?

23 MR. BENNETT: And throughout all the  
24 documentation, I tried to find where any place that the  
25 two -- you know, that the data sheets and the



1 specifications given to me would correlate between  
2 Boeing spec and the manufacturer's recommended spec,  
3 and I could not find that.

4 MR. MCGILL: Now, why did you think Alaska  
5 made that request?

6 MR. BENNETT: I don't know. I can only make  
7 assumptions from the various telex reports, the  
8 correspondence between Alaska and Boeing requesting the  
9 use of the grease.

10 MR. MCGILL: They would not state in their  
11 justification what that reason would have been?

12 MR. BENNETT: I don't recall if it is in  
13 there or not. I'd have to look at it. I have the  
14 documents if we would like to look at them.

15 MR. MCGILL: If -- you said you had  
16 documentation between the field reps or between --

17 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

18 MR. MCGILL: -- Boeing --

19 MR. BENNETT: Yes, it was our field rep here.

20 MR. MCGILL: -- and Alaska. Was anything  
21 said in that correspondence that would indicate why --

22 MR. BENNETT: Yes, there was.

23 MR. MCGILL: And what --

24 MR. BENNETT: I mean, there was a series of  
25 telexes, quite a few, where Alaska was continuously

1 asking for permission or something from Boeing allowing  
2 them to utilize this grease on the MD-80 aircraft, and  
3 one of the correspondence said -- you know, it was  
4 fairly candid in saying that they must have bought a  
5 carload of this stuff because they really want to use  
6 it.

7 MR. MCGILL: Okay.

8 MR. BENNETT: So, with that in mind, it would  
9 have seemed to be, you know, from an economic, you  
10 know, or, you know, some type of standardization.

11 MR. MCGILL: From that perspective, did --  
12 did the FAA look at the stores inventory after they  
13 made this change in January of '98? How -- how did  
14 they make that change, and did someone in fact look and  
15 see if they had a carload of -- of --

16 MR. BENNETT: Not that I'm aware of. I  
17 wasn't aware of any of this back then. So.

18 MR. MCGILL: So, none of this correspondence  
19 you knew about till after the fact?

20 MR. BENNETT: Right. None of this came to  
21 light for me until March of this year.

22 MR. MCGILL: Do you normally do some material  
23 inspections at store level?

24 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. Not necessarily  
25 quantities on hand, I mean, unless it's something

1 specific I'm looking for, but, I mean, I personally  
2 have done a base inspection over there, looking at  
3 items stocked on shelves, looking for, you know, shelf  
4 life limitations and things of that nature.

5 So, yes, I have looked at that grease  
6 storage, you know, those types of things.

7 MR. MCGILL: Have you ever found any  
8 discrepancies, for instance, on shelf life?

9 MR. BENNETT: Yes, I have.

10 MR. MCGILL: In what areas?

11 MR. BENNETT: Various areas, you know, and in  
12 different shops within the organization, in the base  
13 maintenance area, in the line maintenance area, some of  
14 the other shops, sheet metal, things of that nature,  
15 where they just have various things either were not --  
16 were not properly marked, some were marked with  
17 unlimited life that actually had a shelf life, some  
18 shelf life-expired items that were stocked, things of  
19 that nature.

20 MR. MCGILL: When the task card was changed  
21 in January of 1998, making the change from Mobil 28 to  
22 AeroShell 33, how did they make this transition?

23 MR. BENNETT: With regard to the internal --

24 MR. MCGILL: To --

1 MR. BENNETT: -- process that they utilized?

2 MR. MCGILL: Yes. How -- how would they make  
3 a change? What did they do with their Mobil 28 grease?  
4 How was this transition made? Was there any procedures  
5 that set forth to people that did this work? Did --  
6 did anyone look at the different bases? Did anyone  
7 look at -- was there any surveillance of anything --

8 MR. BENNETT: I don't know at this point, if,  
9 you know, we -- we accomplished any surveillance or  
10 anything related to that.

11 MR. MCGILL: Would it have been acceptable to  
12 use up the Mobil 28 --

13 MR. BENNETT: Well, they still utilize that  
14 grease --

15 MR. MCGILL: I know that.

16 MR. BENNETT: -- for other areas.

17 MR. MCGILL: Into -- since we're into jack  
18 screw assemblies, let's just stick to that area --

19 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

20 MR. MCGILL: -- right there. That task card  
21 calls for a specific grease, --

22 MR. BENNETT: Right.

23 MR. MCGILL: -- which was Mobil 28, and then,  
24 on January 1st of '98, it was changed --

1 MR. BENNETT: Changed.

2 MR. MCGILL: -- to 33. So, --

3 MR. BENNETT: Right.

4 MR. MCGILL: -- at that point, was there any  
5 FAA oversight to verify that that grease was in fact  
6 changed over? Did Alaska present any procedures that  
7 allowed them to make that transition?

8 MR. BENNETT: Not to my knowledge. I don't  
9 know.

10 MR. MCGILL: Is there anyone on the  
11 Certificate Management Team that would be cognizant of  
12 these -- of this type of change to these task cards,  
13 and would they have the technical expertise to -- to  
14 know what was being performed?

15 MR. BENNETT: When you say "what was being  
16 performed", I'm not quite sure --

17 MR. MCGILL: Between one grease to another  
18 grease.

19 MR. BENNETT: I have my doubts that any of us  
20 here on the team would have, you know, a chemist  
21 background to be able to make a real definitive  
22 determination between the two greases.

23 MR. MCGILL: And I wouldn't either. That's  
24 what I'm trying to drive at. Since I wouldn't know,  
25 would you not think it appropriate to find out is -- is

1 it appropriate, if they did not in fact give you  
2 justification for this change?

3 MR. BENNETT: I would, personally.

4 MR. MCGILL: Then, when this task card came  
5 in in January '98, then why didn't you look at that and  
6 say tell me why you did this?

7 MR. BENNETT: At the time, I wasn't in that  
8 position.

9 MR. MCGILL: Who was in that position?

10 MR. BENNETT: To the best of my knowledge, it  
11 was Bill Whitacker, was the PPM on the MD-80 fleet at  
12 the time.

13 MR. MCGILL: So, the -- it wouldn't  
14 necessarily have been John Hubbard or yourself that  
15 would have gone to the specialist on that particular  
16 airplane, which would have been Mr. Whitacker, is that  
17 correct?

18 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. I -- I may not have even  
19 seen that card necessarily, because normally that would  
20 be routed through the -- the PPMs.

21 MR. MCGILL: So, the total correspondence  
22 that's coming out of -- back and forth between Alaska  
23 Airlines and the -- and this facility here at the --  
24 for the FAA, all the people involved did not  
25 necessarily look at all of these -- this

1 correspondence, whatever it might be?

2 MR. BENNETT: We do route the bulk of the  
3 information that comes through here through each person  
4 for kind of a cursory review of what's going on, to  
5 stay abreast of the different things. So, yes, that  
6 may have easily passed over my desk, if that's what  
7 you're asking here, but I don't necessarily recall it.

8 MR. MCGILL: You said you had a background in  
9 QC?

10 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

11 MR. MCGILL: Can you explain a little bit  
12 about the QC of Alaska Airlines, that department?

13 MR. BENNETT: With regard to what?

14 MR. MCGILL: What your -- just a quick  
15 snapshot overview of the -- of the quality control,  
16 quality assurance, the chief inspectors, just since --

17 MR. BENNETT: Okay. Chet Yancey was the  
18 chief inspector through the bulk of the time, until  
19 just recently. He seemed a very competent person,  
20 knowledgeable, was very understanding any time we came  
21 for -- with a request to him, he understood the nature  
22 of what we wanted and that type of thing.

23 Most of the folks that I've interacted with  
24 with regard to the inspection folks seemed again  
25 knowledgeable, have quite a few years of experience,

1 gave me no reason necessarily to doubt them.

2 With regard to quality assurance, I believe  
3 that they were shorthanded there, that the auditing  
4 process could have been better, that -- just more with  
5 the auditing area than the quality control area.

6 MR. MCGILL: Let's talk about that quality  
7 assurance area then.

8 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

9 MR. MCGILL: You suggested that maybe they  
10 were understaffed. Was there any concern? Did the FAA  
11 ever mention anything about this to Alaska? Was there  
12 any documentation that you -- you sent --

13 MR. BENNETT: I don't recall. No, I don't  
14 recall myself sending something to them saying that you  
15 need more people.

16 MR. MCGILL: Well, then what were the  
17 physical reasons that you could see that they would  
18 need more people? What were the indicators?

19 MR. BENNETT: That I could go out there and  
20 find quite a few different areas that may have been  
21 identified before by their auditors, you know, and it  
22 just didn't seem like there was a lot of follow-up  
23 activity, didn't seem like there was necessarily a lot  
24 of administrative control over those areas with regard  
25 to, you know, the upper management folks, you know,



1 actually getting out there and ensuring that what was  
2 supposed to be done was being done, that a good follow-  
3 up process where the auditors are actually out there  
4 doing more follow-up activity after an audit.

5 MR. MCGILL: Did you find that it was -- that  
6 the QC inspectors did a better job than auditing of the  
7 QC area?

8 MR. BENNETT: Well, it's to me kind of  
9 looking apples and oranges because the inspection  
10 folks, you know, were doing more of the physical  
11 inspection of the -- the aircraft and, you know,  
12 required inspection items, things of that nature,  
13 whereas the auditing group is more out there to ensure  
14 program compliance and working within the -- the  
15 different areas of the general maintenance manual and  
16 the procedures set forth by Alaska.

17 MR. MCGILL: Taking what you just said right  
18 there, --

19 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

20 MR. MCGILL: -- a task card in this case, a  
21 task card that was at the maximum on an in-plate check  
22 was performed on the Aircraft 963.

23 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

24 MR. MCGILL: Was there any follow-up that  
25 assurance or the quality control inspectors was ever

1 made about just that one task card? Do you know?

2 MR. BENNETT: I have no knowledge of that. I  
3 don't.

4 MR. MCGILL: Would that not be part of their  
5 duties, if you -- to look at the results of these task  
6 cards and better evaluate them to --

7 MR. BENNETT: Yes, I think it -- I know that  
8 that is part of their program, to evaluate -- to review  
9 work cards and things of that nature, though I'm not  
10 sure that they would do a hundred percent looking at  
11 every piece of paper.

12 MR. MCGILL: Do they come up or go down to  
13 Oakland to check the different -- check that facility?

14 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

15 MR. MCGILL: How often would they do that?

16 MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure. Probably on an  
17 annual basis. Perhaps a biennial basis.

18 MR. MCGILL: How long would they stay there  
19 when they did that?

20 MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure. Day or two.

21 MR. MCGILL: As far as the quality  
22 inspectors, the ones in Seattle, do they also go down  
23 and check their own inspectors at, say, Oakland?

24 MR. BENNETT: Not to my knowledge.

1           MR. MCGILL:  Would the inspectors at Oakland  
2 come to Seattle for recurrent training?

3           MR. BENNETT:  I'm not sure if they'd come to  
4 Seattle because they perform an awful lot of the  
5 training on site in Oakland.

6           MR. MCGILL:  How is the recurrent training at  
7 Alaska Airlines, in your view?

8           MR. BENNETT:  It could be improved.

9           MR. MCGILL:  And why?

10          MR. BENNETT:  I feel that the -- I've seen a  
11 fair amount of simple mistakes with paperwork, with  
12 accomplishing fairly routine tasks, that I believe  
13 recurrent training, a good sound recurrent training  
14 program would help eliminate that type of error and  
15 perhaps decrease that error rate.

16          MR. MCGILL:  You earlier said that you  
17 checked log discrepancies.  Do you also review MIG-4 --

18          MR. BENNETT:  Hm-hmm.

19          MR. MCGILL:  -- discrepancies after the  
20 checks are completed?

21          MR. BENNETT:  Sometimes.

22          MR. MCGILL:  How often does this occur?

23          MR. BENNETT:  Not very often.

24          MR. MCGILL:  When is the last time you had  
25 checked --

1           MR. BENNETT: Well, just within the last  
2 couple months.

3           MR. MCGILL: I'm going to rephrase that.  
4 Prior to the accident, when was the last time you  
5 looked at a MIG-4 coming out of, say, the Oakland  
6 facility?

7           MR. BENNETT: I can't recall.

8           MR. MCGILL: Do you think you ever did it?

9           MR. BENNETT: Yes, I think I probably did,  
10 but I really don't recall exactly when because I had  
11 looked at a few C check packages prior to that  
12 accident.

13          MR. MCGILL: What about the certification of  
14 tools and the calibration of tools? How often do you  
15 go into a storeroom and check that?

16          MR. BENNETT: Not terribly often, though I  
17 have gone in there on a couple of occasions since I've  
18 been with the unit and done an inspection in the  
19 facility, not in Oakland but here in Seattle, both at  
20 the base, in the hangar, and out on the line.

21          MR. MCGILL: But you also look at the -- any  
22 repairs that were -- would you monitor any of the  
23 repairs that were performed on these tools?

24          MR. BENNETT: I have not, no.

1           MR. MCGILL: How would you verify the  
2 calibration of MDT equipment?

3           MR. BENNETT: I would have to go back and  
4 look for the normal certification process, the certs  
5 that would come from whatever area.

6           MR. MCGILL: How would you know just offhand  
7 which MDT instruments required certification?

8           MR. BENNETT: Just offhand, I'm not sure that  
9 I would.

10          MR. MCGILL: Is a program in place at Alaska  
11 Airlines that would guide you in that direction?

12          MR. BENNETT: With regard specifically to  
13 MDT?

14          MR. MCGILL: Yes, specifically MDT.

15          MR. BENNETT: Not that I'm aware of.

16          MR. MCGILL: So, it's possible that certain  
17 tools could be used that were not -- even though the  
18 manufacturer required some sort of certification or  
19 calibration that was not performed, is that correct?

20          MR. BENNETT: Yes.

21          MR. MCGILL: How often then would the FAA  
22 have some sort of an oversight that would verify all of  
23 these tools like that? Is that done in any kind of an  
24 annual or two-year/three-year check or who would  
25 perform that?

1           MR. BENNETT: I'd have to say that the MPG,  
2 you know. It would be a matter of a lot of it being  
3 mandated by the work program, and, additionally, if we  
4 had concerns, we may have done that, but under ATOS,  
5 it's kind of a different situation all together. So.

6           MR. MCGILL: How would you identify the  
7 legality of in-house tooling then? Do you think every  
8 tool in that -- in the bins are -- are they noted on  
9 some listing that --

10          MR. BENNETT: That are manufactured in-house?

11          MR. MCGILL: Yes.

12          MR. BENNETT: Not that I'm aware of, no.

13          MR. MCGILL: Is there any time then that  
14 these in-house tools are ever checked or verified or --

15          MR. BENNETT: Again, not that I'm aware of.

16          MR. MCGILL: When the initial program was  
17 performed, and I know you weren't here at that time,  
18 but would not a list of all tools -- in 1985, when the  
19 MD-80 aircraft was -- when Alaska was given the  
20 permission to do heavy checks, would not every tool  
21 that is required on the task cards -- some summary of  
22 all of these tools and their verification, would that  
23 not have to be presented for --

24          MR. BENNETT: Yes.

1                   MR. MCGILL: Is there a list like that now in  
2 the FAA?

3                   MR. BENNETT: I have no idea.

4                   MR. MCGILL: Who would know that?

5                   MR. BENNETT: I would have to say you'd have  
6 to go back to the folks that were here at the time.

7                   MR. MCGILL: Do you keep any of this  
8 documentation here in this facility?

9                   MR. BENNETT: We do have records here. I'm  
10 not sure how far back they go. I don't think we go  
11 back to '85 with them.

12                   MR. MCGILL: So, at that point, it's possible  
13 that whatever tooling they submitted would have been  
14 accepted, and it's been thataway since that time?

15                   MR. BENNETT: I really can't speak to that  
16 because I really don't know.

17                   MR. MCGILL: How do FAA -- does the FAA have  
18 an internal audit of themselves?

19                   MR. BENNETT: I'm honestly not familiar.  
20 I've only been with the agency five years so I'm not  
21 that intimately involved or understanding of how often  
22 that occurs. I know we've had one or two since I've  
23 been on board.

24                   MR. MCGILL: How can you verify the out-  
25 sourced maintenance that is used by Alaska Airlines?

1           MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure that I can say  
2 exactly how many times. I have looked at one or two  
3 myself.

4           MR. MCGILL: Locally or somewhere else?

5           MR. BENNETT: Mobil Aerospace. And I've been  
6 up to Everett but not to do a complete, thorough. I  
7 was more focused on a couple of different items up  
8 there. And I've looked at the B.F. Goodrich for their  
9 escape slides, so I have seen a couple of their  
10 contract vendors.

11           MR. MCGILL: Because of these times, the areas  
12 where they got behind that we've identified the last  
13 few years because of various reasons, certain aircraft  
14 were -- instead of doing it in-house, were sent out.  
15 Are you familiar with that procedure of how Alaska  
16 represents its aircraft when it's out-sourced to  
17 another facility?

18           MR. BENNETT: Yes. They don't put too many  
19 folks out there with the aircraft.

20           MR. MCGILL: Would you think it's acceptable  
21 or --

22           MR. BENNETT: No, not necessarily. Especially  
23 more in light of what we've learned recently.

24           MR. MCGILL: Was there ever any concern voiced  
25 that perhaps they needed more in depth or more manpower



1 or whatever representing their own aircraft when they  
2 were sent into these other facilities?

3 MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure if anybody else has  
4 addressed that. I can't say that I personally have,  
5 other than just to make mention of how many folks were  
6 available at the facilities that I looked at.

7 MR. MCGILL: Which PTRS is now being submitted  
8 or do you even get that nowadays since this certificate  
9 is processed.

10 MR. BENNETT: When you say PTRS being  
11 submitted, submitted by us or submitted to us?

12 MR. MCGILL: By anyone.

13 MR. BENNETT: Since ATOS?

14 MR. MCGILL: Yes.

15 MR. BENNETT: Very little. Because it's  
16 pretty much mandated we don't use the PTRS system for  
17 surveillance.

18 MR. MCGILL: So, we can merely say that the  
19 PTRS has come to a halt at this point; right?

20 MR. BENNETT: For the most part for  
21 surveillance.

22 MR. MCGILL: Did you go back and look at the  
23 NASEP inspections when you came aboard that were done  
24 in '84 and '85 and the DoD that was done in '98? Did  
25 you look at those results?

1           MR. BENNETT: I don't recall seeing the NASEP  
2 results, no.

3           MR. MCGILL: So you never really tried to go  
4 back and see what problems could have --

5           MR. BENNETT: I did but I did not necessarily  
6 see the NASEP reports. I looked back through  
7 enforcement cases and things of that nature when I  
8 first came on board to kind of get a feel for problem  
9 areas. I did not necessarily see the NASEP reports  
10 though.

11           MR. MCGILL: What about the DoD report that  
12 was done in '98?

13           MR. BENNETT: I don't recall if I saw the '98  
14 report or not. All that I can recall from the DoD  
15 stuff is that there seemed to be fairly good results  
16 from the inspections. But '98 may not be -- I'm just  
17 not sure.

18           MR. MCGILL: Is there someone here that would  
19 head the management team that has the maintenance  
20 background to understand the logic of MSG-2, MSG-3  
21 through the MRB, down to the OAMP, through the task  
22 cards that are being used by Alaska Airlines? Is  
23 somebody looking at that process?

24           MR. BENNETT: As far as I know, yes.

1 MR. MCGILL: Who does that?

2 MR. BENNETT: I believe Chris Dawson and Bill  
3 Whitacker. At least to my knowledge.

4 MR. MCGILL: So that if a task card is created  
5 by Alaska that would be different than this guidance  
6 that's been supplied, they would recognize this fact?

7 MR. BENNETT: I know Chris has brought those  
8 issues up in the past.

9 MR. MCGILL: Are you knowledgeable in that  
10 area?

11 MR. BENNETT: Very little. I mean, not  
12 thoroughly but I do have an understanding of it.

13 MR. MCGILL: If you needed outside help  
14 through the geographic area, would you as an assistant  
15 request help?

16 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

17 MR. MCGILL: Do you do it individually or  
18 would you go through the principal or can anyone --

19 MR. BENNETT: As an assistant, I normally  
20 would -- yes, any of us could do that. But normal  
21 procedures here within the office, if for no other  
22 reason than courtesy, we'd always keep the PMI involved  
23 and informed. And we might let him make that decision.  
24 Just depends on the situation. If he was not  
25 available, I wouldn't hesitate to call for assistance

1 if I thought it was needed.

2 MR. MCGILL: When I look at a list of all the  
3 people that on you all's team for the certificate  
4 management, I see changes to -- quite a few changes in  
5 there. Does that ever seem to present a problem to  
6 ever be able to understand how the maintenance program  
7 of a carrier that you're going to do oversight with?

8 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

9 MR. MCGILL: I hear from other carriers also  
10 that under the ATOS system when inspectors come in,  
11 it's like carriers trying to teach the inspectors their  
12 program. And about the time they're learning, some  
13 reason or other they're transferred somewhere else and  
14 another one comes in and it's another process.

15 They're doing the teaching and the FAA is  
16 doing the learning.

17 MR. BENNETT: That's one of the big problems  
18 that we have, especially being the certificate  
19 management office. We have no control over the  
20 geographic folks because they're controlled  
21 independently in different offices out there.

22 A prime example is we just had a new  
23 inspector assigned to us, Rick Browning, out of L.A.  
24 He just came up, just received the training. Is now  
25 over on the American certificate out of the L.A. office

1 and we've been given somebody else that we're going to  
2 have to school up.

3 So we have absolutely no control over who  
4 gets assigned to us and qualifications and all that.

5 MR. MCGILL: Since you've been at least five  
6 years in the FAA and you were under the old system  
7 where -- by the way, I've only been with the Safety  
8 Board like three years, but I spent all my career in  
9 the industry. And I dealt with principals that knew a  
10 lot about the carriers they were with.

11 Right now, who has the big picture of Alaska  
12 Airlines? Who's in charge of the oversight of Alaska  
13 Airlines?

14 MR. BENNETT: Bill Whitacker with regard to  
15 the maintenance function. I mean, is that where you're  
16 headed?

17 MR. MCGILL: You've mentioned now the  
18 maintenance. What about ops? What about dispatch?  
19 What about scheduling? Who's looking at the big  
20 picture of this carrier, the oversight of that carrier  
21 with all these particular -- the training issues, the  
22 legal issues, the monitoring issues, the DoD issues?

23 MR. BENNETT: I guess I'm not quite sure when  
24 you're asking who has the overall. I mean, overall  
25 within each area would be the principal, I would have

1 to say. Beyond that, it would have to go up to our  
2 management.

3 I guess I'm not quite sure exactly what  
4 you're asking.

5 MR. MCGILL: You say your management would  
6 know then about the overview of Alaska Airlines?

7 MR. BENNETT: I guess I'm not quite sure what  
8 your question is.

9 MR. MCGILL: I want to know who's looking at  
10 the entity of Alaska Airlines rather than just a  
11 specific area like you're doing right now, the  
12 maintenance. Who's looking at the entire picture?

13 (Crosstalk.)

14 A term that's used in the DoD is the fitness  
15 of this carrier.

16 MR. BENNETT: I'm honestly not sure. I would  
17 have to make an assumption that it would go to a level  
18 like perhaps division manager. But I'm not sure.

19 MR. MCGILL: Well, let's stop this one second.

20 (Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

21 MR. MCGILL: We now have also Mr. George  
22 Thompson, legal counsel with the FAA, and he will be  
23 representing Tim. And you have requested for him to be  
24 your representative. Is that correct?

1 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

2 MR. MCGILL: Thank you very much.

3 Dr. Brenner, would you start off the  
4 questions?

5 DR. BRENNER: Yes. Thank you. Thank you for  
6 your help so far.

7 Yesterday we talked with Phil Hoy and we said  
8 that sometimes the company complained that John Hubbard  
9 seemed too strict. Do you think that's a fair  
10 criticism? Was he too strict?

11 MR. BENNETT: No. I don't believe so. In  
12 fact, I honestly don't recall those situations, as far  
13 as him being considered too strict.

14 DR. BRENNER: What were the areas of  
15 disagreement that he may have experienced with the  
16 company in maintenance?

17 MR. BENNETT: When you say disagreements --

18 DR. BRENNER: Where you had different  
19 viewpoints and you had to resolve them. Any memorable  
20 disagreements come to mind?

21 MR. BENNETT: Nothing outstanding. I mean,  
22 the ones we've discussed, the short-term escalation  
23 process. That's probably one of the more stern actions  
24 I've seen him do where he just said that he refused to  
25 grant any more extensions until they got that system

1 under control.

2 I know the de-icing program was a constant  
3 thing.

4 DR. BRENNER: I guess at the time that he  
5 retired, he'd started paperwork, as I understand, to  
6 push for a single Director of Safety. Do you know what  
7 happened with that? I think he said he was putting  
8 pressure on them and then he retired and wasn't able to  
9 follow it.

10 MR. BENNETT: Yes. They ultimately did  
11 resolve that issues as far as I know. They've since  
12 put somebody in place to run the safety.

13 DR. BRENNER: At the time of the accident, how  
14 would you characterize morale in the certificate  
15 management group?

16 MR. BENNETT: Not great.

17 DR. BRENNER: Why was that?

18 MR. BENNETT: It's still primarily a staffing  
19 issue. I hate to keep coming back to it but it's  
20 prevalent. We were all pretty much overloaded with the  
21 work that we had to do and the frustration would be  
22 that management would say, well, come to us if you have  
23 a concern. And we would come to management and what  
24 we'd get is we feel your pain. So, --



1 DR. BRENNER: I guess that answers it. How  
2 would you characterize workload then, as well?

3 MR. BENNETT: I mean, realistically? Like I  
4 said, I started to feel like I was the only person in  
5 the unit at times because things just kept coming my  
6 way. But realistically, we were down to three  
7 inspectors on the airworthiness side after John Hubbard  
8 retired.

9 DR. BRENNER: And over the - I guess five  
10 years I think it was that you worked with the FAA, had  
11 that changed, the level, work level?

12 MR. BENNETT: I've only been with the unit for  
13 about three years, so it was relatively constant the  
14 entire time. And as we lost folks, obviously the  
15 workload increased.

16 DR. BRENNER: I've heard comments, a sense  
17 that perhaps the airline was growing too fast. There  
18 were a lot of issues related to that. Do you think  
19 that's a fair comment on them?

20 MR. BENNETT: Repeat that, please?

21 DR. BRENNER: That the airline was growing too  
22 fast. Is that fair?

23 MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure. They had an  
24 aggressive growth rate. I don't know as far as growing  
25 too fast. Too fast with respect to --

1 DR. BRENNER: I guess I'm thinking a special  
2 inspection, which I saw you were part of the team that  
3 worked on that, it noted changes in the fleet size and  
4 composition in general. This would tend to -- several  
5 categories would show that the airline was growing to a  
6 point that deserved extra surveillance.

7 MR. BENNETT: Yes. I would guess.

8 DR. BRENNER: What were the areas in which  
9 extra surveillance was especially important or being  
10 done?

11 MR. BENNETT: Initially one of the key ones  
12 most recently is putting on a new aircraft type with  
13 the 737-700s. It's a new generation aircraft. It's  
14 different from the existing traditional 37s and it  
15 requires a fair amount of man hours to do a review of  
16 their maintenance programs and everything else in order  
17 to get the aircraft in the fleet, on the certificate.

18 DR. BRENNER: And also, one of the conclusions  
19 of the group is that the quality control and quality  
20 assurance programs are ineffective. I was wondering if  
21 you could talk about that.

22 MR. BENNETT: Well, again, for the quality  
23 assurance -- primarily the quality control to a degree  
24 with regard to maybe the calibrated tool issue is about  
25 the only one I'm really intimately involved with. And

1 like I say, the quality assurance area, again in the  
2 auditing function, having adequate people out there  
3 looking at the right things, doing good thorough  
4 follow-ups, ensuring that any corrective actions or  
5 identified problems were corrected and are working,  
6 there wasn't necessarily a corrective action put in  
7 place that didn't work; those areas I think are a  
8 little weak over there.

9 DR. BRENNER: Do you think the FAA senior  
10 management was too aggressive in pushing for  
11 enforcement?

12 MR. BENNETT: The FAA management?

13 DR. BRENNER: Yes. Your management, your  
14 senior management.

15 MR. BENNETT: Too aggressive?

16 DR. BRENNER: Yes. Too strict, do you think,  
17 on the airline?

18 MR. BENNETT: No. I wouldn't say that.

19 DR. BRENNER: Do you think they should have  
20 been more strict?

21 MR. BENNETT: Perhaps in some areas. I don't  
22 have necessarily an uncomfortable feeling in that area.

23 DR. BRENNER: Okay. Thank you.

24 MR. HAMILTON: Dean Hamilton. I just want to  
25 clarify one thing.

1           You said that you had no knowledge of any --  
2 that Alaska had changed the grease until after the  
3 accident?

4           MR. BENNETT: Uh-huh.

5           MR. HAMILTON: And you don't know when they  
6 changed the card until -- you had no knowledge of it?

7           MR. BENNETT: Not prior to my investigation of  
8 it, no.

9           MR. HAMILTON: I think that's all I have right  
10 now.

11          MR. PAPE: Kevin Pape, Quality Assurance with  
12 Alaska Airlines.

13           Tim, I've just got a couple of questions as  
14 far as in reference to if a task card is revised from  
15 the MAO-1 process and to goes to the MRB process, the  
16 maintenance review board and it's accepted and  
17 technical publications puts it into the board card and  
18 it's revised and it's forwarded on in a package to the  
19 FAA, is there a visual indicator on that task card that  
20 tells you what's been revised?

21          MR. BENNETT: Not necessarily, no. Not that I  
22 can think of. Because I know I've had issues in the  
23 past and I can't recall if it was actually on the task  
24 card. But change bars for revisions and that sort of  
25 thing. But I know oftentimes too in seeing the MAO-1s

1 that come through more in a draft status, it kind of  
2 gives -- it will give an example of the existing card  
3 and the proposed card. So with respect to that, you  
4 can sometimes see that correlation.

5 MR. PAPE: Will it give you a recap of what  
6 task cards have been revised and what was revised on  
7 the task cards?

8 MR. BENNETT: Just recalling those that I have  
9 reviewed, I know that there's usually the MAO-1 that  
10 gives the input from the individual that's requesting  
11 the change to give some of the background for the  
12 change. And then generally they would put forth a  
13 proposed change, what they would like to see the task  
14 card look like or what verbiage they would want to have  
15 changed on the card.

16 MR. PAPE: Has tech pubs went to the revision  
17 bar method or methodology now?

18 MR. BENNETT: Not that I've seen on the task  
19 cards.

20 MR. PAPE: Back to the greases as far as the  
21 MAO-1 process and the change between the Mobil 28 to  
22 the Aero Shell, there was a telex that made mention  
23 from Boeing or Douglas that had a statement that said  
24 no technical objection.

1                   What does that mean? Do you know?

2                   MR. BENNETT: No. To the best of my  
3 knowledge, the no technical objection is just simply  
4 saying that they have reviewed the data and they don't  
5 necessarily object to it but they're not approving  
6 anything.

7                   MR. PAPE: So that doesn't mean that it's an  
8 approval?

9                   MR. BENNETT: No. As far as I'm concerned,  
10 it's not an approval.

11                   MR. PAPE: Would it be acceptable?

12                   MR. BENNETT: In my eyes, a no technical  
13 objection is good data to add to the supporting  
14 documentation in a package that you want to have  
15 accepted or approved.

16                   It's just another piece that's nice to have  
17 in there that a manufacturer also doesn't have a  
18 problem with this process.

19                   MR. PAPE: In other words, you need additional  
20 data?

21                   MR. BENNETT: I would require additional data.  
22 Yes.

23                   MR. PAPE: That's all I have at this time,  
24 Frank.

1 MR. MCGILL: Kristen?

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Kristen Von Kleinsmid.

3 I'd like to go over the dates just to  
4 clarify. You're currently the assistant PMI; correct?  
5 And you're also the acting PPM for the MD-80 program?

6 MR. BENNETT: Correct.

7 MS. VON KLEINSMID: How long have you been in  
8 the position of acting PPM for MD-80?

9 MR. BENNETT: Officially just the last week or  
10 two.

11 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And prior to the last week  
12 you were the acting PPM for engines?

13 MR. BENNETT: To put this in perspective, as  
14 we did not have people here to dedicate to those  
15 positions, those responsibilities were given to me.

16 MS. VON KLEINSMID: So how long did you assume  
17 those responsibilities of acting PPM for engines?

18 MR. BENNETT: Probably the major portion of  
19 the time I've been assigned to the certificate.

20 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And you were acting PMI  
21 from October of '99 to February of 2000?

22 MR. BENNETT: Correct.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Did you serve any other  
24 time as acting PPM for the MD-80 program prior to the  
25 last two weeks?

1 MR. BENNETT: Not officially, no.

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Yesterday we were told  
3 that in June of '99 that you shared something --  
4 because Tim Miller left to go be FSDO? And did you not  
5 -- you weren't PPM for MD-80?

6 MR. BENNETT: That was another just a  
7 collateral duty assigned, yes. But I was not  
8 officially assigned to that position, no.

9 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. Because I have you  
10 down as being propulsions part-time and MD-80 program  
11 manager part-time in June of '99 but that's not true?

12 MR. BENNETT: Those were put onto me as  
13 collateral duties.

14 MS. VON KLEINSMID: What was your primary  
15 collateral -- what was your primary duty?

16 MR. BENNETT: Assistant PMI is my official  
17 duty, official title.

18 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. In June of '99?

19 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

20 MS. VON KLEINSMID: So even though it wasn't  
21 your primary duty, you made a statement today when we  
22 asked about reviewing the task cards that that would  
23 have been evaluated by the partial program managers for  
24 each program type. So in June of '99, since that  
25 wasn't your primary duty, you wouldn't have --



1           MR. BENNETT: I mean, it was just another duty  
2 included in my --

3           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Dump?

4           MR. BENNETT: Yes. Dump. Good way to phrase  
5 it.

6           (Laughter.)

7           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Talk a little bit about  
8 deferred maintenance. You said you had some concerns  
9 regarding the deferred maintenance. A lot of it was  
10 passenger convenience items?

11          MR. BENNETT: Yes. There were different areas  
12 in the deferral process. I think it was just being  
13 used relatively loosely and I understand the deferral  
14 process and I know that it's not something unique in  
15 this particular situation, but I mean, I have a couple  
16 of enforcement actions out on some deferral processes  
17 that were accomplished.

18          MS. VON KLEINSMID: And that's going to be my  
19 next question. What examples of enforcement actions do  
20 you have outstanding or had you written in the three  
21 years that you've been working in this office?

22          MR. BENNETT: If I can remember. I'm in a  
23 case right now where there was a deferral of a door  
24 skid on an MD-80 aircraft that had no basis for the  
25 deferral. The basis that was utilized was an

1 engineering authorization Alaska Airlines put in place  
2 for a one-time ferry permit and they utilized that  
3 information for a continued operation of the aircraft  
4 and deferred it with that as the basis for deferral.

5 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Anything else come to your  
6 mind?

7 MR. BENNETT: Yes. There was another one.  
8 There was a carpet in a galley area on a MD-80 aircraft  
9 that was coming loose. The flight attendants had  
10 complained that they were tripping over it and there  
11 was a great degree of confusion as far as how to repair  
12 that. They had trouble repairing it and ultimately  
13 ended up putting that on a deferral also, which again  
14 didn't have any basis for the deferral.

15 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Can you give me a number,  
16 a rough estimate of how many enforcement cases you  
17 might have written up regarding deferral items?

18 MR. BENNETT: Just off the top of my head, two  
19 or three. That's all that comes to mind right now.

20 MS. VON KLEINSMID: What about in comparison  
21 to other airlines. You told us you went on some  
22 inspections and I think you mentioned B.F. Goodrich,  
23 Mobil Aerospace in Everett.

24 MR. BENNETT: Well, actually, Mobil Aerospace  
25 is in Mobil, Alabama.

1 MS. VON KLEINSMID: I sort of figured that.

2 But no other major airliner inspections?

3 Have you gone out on other inspections for like

4 American or Northwest?

5 MR. BENNETT: No.

6 MS. VON KLEINSMID: So can you make any  
7 comparison of MEL items at Alaska Airlines relative to  
8 other air carriers?

9 MR. BENNETT: Not specifically, no.

10 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And you said Hubbard was  
11 not going to allow any more extensions. And what were  
12 you talking about? I guess this would be when you have  
13 aircraft in C checks --

14 MR. BENNETT: Short-term escalations.

15 MS. VON KLEINSMID: -- beyond their time  
16 period and they were being extended and he was putting  
17 his foot down. This was about a year and a half ago?

18 MR. BENNETT: To the best of my -- yes.

19 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Is that what you said?

20 MR. BENNETT: Uh-huh.

21 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. I have a double  
22 question but I can't figure out my handwriting, dealing  
23 with Mr. Rodriguez's of yesterday.

24 You made a comment -- and I'm not sure this  
25 is a question but do you go over to the plant several

1 times a week and usually spend approximately two hours,  
2 one to two hours. Was this after the implementation of  
3 ATOS or before?

4 MR. BENNETT: Before. More so before.

5 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And now what's your  
6 frequency on getting over to the plant?

7 MR. BENNETT: Kind of sporadic. It's more on  
8 an as needed basis. I can't really quantify that for  
9 you.

10 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Once a month or --

11 MR. BENNETT: I could be there every day of  
12 the week and then I could not be there for several  
13 weeks.

14 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Let's say in the last  
15 three months, how many times have you gone over to the  
16 plant?

17 MR. BENNETT: The last three months might not  
18 be a good representation. But to be honest with you,  
19 in the last three month, I don't know. This is just a  
20 guess. Twenty, 30 times.

21 MS. VON KLEINSMID: I believe I've asked  
22 enough questions on the grease so I'll defer that to  
23 others.

24 You made a comment that because of your  
25 staffing problems -- talk about when you say it's not

1 high enough on the priority list in terms of being able  
2 to go over some of the items we brought up earlier,  
3 checking cards, going over to the plant. What type of  
4 items have you guys been prioritizing in the last --  
5 let's take it in different stages because I know ATOS  
6 came in and your life was a bit different. But say  
7 from '97 to '99, what were the priorities going on in  
8 the office that prevented PMIs and program managers  
9 from going over and getting into the detail, doing  
10 inspections. What was occupying your time in this  
11 office?

12 MR. BENNETT: It would just depend on if there  
13 was a project that came along or -- I mean, there's an  
14 awful lot of things that come into play that shift the  
15 priority. Hot line complaints. I can't think of much  
16 different specific examples for you right at the  
17 moment. But it's just a matter of changing priorities  
18 with regard to what's coming down the pipe and what is  
19 new.

20 As far as we were concerned at the time when  
21 the surveillance was our primary duty that we would be  
22 doing that. It's hard to distinguish and give you  
23 really good examples.

24 MS. VON KLEINSMID: You made a comment here  
25 that one of us was checking these things out. So far

1 everyone we've talked to said the same that you've  
2 said, that there was never any time to go and do any  
3 surveillance or check cards -- just all staffing in  
4 terms of not having enough people and not --

5 MR. BENNETT: Those functions did occur but  
6 probably not with as much frequency and dedicated time  
7 to them as I think I would have liked to have seen  
8 anyway.

9 MS. VON KLEINSMID: I think a question was  
10 asked about visitations to Oakland. Have you ever gone  
11 to Oakland?

12 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

13 MS. VON KLEINSMID: During what phase of your  
14 -- in what role were at the time when you went to  
15 Oakland?

16 MR. BENNETT: The first visit to Oakland was  
17 primarily after all the problems with the mechanics  
18 down there, the Leatie incident and all that. I was  
19 requested to go down there and just talk to a few of  
20 the mechanics and kind of get a feel to see if I could  
21 ascertain what -- more or less what the culture was,  
22 what the attitudes were down there, and just see if I  
23 could find anything there to help substantiate all the  
24 stuff that was going on.

1 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And what was the culture?

2 MR. BENNETT: To be honest with you, I talked  
3 to I think about 10 people, maybe 12 people down there,  
4 12 different mechanics. And realistically most of them  
5 were so afraid after the IG and the FBI and everything  
6 else, I got little to no responses out of them so I  
7 couldn't make any true determination there.

8 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Did you take back any  
9 other reflections of the Oakland facility at that visit  
10 in terms of the mechanics, the expertise level?

11 MR. BENNETT: No. I didn't spend a lot of  
12 time there so it seemed to be fairly well organized and  
13 the operation seemed to be going okay. And again, it  
14 was kind of hard to determine because there was an  
15 awful lot of apprehension with my being there.

16 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was this not about the  
17 same time as Hubbard had started to get a lot of  
18 complaints in terms of aircraft coming out of C check  
19 continually being late?

20 MR. BENNETT: It would have been within that  
21 time frame but that wasn't necessarily what I -- I  
22 wasn't focused on that. No.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: You weren't asked to go  
24 down and see if you could find out any answers to --

1 MR. BENNETT: To that particular situation?

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: -- about their problems?

3 MR. BENNETT: No.

4 MS. VON KLEINSMID: No. It was just --

5 MR. BENNETT: I did try to get into -- you  
6 know, as far as staffing, urgency from management to  
7 get aircraft out quickly, that type of thing is what I  
8 was talking to the mechanics about. But realistically,  
9 all I was really able to put together was that they had  
10 recently put quite a few people on board. And they did  
11 not feel -- go ahead.

12 MS. VON KLEINSMID: I was just saying were  
13 those individuals directly out of A&P school or were  
14 they seasoned mechanics? Did they come from Seattle?

15 MR. BENNETT: I don't recall. There may have  
16 been one or two that were fairly fresh mechanics. It  
17 seemed like most of them had either prior military or  
18 that maybe either had come from another airline or  
19 another facility. So they had been working as an A&P.

20 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And were you going to say  
21 something else?

22 MR. BENNETT: No.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. Talk about  
24 training. You made some comment that you saw mistakes  
25 coming out like in paperwork, how paperwork was filled



1 out. So there were some training issues, you believed.

2 Do you have any idea what the training budget  
3 -- was training de-emphasized over the last say three  
4 year period of time here at Alaska Airlines?

5 MR. BENNETT: Not that I'm aware of. I can't  
6 say that it was de-emphasized.

7 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Ever talk to Trimbürger  
8 regarding training and what classes?

9 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

10 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And what type of  
11 conversation did you have with Mr. Trimbürger?

12 MR. BENNETT: I don't recall the exact  
13 incident but there were several items where small  
14 things, minor problems with paperwork and things like  
15 that, things that are fairly routine. And after seeing  
16 several of these incidences I mentioned to him that  
17 perhaps a good sound recurrent training program would  
18 help alleviate that.

19 I understand it's a fairly cyclic event being  
20 out in the industry that you get your mechanics that do  
21 their paperwork very well for quite a while and then it  
22 will taper off and diminish.

23 I did find as a director of quality in there  
24 that recurrent training, good OJT, things of that  
25 nature, helped kind of flatten that line out a little

1 bit. So I really had some discussions on that. But at  
2 the time, he was not inclined to go that way.

3 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And you never raised any  
4 concerns or any problems or frustrations on his part  
5 regarding the training budget?

6 MR. BENNETT: No. I mean, in that  
7 conversation, all I recall is that they had gone  
8 through a similar thing and it had just taken a lot of  
9 time out with regard to pulling the mechanics off the  
10 floor and all that. I mean, I'm sensitive to that,  
11 having run a training department also, that you're  
12 drawing assets off from the production aspect of the  
13 operation. So it's a concern on that. But no, he did  
14 not express necessarily a specific problem with budget  
15 or something along that line.

16 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And you only really had  
17 one conversation with Mr. Trimbürger regarding training  
18 that you recall?

19 MR. BENNETT: That I recall right now.

20 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And did you take it upon  
21 yourself at any time to actually check how many  
22 training classes were being run by Alaska Airlines,  
23 whether it be 737 or MD-80? Did you see any decrease  
24 in the frequency of classes or an increase in the  
25 frequency of classes?

1           MR. BENNETT: Not necessarily, no. Because we  
2 get a monthly newsletter from them that gives their  
3 schedule of classes to be offered and they seem to be  
4 relatively consistent. You do see that if something  
5 new like the 700s that are coming on board, you see an  
6 increase in training activity for that type of  
7 operation.

8           MS. VON KLEINSMID: And following the crash  
9 and there was a recheck, the FAA put out the AD  
10 regarding the recheck of the jack screws and there was  
11 a big emphasis at all airlines to go and do that.

12           Were you involved in any way on the recheck  
13 of the jack screws?

14           MR. BENNETT: No. Not actually being out  
15 there watching the rechecks, no.

16           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was there any individual  
17 from the FAA that was out with Alaska Airlines'  
18 mechanics and management during the recheck of MD-80s?

19           MR. BENNETT: Yes.

20           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Who?

21           MR. BENNETT: One that I can think of right at  
22 the moment is Corky Lukes here. And now that I say  
23 that -- I mean, I was over there. And when you say  
24 rechecking the jack screw, what specifically are you  
25 talking about? Because --

1 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Doing the end plate check.

2 MR. BENNETT: Okay. Now the end plate check is  
3 something different. Because what I'm talking about is  
4 when they found the metal chips and all that. The  
5 initial day when that was first discovered I had gone  
6 over to the hangar here and I sent Corky down to  
7 Portland because there were two aircraft in question at  
8 that time. And that's where they were located.

9 MS. VON KLEINSMID: They were just looking for  
10 chips and they weren't doing end plate checks?

11 MR. BENNETT: It was just something new that  
12 had arisen, yes. And we were immediately addressing  
13 that situation.

14 Now with regard to the end plate check, yes,  
15 but I can't give you a specific name right off the top  
16 of my head here. There was FAA oversight on them  
17 though that I recall.

18 MS. VON KLEINSMID: That's all I have.

19 MR. SEYER: Lance Seyer.

20 Could you start by giving us a job  
21 description or a job function of the assistant PMI?  
22 What are your duties? What are you responsible for as  
23 the assistant PMI?

24 MR. BENNETT: To be honest with you, without  
25 looking at my PD again, I don't know if I could

1 regurgitate that.

2 In a nutshell, perhaps to assist the  
3 principal in performing his normal functions and do the  
4 work assigned to me through him, which would normally  
5 encompass review of programs, doing surveillance in  
6 different areas that he might have concerns.

7 MR. SEYER: As assistant PMI, does all the  
8 paperwork when your inspectors go out in the field for  
9 surveillance, do all forms and reports that go to the  
10 PMI pass over your desk on the way to him so you are  
11 fully aware of everything that's going on as well as  
12 the PMI?

13 MR. BENNETT: No, not always. But we're  
14 pretty good in this unit to share that information  
15 among us. But it wouldn't necessarily come directly to  
16 me and then to him.

17 MR. SEYER: Would MAO-1s from the airline  
18 normally go through your desk on the way to the PMI?

19 MR. BENNETT: No. I would generally be  
20 included in the information loop, but no, it wouldn't  
21 necessarily come through me directly.

22 MR. SEYER: So would the PMI ask you for your  
23 input if he did receive one? Would he ask you for your  
24 input when they make their decisions whether to allow  
25 the change or not?

1           MR. BENNETT: Possibly, yes. I don't recall a  
2 specific incident, no. To more specifically answer  
3 your question, generally most of the paperwork came  
4 directly to the PMI and then it was distributed out,  
5 either delegated, assigned to one of us to follow up on  
6 or just as an informational to let us know what's going  
7 on.

8           MR. SEYER: When Mr. Hubbard retired in the  
9 Fall of '99, you were the assistant PMI at that time  
10 and then you became the acting PMI until Mr. Whitacker  
11 was assigned the duties later on in 2000. Is that  
12 correct?

13           MR. BENNETT: Uh-huh.

14           MR. SEYER: Was there any turnover time  
15 between yourself and Mr. Hubbard as far as the date  
16 that he retired? Did he call you into his office and  
17 say well, these are the current items that I have open  
18 and out there still. I want you to push these items.  
19 Was there any kind of turnover or the day he walked out  
20 the door, did you just walk in and start from that day  
21 forward?

22           MR. BENNETT: Well, there was nothing  
23 formalized in that respect. However, that's not to say  
24 that I wasn't -- we had a couple of general discussions  
25 if I remember correctly but there was no really formal

1 turnover process.

2 MR. SEYER: Were you aware of the letter that  
3 he sent to Alaska Airlines regarding the issue of the  
4 Director of Safety?

5 MR. BENNETT: Yes. I knew that that was an  
6 issue that he was working at that time.

7 MR. SEYER: As assistant PMI, as far as policy  
8 or your view of Alaska Airlines and how they're run,  
9 did you pretty much agree with the way Mr. Hubbard was  
10 -- his approach to it, or was there times that you  
11 disagreed and brought those forward?

12 MR. BENNETT: Yes. There were times we  
13 disagreed. I didn't necessarily always agree with the  
14 way he handled things. Not to say it was right or  
15 wrong, just that I felt that I would have handled it in  
16 a different respect. And we'd discuss it and he would  
17 express his views. Most times I did not have  
18 necessarily a problem with it. He had a different  
19 approach than I would have.

20 MR. SEYER: How did you view the split duties  
21 of Mr. Trimbürger with having three different titles?

22 MR. BENNETT: Personally, I feel it's awful  
23 hard to be able to juggle that many areas. I've worn  
24 those hats so I understand that you don't really get a  
25 chance to devote as much time to any one particular one

1 that would probably be warranted.

2 MR. SEYER: In your view then, these should be  
3 three separate people and not three duties assigned to  
4 one person at a major carrier?

5 MR. BENNETT: In a perfect world, I would say  
6 yes. They should be individual duties.

7 MR. SEYER: What's your view of the Director  
8 of Maintenance position that was open for a period of  
9 approximately two years?

10 MR. BENNETT: I felt the position should have  
11 been filled. I didn't quite understand the division.  
12 But again, that was not my call.

13 MR. SEYER: Does the FAA require that A&P or  
14 avionics techs have a required number of training hours  
15 per year? Is that a requirement?

16 MR. BENNETT: No.

17 MR. SEYER: As the airline was increasing the  
18 number of aircraft they had or utilizing it more hours  
19 per day and going through a time of rapid growth, did  
20 you notice any increase in the quality control or  
21 quality assurance division or the training department  
22 to keep up with the increased staffing? They hired more  
23 mechanics there.

24 MR. BENNETT: I honestly don't recall how many  
25 people were necessarily converted to or hired in as



1 inspectors or instructors. The instructor staff is  
2 relatively small and I don't recall it increasing. The  
3 inspector staff I believe did, but I honestly can't  
4 recall.

5 MR. SEYER: This is really -- you  
6 earlier when we were talking about the Quality Control  
7 Department, that as far as -- one of the QA functions  
8 was program compliance.

9 Are we talking about the old maintenance  
10 program compliance or just quality control compliance?

11 MR. BENNETT: It's more -- it's more  
12 encompassing than just quality control. It would be  
13 more the --

14 MR. SEYER: The whole Maintenance Program --

15 MR. BENNETT: -- Maintenance Program, yes.

16 MR. SEYER: -- compliance? And you mentioned  
17 that they were in the QA Department shorthanded, and  
18 because this department is supposed to oversee the  
19 compliance of the Maintenance Program, if they were  
20 shorthanded, wouldn't that be a red flag? That may  
21 mean the Maintenance Department isn't run as well as it  
22 should -- could be?

23 MR. BENNETT: Yes, and I know that was an on-  
24 going concern with Mr. Hubbard.

1 MR. SEYER: Is it a concern of yours?

2 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

3 MR. SEYER: And you -- one more question.  
4 You mentioned as far as morale on the CMT Team, one of  
5 them was you were actually down to three inspectors.

6 What is the normal amount of inspectors that  
7 you should have if you were fully staffed?

8 MR. BENNETT: I honestly don't know what the  
9 norm would be. I don't see -- don't think I've ever  
10 seen anything that would mandate or spell out how many  
11 inspectors there should be for any particular  
12 operation.

13 MR. SEYER: In your opinion, though, three  
14 inspectors was not enough at the time?

15 MR. BENNETT: No, it was not.

16 MR. SEYER: That's all I have.

17 DR. CRAWLEY: I'm Dave Crawley with Airline  
18 Pilots Association.

19 What kind of a safety reporting system was in  
20 place prior to the crash of Alaska 261 at Alaska  
21 Airlines?

22 MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure.

23 DR. CRAWLEY: You're not aware of any form

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1 design for --

2 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. I'm not aware. There  
3 may have been. I don't know.

4 DR. CRAWLEY: But you've never seen any kind  
5 of a safety report where an employee filled out a form  
6 reporting a safety concern?

7 MR. BENNETT: Not to my recollection right  
8 now, no.

9 DR. CRAWLEY: Tell me a little bit about the  
10 Engineering Department and its relationship with the  
11 Maintenance Department. Are they separate departments?

12 MR. BENNETT: When you say that, what do you  
13 mean by "separate"? They are separate -- the  
14 Engineering Department and the Maintenance Department.  
15 In that respect, yes, they are separate.

16 DR. CRAWLEY: Do you understand the  
17 relationship between the two in the corporate  
18 maintenance structure?

19 MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure I'm understanding  
20 what you're asking for.

21 DR. CRAWLEY: Are they separate departments  
22 or -- or --

23 MR. BENNETT: Yes, they're separate

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1 departments.

2 DR. CRAWLEY: Tell me what the Engineering  
3 Department does.

4 MR. BENNETT: As far as I'm concerned, they  
5 -- they -- they do evaluations on a higher level than  
6 just the mechanic with regard to structural integrity  
7 of the aircraft, issues of hardware substitutions,  
8 things of that nature that go beyond the expertise of  
9 the normal mechanic, and they're more an engineering  
10 function.

11 DR. CRAWLEY: Does the Maintenance Department  
12 run the Engineering Department?

13 MR. BENNETT: They fall under the Maintenance  
14 Department. Yes, they do.

15 DR. CRAWLEY: Does Alaska have a strong  
16 Engineering Department?

17 MR. BENNETT: When you say do they have a  
18 strong Engineering Department?

19 DR. CRAWLEY: Well, I guess I'm asking, does  
20 Engineering run Maintenance or does Maintenance run  
21 Engineering or are they separate entities?

22 MR. BENNETT: I don't see Engineering running  
23 Maintenance necessarily.

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1 DR. CRAWLEY: If Maintenance needs some type  
2 of deferral that goes beyond limits prescribed in the  
3 General Maintenance Manual, are they able to defer  
4 something that goes beyond limits in the General  
5 Maintenance Manual?

6 MR. BENNETT: They have a process where, yes,  
7 they do go to the Engineering Department at times, and  
8 Engineering does give Engineering authorizations for  
9 some things. It's not specific. There are, you know,  
10 different cases.

11 DR. CRAWLEY: How often do you see deferrals,  
12 and you've talked about there being at times excessive  
13 number of deferrals, how often do you see deferrals in  
14 which a limit has been extended beyond the -- by way of  
15 an EA, beyond what is prescribed in the General  
16 Maintenance Manual?

17 So, how often do you see deferrals that --  
18 that require an EA?

19 MR. BENNETT: Not that frequently.

20 DR. CRAWLEY: And do you review EAs and the  
21 basis for -- for the EAs?

22 MR. BENNETT: Not necessarily, no.

23 DR. CRAWLEY: Do you know what kind of a

1 basis they have for EAs or what kind of documentation  
2 Engineering Department has to provide to -- to support  
3 an EA?

4 MR. BENNETT: That would be different in many  
5 respects, depending upon what the EA was being issued  
6 for.

7 DR. CRAWLEY: Getting back to the staffing,  
8 you said that you thought Alaska Airlines had increased  
9 staffing as aircraft utilization was increased.

10 Have you ever looked at any numbers, charts,  
11 comparisons, annual numbers of mechanics on board at  
12 the Seattle base, the Oakland base, line maintenance?

13 Have you maintained any charts or made your  
14 own charts or has the airline given you any charts or  
15 numbers or graphs or anything like that?

16 MR. BENNETT: No, not some consistent tally,  
17 no.

18 DR. CRAWLEY: So, the fact that they had  
19 increased the number of mechanics to -- with this  
20 increase in aircraft utilization, that's just sort of  
21 been your overall feeling or not --

22 MR. BENNETT: More based on just seeing new  
23 faces and discussions with other folks in the company.

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1 DR. CRAWLEY: Now, Kevin Pape just briefly  
2 went through a process that he understands a lot better  
3 than I do of the approval process for changes to task  
4 cards, General Maintenance Manual or anything  
5 significant in our Maintenance Program.

6 I don't understand that process or know all  
7 the details of the process like he does and like I'm  
8 sure you do, but what I'm unclear about is when a  
9 change takes place on a task card or in the General  
10 Maintenance Manual or any type of document related to  
11 the Maintenance Department, and that's submitted  
12 through this process that -- that he briefly outlined,  
13 does it -- is the change required to be approved by the  
14 FAA prior to the implementation or is it implemented  
15 and then submitted to you after it's been implemented?

16 MR. BENNETT: Both cases can be true.

17 DR. CRAWLEY: What determines that, whether  
18 it has to be approved after the fact, after it's  
19 implemented, or approved prior to being implemented?

20 MR. BENNETT: I can't think of a good example  
21 right at this second, at the moment, but, I mean,  
22 there's certain programs that are approved through us,  
23 and any changes made to those have to have an approval

1 for every change.

2 There are also portions that are accepted  
3 within the Maintenance Program, and they have the  
4 option to go ahead and give us the -- you know, to make  
5 the change and do that, go through that process.

6 It's more encompassed under the -- the realm  
7 of the operating or the ops specs, operating  
8 specifications.

9 DR. CRAWLEY: Changing the type of grease  
10 used for -- for lubrication of control surfaces, would  
11 that be an item that they could change, submit the new  
12 task card, that the grease had already been changed and  
13 implemented, and then they would just submit that to  
14 you or would they have to submit that change to you for  
15 approval prior to implementing it?

16 MR. BENNETT: There's nothing in changing  
17 that that I'm aware of that required our approval prior  
18 to it as part of the accepted program.

19 DR. CRAWLEY: Did you see the MTL letter from  
20 Boeing regarding the change in the grease? Had you  
21 reviewed that document?

22 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

23 DR. CRAWLEY: What does it say in there

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1 regarding FAA approval?

2 MR. BENNETT: There were several caveats in  
3 there, that they had not tested the grease. They did  
4 not have any substantiating data that says it was okay  
5 to utilize that grease on the Douglas aircraft, and  
6 they also said that any approvals that may be required  
7 had to be coordinated through the FAA.

8 DR. CRAWLEY: Had to be approved by the FAA?

9 MR. BENNETT: It said any approvals that may  
10 be required had to be accomplished through the local  
11 FAA.

12 DR. CRAWLEY: But you didn't get any of this  
13 -- any of these changes until after --

14 MR. BENNETT: To my knowledge, --

15 DR. CRAWLEY: Over two years after the --  
16 after it was done?

17 MR. BENNETT: My knowledge of the grease was  
18 in March of this year.

19 DR. CRAWLEY: How about escalations of C  
20 checks or C checks were extended from 13 months to 15  
21 months? Is that an item that required approval prior  
22 to implementation?

23 MR. BENNETT: Yes, as far as I know.

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1 DR. CRAWLEY: Going back to training of  
2 mechanics, when a new mechanic is hired, do you happen  
3 to know how long his initial training is prior to being  
4 -- going to work actively on the line or in the hangar?

5 MR. BENNETT: I can't recall specifically,  
6 but it's just a matter of a couple of weeks, if I  
7 recall correctly.

8 DR. CRAWLEY: Are the new hires required to  
9 receive training on -- on both of our major aircraft  
10 types prior to going to work on the line or in the  
11 hangar?

12 MR. BENNETT: Not that I'm aware of, no.

13 DR. CRAWLEY: Have you reviewed the training  
14 syllabus for new hires?

15 MR. BENNETT: I believe I have, but I can't  
16 honestly recall. I have looked at the syllabus,  
17 syllabi, for most of the courses.

18 DR. CRAWLEY: That's all I have.

19 MR. LASLEY: Mike Lasley. Was any requests  
20 submitted by Alaska for approval or acceptance of an  
21 alternate restraining fixture tool for the end plate to  
22 check the stabilizer actuator?

23 MR. BENNETT: Not to my knowledge. I'm still

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1 looking into that at present.

2 MR. LASLEY: If -- now, the Maintenance  
3 Manual allows the use of an equivalent tool.

4 Would Alaska be able to make the  
5 determination of what's equivalent on their own or  
6 would they have to call the FAA on that or the  
7 manufacturer?

8 MR. BENNETT: The manufacturer would  
9 definitely have to, because the manufacturer is  
10 generally the one that mandates any special tooling,  
11 and we would expect to see that.

12 MR. LASLEY: Would they have to -- well,  
13 let's just say they went to the manufacturer and got  
14 the manufacturer's okay. Would they then take that to  
15 the FAA for approval of that tool or -- or would they  
16 even have to?

17 MR. BENNETT: I'm honestly not sure.

18 MR. LASLEY: Does it depend on what type of  
19 tool or --

20 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. I'd have to see it in  
21 that respect.

22 MR. LASLEY: Handled on a case-by-case basis,  
23 depending on the type of tool and test it was?

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1           MR. BENNETT: Yes. I mean, I can't honestly  
2 say how the process is going to work.

3           MR. LASLEY: Have you ever had such a request  
4 brought to you?

5           MR. BENNETT: No, I have not.

6           MR. LASLEY: That's all I have. Thank you.

7           MR. HAMILTON: I have one follow-up question.  
8 Can you -- can you explain real quickly what the  
9 difference is between FAA-approved and FAA-accepted?

10          MR. BENNETT: I'm not sure that I could give  
11 you a real good definition of that.

12          MR. HAMILTON: Does something that's FAA-  
13 accepted require the FAA's signature?

14          MR. BENNETT: No.

15          MR. RODRIQUEZ: Tim, basically what I'm going  
16 to do is go back through the questions that have  
17 already been asked and to a certain extent amplify  
18 what's come in.

19                 For instance, with respect to training, I'm  
20 not sure acting PTM -- you just said you became that  
21 recently?

22          MR. BENNETT: Yes.

23          MR. RODRIQUEZ: And that was just a

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1 collateral, it really wasn't an assignment?

2 MR. BENNETT: Prior to that?

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Yeah.

4 MR. BENNETT: Right now, it's actually  
5 official. I am the acting principal -- partial program  
6 manager.

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: On MD-80?

8 MR. BENNETT: On MD-80 aircraft, yes.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, as a practical matter,  
10 let me ask, how did -- how does it happen that the only  
11 official training you've had with the FAA involves the  
12 engine on the 737, and you're an acting partial program  
13 manager on the MD-80?

14 Was there -- is this a function of we had a  
15 slot, and it will give you some technical training to  
16 fill a billet or --

17 MR. BENNETT: I honestly don't know. The  
18 only thing I can recall is --

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Was there a request --

20 MR. BENNETT: I was going to say, I think I  
21 did request it a couple of years ago, along with other  
22 training, and it's just kind of assigned to us. I  
23 don't know by what rhyme or reason it's accomplished.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: On several occasions  
2 throughout the interview here, you have said that that  
3 was John's call or words to that effect, and that you  
4 did occasionally differ in, I think you said, approach  
5 to a problem rather than necessarily a desired outcome.

6           MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

7           MR. RODRIQUEZ: And I was just wanting to  
8 give you an opportunity to, as I frequently do in  
9 interviews, I dub people, in this case, PMI, and --

10          MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

11          MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- in the course of your two  
12 years as assistant PMI, what would you have done in  
13 this particular two-year period, had you been the PMI,  
14 to resolve problems or to surveil Alaska Airlines?

15          MR. BENNETT: Well, when I say there were  
16 differences, the way John's approach was, was that he  
17 had a fairly methodical -- he'd identify a problem and  
18 then just kind of chip away and gather enough data to  
19 where he felt he had a firm ground to stand on in order  
20 to effect a change in a particular area, and in some  
21 instances, I just think initially looking at them, I  
22 may have done something a little more immediate as  
23 opposed to working through it that way.

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1           However, I will admit that in watching him do  
2 this and learning from him, also, it's -- you know, he  
3 seemed to be fairly effective in that methodology.

4           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Now, could I characterize it  
5 as saying his was a more formal approach, and yours  
6 would have been more informal?

7           MR. BENNETT: No, not necessarily, no. It  
8 was just a matter of how he approached a particular  
9 situation with regard to -- let me see if I can think  
10 of an example. I really can't right at the moment, but  
11 I know he would often not tend to just dive into  
12 something. He'd make sure that he had all of his ducks  
13 in a row or I'm really not characterizing this well.

14           MR. RODRIQUEZ: One of the problems I'm  
15 having personally is trying to evaluate the performance  
16 of the agency surveillance of Alaska, --

17           MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

18           MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- and over the years, it's  
19 -- I have become aware that there is or the FAA has  
20 identified certain, call them, turkey tracks that  
21 indicate problems, indices that are of significance in  
22 the role of the agency.

23           In the two years that -- are you familiar

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1 with some of those? I mean, do you -- have you had  
2 training that would indicate to you, such as expansion  
3 of types of equipment, increased utilization, deferred  
4 maintenance, labor strike, those kinds of things?

5 Do you understand what I'm --

6 MR. BENNETT: I think I understand now what  
7 you're saying, and I don't recall any specific training  
8 to that effect, no.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. Well, in your two-year  
10 stint with the Maintenance Program at Alaska Airlines,  
11 I was trying to get from you an overall evaluation  
12 balanced against those particular indicators as to the  
13 health, as somebody said, or the fitness of the  
14 carrier.

15 MR. BENNETT: I would think in respect to  
16 that, there are quite a few areas that -- and again, I  
17 think the easiest way for me to characterize that is  
18 that, I mean, I've noticed repeatedly over the years  
19 that I think they had a fairly good program.

20 It's been painfully shown that the procedures  
21 were lacking of late, but, overall, that there seemed  
22 to be not as much management involvement in the  
23 operation of the Maintenance Department that I think I



1 would have expected to see, primarily regarding the  
2 insurance of the different programs and procedures that  
3 were in place, were actually being followed, and they  
4 were good and sound practices.

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: If I asked you to  
6 differentiate between lack of management involvement  
7 versus evidence of management involvement to subvert,  
8 ignore, modify existing procedures, which would you  
9 choose? They both end in the same result.

10 MR. BENNETT: Could you repeat that again,  
11 please?

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Sure. If management is not  
13 making sure procedures are followed, you wind up with  
14 procedures not being followed.

15 If management is telling you don't follow the  
16 procedure, get it done, you wind up with procedures not  
17 being followed.

18 My question is, in the case of Alaska  
19 Airlines, where do you see management -- management's  
20 role in the problem of procedures not being followed?

21 MR. BENNETT: Personally, I think that it's  
22 more the lack of involvement as opposed to directing  
23 non-compliance or not following the programs.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. Did you bid the PMI  
2 job?

3           MR. BENNETT: Yes, I did.

4           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Early in your interview, you  
5 mentioned to Mr. McGill that you were reviewing as much  
6 as a month at a time log sheets looking for something  
7 as a surveillance technique.

8           Out of that, I assume some investigation  
9 activities or something arose, is that fair?

10          MR. BENNETT: Yes.

11          MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. What I would like to  
12 know is an expression from you as to your experience  
13 when you were dealing with a problem at Alaska.

14          Did you resolve the problem before it became  
15 an LOI or routinely or --

16          MR. BENNETT: Yes, more routinely, I'd say  
17 that we tried to resolve the issues, you know, prior to  
18 it becoming a -- an LOI issue. It was more a case-by-  
19 case situation obviously, the impact, the severity, you  
20 know, regulatory compliance issues.

21          MR. RODRIQUEZ: Somewhere in here, I got the  
22 impression that your enforcement activity against the  
23 carrier was less than 10 cases or items, is that true?

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1           MR. BENNETT: I honestly don't recall. I  
2 mean, with regard to the MEL issue, yeah.

3           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Oh, with regard to the MELs?

4           MR. BENNETT: Right. I have other -- yeah.  
5 I've done other enforcements.

6           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Did you -- I wanted to focus  
7 on that MEL enforcement activity.

8                   Did you have any problem internally within  
9 the FAA processing or pursuing enforcement activity?

10          MR. BENNETT: No, not that I recall.

11          MR. RODRIQUEZ: And as I -- I gathered,  
12 increase in MEL is a -- one of those indices of trouble  
13 that I referred to earlier.

14                   If you observed that, and you said you did,  
15 why wouldn't you track that very carefully? Why  
16 wouldn't that be a numero uno, so to speak?

17          MR. BENNETT: If I recall correctly, we were  
18 watching that, but, you know, I can't give you anything  
19 definitive as far as we knew we had X amount of, and we  
20 were seeing this many more, and, you know, there was  
21 some specific actions taken there.

22          MR. RODRIQUEZ: Let's --

23          MR. BENNETT: I don't recall that right at

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1 the moment.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: That suggests to me that  
3 you're watching them generally, but you weren't  
4 watching them specifically; otherwise, you would know  
5 there was in the ball park of 20 or 10 or increase of  
6 200 or things with quantitative values to it.

7 MR. BENNETT: Well, --

8 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Not exact, but in general  
9 terms.

10 MR. BENNETT: -- I'm trying to recall, and it  
11 seems like we were requesting deferred item reports and  
12 that sort of thing. So, I mean, with respect to that,  
13 we were, but, I mean, I don't remember any specifics.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Also, you discussed the, I  
15 call it, cross-over personnel from line to base and  
16 then from base to base, Seattle, and to help out in  
17 Oakland, etc.

18 Do you know if other carriers do that sort of  
19 thing? Is that -- is that a maintenance procedure to  
20 -- I don't know whether Air Midwest was big enough to  
21 have multiple bases.

22 MR. BENNETT: Yes, we were, and oftentimes we  
23 -- I won't say oftentimes. There were occasions when,

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1     yeah, we might need more resources in another area.  
2     So, we would dedicate some of those resources to those  
3     areas.

4             MR. RODRIQUEZ: As a general practice, do you  
5     think that's a good policy?

6             MR. BENNETT: Not necessarily, no. I mean,  
7     it depends. You know, it wasn't -- I can't say that it  
8     was done that frequently.

9             MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you communicate with other  
10    PMIs or assistant PMIs directly?

11            MR. BENNETT: At times but not that  
12    frequently.

13            MR. RODRIQUEZ: You referenced there are some  
14    former Alaska employees on the CMS. How many? Do you  
15    know?

16            MR. BENNETT: Three at the moment.

17            MR. RODRIQUEZ: Three? Do you know if  
18    there's a policy regarding that?

19            MR. BENNETT: Only what I've heard is a  
20    requirement for a minimum of two years separation  
21    between the carrier and working within the agency, to  
22    be working on the certificate.

23            MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you know if that was the

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1 case here?

2 MR. BENNETT: As far as I know, yeah, because  
3 Tim Miller is where I -- when he was being brought in,  
4 there was quite a bit of activity to ensure that he had  
5 reached at least the two-year mark.

6 MR. RODRIQUEZ: You mentioned that or I  
7 understood you to say a lot of task cards have been  
8 changed recently.

9 MR. BENNETT: I don't recall saying that, but  
10 --

11 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, then let me ask it this  
12 way. Have the changes to the task cards in Maintenance  
13 Program been relatively constant during your exposure  
14 to Alaska?

15 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. More or less, I would  
16 say so.

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: When you have something like  
18 a change in a task card, and I think you've indicated  
19 in other areas, that frequently paperwork is  
20 distributed and shared with folks, but it primarily  
21 goes from the carrier to the PMI, is that correct?

22 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

23 MR. RODRIQUEZ: When there was a change to

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1 the task card, is that typically discussed with you?

2 MR. BENNETT: Not specifically, unless there  
3 just happens to be a particular item of concern or  
4 whatever, but no, generally no.

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: If you were the PMI, would  
6 you discuss it with the assistant PMI?

7 MR. BENNETT: I think I would, only to keep  
8 him, you know, completely informed, only to be able to  
9 fill in, if for no other reason.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Was that the kind of thing  
11 that might escalate to the chief for resolution, some  
12 problem that Alaska wanted to do, and the PMI didn't  
13 want to do, you as the PMI didn't want to do? Would  
14 you go to the chief to resolve that? How -- how would  
15 you resolve it?

16 MR. BENNETT: What do you mean, when you say  
17 "go to the chief"?

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, Alaska wants to change  
19 a procedure.

20 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: An item on a task card.

22 MR. BENNETT: Okay.

23 MR. RODRIQUEZ: You don't think that's a good

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1 procedure. You just -- you just turn them down and  
2 that's the end of it? It has to have your approval,  
3 doesn't it?

4 MR. BENNETT: I guess I don't really  
5 understand your question. You threw me on the chief  
6 part, I guess. When you're saying "chief", who are we  
7 talking about?

8 MR. RODRIQUEZ: The chief of CMS.

9 MR. BENNETT: Oh, okay.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Who's above the PMI.

11 MR. BENNETT: Our management. Okay. I  
12 thought you were talking about --

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: For resolution, you go up the  
14 chain, don't you?

15 MR. BENNETT: Yes, yes.

16 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, I'm asking, is a task  
17 card problem or failure to resolve, is that the kind of  
18 thing that might escalate to the chief or --

19 MR. BENNETT: Generally, I would say no.

20 MR. RODRIQUEZ: In the time you've been here  
21 as acting PMI, has there been any problems with  
22 Alaska's Maintenance Program that had to be elevated to  
23 a higher level than the PMI for resolution?

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1 MR. BENNETT: Not that I can recall.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: In changes to the task card,  
3 I understood you to say that there was -- that Alaska  
4 had -- Alaska had an in-house program. Do you  
5 participate in that in any way, the in-house program?

6 MR. BENNETT: No. When we're not a formal  
7 member of any of the process, although we obviously  
8 could go as part of it.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Are you familiar with the  
10 activity that's involved there?

11 MR. BENNETT: To a degree, yes.

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I just -- could you describe  
13 it for me? What -- what is that in-house activity  
14 you're referring to?

15 MR. BENNETT: In essence, Kevin has stated  
16 that if a process is recommended for review, they use  
17 an MEO-1 form to request that change. That goes before  
18 their Maintenance Review Board, which includes the bulk  
19 of the different departments, a representative of the  
20 different departments under the -- in the Maintenance  
21 organization.

22 They review that and make a determination of  
23 accepting it or rejecting it, and then they will inform

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1 the requester of the status of that, and it's approved,  
2 they will move on for the approval and the  
3 incorporation of the change.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Now, presumably this change  
5 in grease went through that process?

6 MR. BENNETT: As I found out, no, it did not.

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: It did not?

8 MR. BENNETT: Right.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I missed the nomenclature,  
10 but I thought you said that this in-house thing did an  
11 MEO-1, is that not -- what's an MEO-1?

12 MR. BENNETT: It's a form. It's just a  
13 request form for a change.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Is that -- wouldn't that be  
15 the subject of the in-house review or whatever?

16 MR. BENNETT: It is, and I'm trying to --  
17 well, let me take a quick look.

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Sure.

19 MR. BENNETT: Okay. There was an MEO-1  
20 generated.

21 MS. VON KLEINSMID: What's the date on that?

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: We'll get copies of it. When  
23 we finish here, Tim, what I'd like you to do is furnish

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1 copies of the -- of this chapter and verse --

2 MR. BENNETT: Sure.

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- in the process.

4 MR. BENNETT: No problem.

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Go ahead. There's an MEO-1?

6 MR. BENNETT: MEO-1 was --

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And then, this goes --

8 MR. BENNETT: -- submitted --

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- before the MRB?

10 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. And that was in July of  
11 '97, yes, and then it was -- it should go before the  
12 MRB. However, all of the normal areas, it spells out  
13 Tech Problems, Reliability, Engineering, Line  
14 Maintenance, Base Maintenance, Maintenance Control,  
15 Quality Control and Planning and Production are all  
16 members.

17 The only signatures on this are Engineering  
18 and Tech Problems. There have been lines through Base  
19 Maintenance and the Planning/Production areas. Quality  
20 Control, Line Maintenance and Reliability apparently  
21 were left out of it.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. As a practical matter,  
23 do you have any idea why Alaska would want to change

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1 its grease? Had you been hearing any drum beats of  
2 this grease stinks or --

3 MR. BENNETT: No.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- did you really need to get  
5 this new stuff or --

6 MR. BENNETT: I had --

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- what motivation was for  
8 it?

9 MR. BENNETT: No, and I cannot go into -- can  
10 only make my assumptions from what I've discovered.

11 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Since the decision was made,  
12 which you have reversed, --

13 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- what, if any, discussions  
15 have you had with Alaska about why they changed it?

16 MR. BENNETT: I really haven't had any of  
17 that dialogue with them to discuss, you know, why did  
18 we actually arrive here?

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Why did you send out a letter  
20 telling them to revert to Mobil 28?

21 MR. BENNETT: Because I believed they were  
22 not following the manufacturer's recommendations, and  
23 the information that they had given me to support their

1 change, I didn't feel was adequate, based upon, as I  
2 mentioned earlier, that I could not see the correlation  
3 between the two greases with regard to the  
4 specifications they were made to.

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And I think you -- but no  
6 technical objection is not acceptance by the carrier?

7 MR. BENNETT: No.

8 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I mean, by the manufacturer?

9 MR. BENNETT: No. No. I mean, it's fairly  
10 explicit in their no technical objection, that they  
11 have no basis or no -- no knowledge as far as the  
12 ability to utilize that aircraft -- the grease on that  
13 aircraft.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Was there any other FAA  
15 management action involved in this letter that you  
16 sent?

17 MR. BENNETT: When you say "any involvement"?

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: That's your idea or did --

19 MR. BENNETT: Oh, yeah.

20 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- someone tell you to write  
21 that?

22 MR. BENNETT: Oh, no, no, no. That was mine.

23 MR. RODRIQUEZ: You mentioned something about

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1 shelf life discrepancies. Do you recall that?

2 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What action was taken?

4 MR. BENNETT: As I recall, we worked through  
5 that process, discussed it with the carrier, got that  
6 -- got those items removed, corrected, whatever, and it  
7 was a fairly immediate --

8 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Did you confiscate that  
9 stuff?

10 MR. BENNETT: No, not necessarily.

11 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Carrier disposes of it?

12 MR. BENNETT: Carrier will dispose of it or  
13 correct the discrepancy, if it's mislabeled or  
14 something to that effect.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you go back and make sure  
16 they threw it away?

17 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, let -- is there more  
19 than one instance of this?

20 MR. BENNETT: There were several that I --

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What did they involve? What  
22 product?

23 MR. BENNETT: The one that sticks out in my

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1 mind right now is the Sheet Metal Shop had a very large  
2 quantity of various extrusions, sheet metal stock,  
3 things of that nature, that did not have any  
4 traceability on it. They had, you know, -- the tags  
5 that they normally utilized that would direct you back  
6 to ensure the traceability of the product and how good  
7 the product was could not be established, and Alaska  
8 disposed of a very large quantity of extrusions and  
9 sheet stock and the like, and --

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: More than the shelf life,  
11 that's --

12 MR. BENNETT: -- they're supposed to be on  
13 shelf life, yeah. That's more a traceability of  
14 materials.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What -- what is this you've  
16 got here?

17 MR. BENNETT: Right.

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What else -- what other  
19 things might be involved in shelf life?

20 MR. BENNETT: The -- the alladine tank within  
21 that. The process, the shelf life, was -- let's see.  
22 I'm trying to think. There may have been some, you  
23 know, glues or sealants. I can't recall exactly what.

1       There were several.

2               MR. RODRIQUEZ: No grease?

3               MR. BENNETT: I can't recall if there was a  
4 grease or not.

5               MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. I asked earlier, and  
6 I'll ask you, going back to my indices of trouble, what  
7 was the FAA presence evaluating quality assurance at  
8 Oakland?

9               MR. BENNETT: From this office, little to  
10 none. I'm honestly not sure about the geographic  
11 surveillance out of the Oakland office.

12               MR. RODRIQUEZ: Were the geographic support  
13 people doing work in Oakland on this -- on the  
14 Certificate Management Team?

15               MR. BENNETT: No. At that -- well, prior to  
16 ATOS, no. After ATOS, that established the Certificate  
17 Management Team and having geographic inspectors  
18 dedicated to our Certificate Management Unit.

19               MR. RODRIQUEZ: Isn't -- doesn't ATOS pretty  
20 well cover your tenure? You've been in ATOS a year and  
21 a half or so, and you've been --

22               MR. BENNETT: Yes. Yeah. I mean, I've been  
23 in the unit since the onset of ATOS.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: And -- and who is on the team  
2 that would do this kind of thing?

3           MR. BENNETT: Okay. We have a maintenance  
4 inspector and an avionics inspector, and that's all out  
5 of Oakland. We have a maintenance and avionics  
6 inspector, one of each.

7           MR. RODRIQUEZ: These are the -- these are  
8 folks in the category that you say you have no control  
9 over, is that right?

10          MR. BENNETT: That's true.

11          MR. RODRIQUEZ: How would you characterize  
12 the working relationship between these two inspectors  
13 at Oakland and the Certificate Management Team in  
14 general as far as surveillance is concerned? Are they  
15 doing any surveillance at Oakland?

16          MR. BENNETT: Yes.

17          MR. RODRIQUEZ: How much?

18          MR. BENNETT: Well, I don't know that I could  
19 quantify that and give you a how much.

20          MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, --

21          MR. BENNETT: I mean, there's --

22          MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- characterize --

23          MR. BENNETT: -- a fair amount of activity,

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1 primarily with our avionics inspector down there.

2 Dan Tessane was our maintenance inspector,  
3 initially assigned, and his activity was not near what  
4 the avionics inspector was.

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: How about characterizing it  
6 pre-ATOS and post-ATOS as far as what you were hearing  
7 for geographic support?

8 MR. BENNETT: Specifically, out of Oakland, I  
9 don't -- I couldn't answer that, but it did seem like  
10 there was, you know, quite a few more PTRS entries and  
11 information that came in from geographic inspectors  
12 more so than since ATOS.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you know why?

14 MR. BENNETT: Not really. I mean, my -- my  
15 best guess would be that we had specific inspectors now  
16 assigned to us, and that was their primary function.  
17 So, consequently, other geographic inspectors were told  
18 basically that that's their realm and, you know, don't  
19 necessarily cross over and look at these different  
20 carriers.

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: We talked about recurrent  
22 training at Alaska. Do you know if Alaska has  
23 recurrent training for mechanics at the present time?

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1           MR. BENNETT: It's not a generalized  
2 recurrent training, no. There is some specific areas  
3 that do require recurrent training, require inspection  
4 item, requires that -- certain NTD activities, that  
5 sort of thing, require recurrent training, but as a  
6 general statement, no, there's -- mechanics don't  
7 normally get recurrent training.

8           MR. RODRIQUEZ: As a matter of fact,  
9 regulations don't even provide for specific guidelines  
10 with respect to mechanic training anywhere, do they?

11           MR. BENNETT: Well, there is a regulation  
12 that does talk to it but not very well.

13           MR. RODRIQUEZ: What -- what -- can you cite  
14 it?

15           MR. BENNETT: I couldn't. I haven't got it  
16 committed to memory.

17           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay.

18           MR. BENNETT: But there is a regulation that  
19 does address maintenance training, and just as a broad  
20 statement, in essence, it says they should be  
21 adequately trained and that's about the basis -- that's  
22 about the bulk of that regulation.

23           MR. RODRIQUEZ: It's one short paragraph?

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1           MR. BENNETT: Not a real big regulation,  
2 doesn't have much teeth in it.

3           MR. RODRIQUEZ: I -- I gathered -- doesn't  
4 mean it's accurate, but I gathered from your comments  
5 that in a lot of cases, you had little or no input to  
6 decisions that were made by the PMI prior to you  
7 becoming the acting PMI, is that fair, and if it isn't,  
8 put it in your own words?

9           MR. BENNETT: Well, when you say "input",  
10 what do you mean exactly?

11           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, what I started out  
12 questioning you on was you said that's John's call or  
13 --

14           MR. BENNETT: Okay.

15           MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- reference --

16           MR. BENNETT: Yeah.

17           MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- to that.

18           MR. BENNETT: I would have input as far as,  
19 you know, I can express my opinion or, you know, we  
20 could have maybe a general discussion on it, but, you  
21 know, in saying that, I'd just say that regardless of  
22 my input, that's still his call, and it would be his  
23 determination to go whatever route he saw fit.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Was there a formal structure  
2 to this coordination between you and the PMI?

3           MR. BENNETT: Not necessarily, no.

4           MR. RODRIQUEZ: You didn't have a weekly  
5 meeting or anything of that nature?

6           MR. BENNETT: Not for those specific things,  
7 no. We do have a weekly meeting here within the unit  
8 for just a general discussion of items that may be of  
9 interest to the group or have some specific bearing or  
10 require some coordination.

11           MR. RODRIQUEZ: And in reference to the NASEP  
12 past inspections and things of that nature that have  
13 been conducted here, you said you had not reviewed  
14 those, --

15           MR. BENNETT: Correct.

16           MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- but that you did review  
17 past enforcement.

18           It occurred to me that past enforcement may  
19 reflect a condition of the carrier and/or the  
20 effectiveness of the unit but might not indicate  
21 problems within the unit itself, the CMS.

22           Do you have any knowledge or do you have any  
23 comments to make about the -- the working relationship

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1 within the unit, the efficiency of the unit or the  
2 effectiveness of the unit, as it's constituted at the  
3 present time?

4 You heard no discussions about what NATOFS --  
5 NATOFS -- giving my background away.

6 You heard no discussions about what NASEP  
7 said about this outfit?

8 MR. BENNETT: I don't recall it. No, I  
9 don't. What NASEP said about -- about this unit?

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Yeah.

11 MR. BENNETT: No.

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you know what the purpose  
13 of a NASEP inspection is?

14 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. The best of my knowledge  
15 is an in-depth look at a carrier, just, you know, a  
16 fitness review, in essence.

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Of the carrier?

18 MR. BENNETT: Of the carrier.

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And would that have -- would  
20 that have any reflection on the Surveillance Unit  
21 responsible for the carrier?

22 MR. BENNETT: Yes. Yes, it would.

23 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Have you ever looked at a

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1 NASEP report on any -- or participated in any NASEP  
2 inspection of any carrier?

3 MR. BENNETT: No. I have not participated in  
4 any NASEPs.

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Now, I don't want to split  
6 hairs, but the FAA is replete with inspection or  
7 inquiries that they conduct.

8 Are you aware of any investigations or  
9 inquiries or special inspections or what have you of  
10 the CMS here in the time you've been here?

11 MR. BENNETT: Not that I can recall. I'm  
12 trying to recall. There may have been something.  
13 There have been numerous -- well, numerous may not be  
14 the correct term. But there have been situations with  
15 regard to past things going on here --

16 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I'm referring to your tenure,  
17 the time you've been here.

18 MR. BENNETT: No.

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. You were the acting  
20 PMI from '97 to '99?

21 MR. BENNETT: No.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: No?

23 MR. BENNETT: Assistant PMI, not acting PMI.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: What was the -- okay.  
2           Assistant PMI. I understood you to relate an increase  
3           in activity at the carrier, Alaska, and you tied it to  
4           the growth rate of the 737-700.

5           MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

6           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Had the carrier not grown  
7           significantly prior to that 737-700 coming on board in  
8           terms of numbers of aircraft, numbers of pilots,  
9           utilization of aircraft?

10          MR. BENNETT: They were taking delivery of  
11          aircraft but not at a huge rate that I can see. I  
12          mean, the 700 is -- the onset of taking delivery of the  
13          700 was probably the most aggressive increase in the  
14          fleet. That's why I gave that example.

15          MR. RODRIQUEZ: How many are there?

16          MR. BENNETT: The last that I recall, it was  
17          about eight or 10.

18          MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, I wasn't going to get  
19          into it, but I -- just so I don't -- to maintain the  
20          flow here.

21          Are -- are you familiar or did you have --  
22          participate in the resolution of the controversy over  
23          Alaska's Maintenance Program, where the FAA was going

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1 to withdraw their authority for base maintenance?

2 MR. BENNETT: Yes. I did participate in  
3 that, yes.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What role did you have in  
5 that?

6 MR. BENNETT: For the most part, just working  
7 with some of the activities initially. With regard to  
8 the --

9 (Telephone ringing)

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, first of all, punch the  
11 button.

12 MR. BENNETT: Primarily working with Bill  
13 Whitacker, the new PMI, and discussing it. There was  
14 general discussions on what's going on, and like I  
15 said, I worked with the initial -- I initially worked  
16 with the group where we opted to bring everybody in  
17 from Alaska and go through the heavy check process, do  
18 that review, kind of work through that whole process  
19 that we had developed, prior to the NSI inspection.

20 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What's NSI?

21 MR. BENNETT: National Safety Inspection.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What is that?

23 MR. BENNETT: I think it's a brand-new term

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1 to the FAA. It was in essence an in-depth group that  
2 was headed up by AFS-40. I don't know how you  
3 characterize it, but it was a specific group of  
4 individuals that came in to do a focused inspection on  
5 Alaska Airlines with emphasis to the heavy check.

6 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Does your aviation career go  
7 back far enough to recognize the term "white glove"  
8 inspection or swaf team?

9 MR. BENNETT: Not a swat team, no.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Swaf.

11 MR. BENNETT: No.

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: But white glove inspection?

13 MR. BENNETT: Well, I've heard the term, not  
14 necessarily directly related to the FAA.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. Well, I guess what I'm  
16 curious about is was the -- the remedial action agreed  
17 to by Alaska Airlines and the FAA in the light of this  
18 maintenance controversy, I'll call it, was that a  
19 function of this National Safety Inspection Team or was  
20 that a function of the PMI?

21 MR. BENNETT: Now, when you say that, are you  
22 saying that the course of action that transpired?

23 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Both.

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1 MR. BENNETT: Well, --

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Identification of problem, a  
3 threat, if you will, to withdraw authorization, and the  
4 remedial action to preclude that withdrawal.

5 I'm trying to get a handle of where did you  
6 -- where did you in this -- this CMS Unit fit into this  
7 overall picture. Did somebody from on high come in and  
8 -- and straighten it out or --

9 MR. BENNETT: I think we had initially  
10 identified that there were some problems in the heavy  
11 check arena with regard to procedures in place.  
12 Because of the continuous Washington involvement and  
13 everything, it took on a life of its own and kind of  
14 escalated up, and at one point, we were not necessarily  
15 calling all the shots out of this unit directly.

16 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I guess my question is, what  
17 was -- what was the difference in the involvement you  
18 referred to, the input that you had there then, and  
19 several years ago, when there was tremendous attention  
20 being focused on the overhaul facility at Oakland  
21 several years ago? And did you not know there was a  
22 problem then or did not -- wasn't there indications of  
23 a problem in that facility?

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1           MR. BENNETT: Not that I can recall specific  
2 to the -- to the -- the heavy check procedure  
3 necessarily.

4           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Hm-hmm. So, at the time that  
5 you went down to Oakland and talked to 12 mechanics,  
6 did you talk to any management people there?

7           MR. BENNETT: Yes. I'm trying to recall. I  
8 spoke with the base manager, Gerald Sommers, and Jesse  
9 Austeel, the -- I believe he runs Production Control  
10 down there.

11           MR. RODRIQUEZ: And the upshot of that visit  
12 and those interviews was what?

13           MR. BENNETT: As far as results?

14           MR. RODRIQUEZ: No. What was your  
15 conclusion? You went down there to see if there was a  
16 problem because --

17           MR. BENNETT: I obviously walked away with no  
18 conclusion because the information I gained was of  
19 little to no value or no information.

20           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, if the indicators that  
21 prompted your visit were valid, would it have -- would  
22 it recommend some remedial action on your part?

23           MR. BENNETT: Possibly, depending upon what

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1 that was.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I guess my bottom line is, if  
3 it's worth a trip to Oakland, it should be worth some  
4 kind of a conclusion to the activity, and you're saying  
5 you came away with no conclusion.

6 MR. BENNETT: Basically, I was asked to go  
7 down there, to try and get a handle on the attitude,  
8 the culture, in essence, down there, and as I stated,  
9 when I discussed -- when I talked to these folks,  
10 realistically, the bulk of them were so frightened, I  
11 think, from previous discussions with FAA, FBI, OIG and  
12 everybody else, and the controversy and the news and  
13 everything else, most of them had little to nothing to  
14 say, literally.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: So, from that point until the  
16 time that you and -- well, you, I guess, as the acting  
17 PMI, threatened to withdraw their heavy maintenance  
18 authorization.

19 What transpired to bring you to some  
20 conclusions?

21 MR. BENNETT: Well, again, I wasn't the  
22 acting PMI through that whole period. I was an  
23 assistant PMI. So, --

1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Who communicates and  
2           coordinates and is kept in the loop through weekly  
3           meetings.

4           MR. BENNETT: I mean, a lot of it -- as far  
5           as my recognition of the problem that ultimately  
6           resulted in the current situation had to do with the  
7           OIG and the questions and problems that were coming out  
8           of San Francisco directly related again to the initial  
9           Oakland incident, and in going down and working with  
10          the IG, myself and another inspector from the branch up  
11          here, that a very dedicated, thorough review of records  
12          because there were some questions and concerns that  
13          were coming out of there, and it seemed like there was  
14          not -- they didn't have the technical background or  
15          whatever, and that's where we started to really  
16          identify that there were some problems in that heavy  
17          check area, which prompted us to initiate the next  
18          course of action, which was to formulate a group and  
19          work through the process and try to work with the  
20          airline to identify that there were procedural problems  
21          and try to identify those and start getting everything  
22          back on track.

23          MR. RODRIQUEZ: Who was the other inspector

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1 that went with you?

2 MR. BENNETT: Jim Dodge.

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And what prompted you and Jim  
4 Dodge to go back down there and look at procedures?

5 MR. BENNETT: There was -- I don't know how  
6 much history you want on this whole thing.

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Generally.

8 MR. BENNETT: One of my -- okay.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I don't want to get into the  
10 -- I don't want to get into the grand jury and all the  
11 other who shot John. I'm just trying to understand --

12 MR. BENNETT: Amen.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- the workings of the -- of  
14 the FAA, because I want it clear on the record, our  
15 purpose is accident investigation, prevention of  
16 accidents.

17 I'm interested in the safety aspects, and --  
18 and as I -- I think I preambled here a couple of times  
19 in prefacing questions to you, I'm trying to assess the  
20 application of principles that I understand the FBI --  
21 the FAA works under to -- I'm trying to assess those by  
22 applying them to this problem that was -- ultimately  
23 resulted in the -- the withdrawal of Alaska's

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1 maintenance privileges, and -- and how that could have  
2 been identified earlier in the process.

3 I don't understand at this point why I don't  
4 see any changes, I just see reactions, and, so, I'm  
5 probing to try and get that from you, and if you would  
6 help me with it, that's --

7 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. No problem. I mean, to  
8 be very frank, this was another reactionary situation.

9 What had happened was -- and I'm going to have to take  
10 you back a little bit.

11 When I did take over as the acting PMI, one  
12 of my concerns that was looming out there were the  
13 FBI/OIG concerns, and what was going on with the -- the  
14 Oakland record falsification case, and it just seemed  
15 to be looming out there, and I didn't -- I know that  
16 there hadn't been much communication, and it just  
17 bothered me sitting out there.

18 So, I prompted a meeting and had discussions,  
19 and it just seemed like the bulk of the discussions  
20 with the OIG and the FBI was, you know, any time we get  
21 into an area, they'd put out caveats that, you know,  
22 they'd say -- they'd lay things on the table like there  
23 was a problem, and I'd try to get specific information

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1 for safety concerns, and it was, "Well, we could tell  
2 you, but we'd have to kill you", and as a result of  
3 that, I elevated that through our management, and  
4 ultimately what happened was we finally got somebody  
5 dedicated from the FAA to work with the grand jury and  
6 all that, and there was a Pelican that transpired early  
7 this year from that individual where he was coming  
8 through, saying that, you know, things were extremely  
9 bad.

10 There was a really terrible picture painted  
11 by him, and it was our management's belief that maybe  
12 that was a little bit extreme, and therefore they asked  
13 me to go down there and see what was going on and take  
14 a look at that, and that's how we ended up, you know,  
15 in the current situation.

16 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. I understand. I  
17 appreciate that.

18 Now, as I understand it, your -- when you  
19 went down with Jim Dodge, you identified procedural  
20 problems in the heavy check -- this is in the  
21 processing of the work cards or, I mean, what were the  
22 procedural problems?

23 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. Primarily the -- the

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1 paperwork and how the paperwork was handled and some  
2 inconsistencies with, you know, information on those.

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Could that have been done by  
4 you when you went down and talked to the mechanics,  
5 looking at the culture or was this something that's --

6 MR. BENNETT: It could --

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- been since then?

8 MR. BENNETT: Yes. I mean, at any time, I  
9 may have been able to do that.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. Okay. Now, this is --  
11 this is where I was trying to go, trying to get to.

12 The -- the -- the remedial plan was to hire a  
13 130 more mechanics. I'm -- I confess I'm going from a  
14 press release. That's the only documentation I have.  
15 I think it's accurate.

16 MR. BENNETT: Right.

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: If it's not, please tell me.

18 A 130 more mechanics. How many mechanics did Alaska  
19 have at the time? Do you know?

20 MR. BENNETT: I don't know the specific  
21 number. I don't know.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, give me a ball park.  
23 300? 500? A thousand?

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1           MR. BENNETT: I can't give you even a ball  
2 park.

3           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. And they made the  
4 management positions that we've been discussing, they  
5 filled those immediately or very shortly.

6           Now, this announcement said that "the FAA  
7 will send teams to conduct special inspections that  
8 will focus on evaluating the overall effectiveness of  
9 critical safety programs."

10           Are you familiar with this press release?

11           MR. BENNETT: Yeah. I think so.

12           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Are you part of that special  
13 team of inspectors or whatever?

14           MR. BENNETT: No.

15           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you have any relationship  
16 with them?

17           MR. BENNETT: Generally not directly, no.

18           MR. RODRIQUEZ: This was July 17th. Do you  
19 know if anything has been done in that area? This was  
20 beginning July 17th, the FAA will send. Do you know if  
21 a team went?

22           MR. BENNETT: Well, I'm not sure exactly what  
23 they're talking about. We have had teams out there

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1 doing focused inspections on the checks and everything  
2 else that are going on --

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Since July 17th?

4 MR. BENNETT: -- an on-going basis, and I  
5 think it was even prior to that.

6 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. Is it on any frequency  
7 basis that you can describe?

8 MR. BENNETT: We've had people out looking at  
9 every check that's come out.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Every single check?

11 MR. BENNETT: Pretty much, since we  
12 identified that problem, yes.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do they give any feedback to  
14 you?

15 MR. BENNETT: Directly to me, no. I mean, I  
16 --

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Who --

18 MR. BENNETT: Through the PMI.

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Huh?

20 MR. BENNETT: The principal maintenance  
21 inspector.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Oh, they -- they are  
23 reporting to the PMI?

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1 MR. BENNETT: Oh, yes.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay.

3 MR. BENNETT: Oh, yes.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And you don't know where  
5 these guys are from?

6 MR. BENNETT: Geographic locations generally  
7 are close to, you know, including our CMT geographic  
8 inspectors.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. When did -- when did  
10 Mr. Whitacker become the PMI?

11 MR. BENNETT: I think officially, he got  
12 selected in February.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Last February?

14 MR. BENNETT: Yes. This --

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. We had some discussion  
16 about -- you said -- I understood you to say you  
17 normally see drafts of changes, and that the drafts  
18 have highlighted the changes or you get a memo covering  
19 the -- that highlights what we're going to do, what  
20 we're going to change.

21 MR. BENNETT: Generally, yes.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: But that when -- when changes  
23 come through, not in draft form, that is, those that

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1 are accepted, etc., the changes may not or are not  
2 highlighted, is that correct?

3 MR. BENNETT: That's true. Not always.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And there's not even a  
5 covering memo that identifies we're sending this to you  
6 because it has the following changes or --

7 MR. BENNETT: Not always.

8 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Is that something you could  
9 request?

10 MR. BENNETT: I would think so, yes.

11 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Is that something you would  
12 expect them to comply with if you requested it?

13 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Now, with respect to the  
15 grease, the letter, as I remember it, said something  
16 about we have now completed our review. Do you have  
17 the letter there?

18 MR. BENNETT: Which letter?

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: The letter you sent, telling  
20 them to revert to Mobil 28.

21 MR. BENNETT: Yes. "We have completed our  
22 review of the information provided by Alaska airlines  
23 Engineering Department regarding justification for the

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1 substantiation of grease used to lubricate the jack  
2 screw assemblies and other flight controls on the MD-80  
3 aircraft. The material provided for our review was  
4 utilized by Alaska to substantiate the substitution of  
5 Boeing materials, Specification BMS-3-33, for MIL" or  
6 MIL SPEC, "-G-81322. Our review of the documentation  
7 does not support this change.

8 As discussed and agreed to in our meeting on  
9 Friday, March 31st, until such time as additional  
10 justification for the substitution of the MIL-G-81322  
11 can be documented, our position is that Alaska Airlines  
12 refrain from utilizing the BMS-3-33 grease in those  
13 areas where the Aircraft Maintenance Manual  
14 specifically recommends the use of the MIL-G-81322.

15 We do acknowledge that the return to the MIL-  
16 G-81322 has already been initiated by your  
17 organization."

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. So, the date of the  
19 letter was March --

20 MR. BENNETT: April 5th.

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: April 5th. So, on April 5th,  
22 you had completed your review of the request to switch,  
23 which was primarily a paperwork review?

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1 MR. BENNETT: Right.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. And the approval to do  
3 so or to make the change in the first place was granted  
4 in December of -- well, do you know?

5 MR. BENNETT: Actually, the approval for  
6 change was done in July of '97.

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: July '97. And based on your  
8 review in 2000, that approval was based on what  
9 documents?

10 MR. BENNETT: Numerous documents here, but  
11 the only thing I can see that it was really based on  
12 was a no-technical objection letter from Boeing.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Is that notebook, inch and a  
14 half high, all the documentation that they submitted to  
15 you?

16 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: On the grease change-over?

18 MR. BENNETT: Plus some additional letters,  
19 yes.

20 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Exclusively?

21 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And in -- you had discussions  
23 with them about this change-over, I guess, when you --

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1 it's implied in the letter, that you didn't agree with  
2 their premise?

3 MR. BENNETT: Right.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What did they give you in a  
5 synopsis? What did they give you as the reason why  
6 they wanted to change in the first place?

7 MR. BENNETT: Well, again, I don't recall  
8 asking that specific question, and I don't recall it  
9 coming up as far as what the reasoning was as to why  
10 they wanted to change.

11 To the best of my recollection, it was to  
12 standardize the use of their grease.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Was it during your interview  
14 where you got this carload of --

15 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

16 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Where did that -- where was  
17 that statement made?

18 MR. BENNETT: Let me see if I can find it.  
19 Telecommunication.

20 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Oh, to Boeing?

21 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. It was their field rep  
22 to Boeing.

23 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Whose field rep?

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1           MR. BENNETT: Alaska Airlines' field rep from  
2 Boeing. They had representatives on site.

3           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Alaska Airlines has a field  
4 representative?

5           MR. BENNETT: From the manufacturer on site.

6           MR. RODRIQUEZ: So, it's a Boeing  
7 representative --

8           MR. BENNETT: Boeing representative  
9 communicating back to --

10          MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- at Alaska Airlines?

11          MR. BENNETT: Right.

12          MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. Where's he talking  
13 about we got a carload of this stuff? He's talking  
14 about at Alaska?

15          MR. BENNETT: Yes. It was a May 16, '97,  
16 telex from Frank Kidd, who was in Seattle, to Product  
17 Support at the manufacturer, and, let's see, I think  
18 they initially addressed some previous telex, and it  
19 says that "The use of the subject grease" -- I'm sorry.

20                 "The telex concerning your response toward  
21 the use of the telex" -- "the subject grease was passed  
22 to Alaska Engineering. They voiced their  
23 disappointment with the year away guesstimated

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1       suitability comments and/or approval. There was  
2       correspondence from Boeing that said it's going to take  
3       us more than a year to do a good thorough evaluation of  
4       the grease."

5               And then, it goes on to say, "Evidently, they  
6       recently got a bargain on AeroShell and picked up a  
7       carload which they are using on their 737s, and now for  
8       standardization intend to use it on the MD-80s. But  
9       regardless of your pro-negative comments, they have  
10      requested the same."

11             MR. RODRIQUEZ: And did Alaska provide that  
12      -- is that part of their justification for using it?

13             MR. BENNETT: Yeah.

14             MR. RODRIQUEZ: Turn that collar down on that  
15      one. I want a copy of that page.

16             MR. BENNETT: No problem.

17             MR. RODRIQUEZ: Have you -- have you back-  
18      tracked that particular document to see where they got  
19      the product?

20             MR. BENNETT: I don't understand.

21             MR. RODRIQUEZ: What was the source of that  
22      product that they bought, recently bought and so forth?

23             MR. BENNETT: No, I did not go back and take

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1 a look to see, you know, if indeed they bought a  
2 carload of it, the insinuation there.

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay.

4 MR. BENNETT: I need to go back three years,  
5 though.

6 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Yeah. Have you looked at --  
7 have you specifically looked at the stores grease that  
8 Alaska has on AeroShell 33 for shelf life?

9 MR. BENNETT: No, not that I recall.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you know what the price  
11 was?

12 MR. BENNETT: Haven't got a clue.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. I'm going to dub you  
14 the PMI again and inquire what action you would have  
15 taken to fill this director of maintenance position  
16 going back a year and a half-two years.

17 MR. BENNETT: Would you ask it again, please?

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Sure. I was wondering, what  
19 technique or procedure or action you might have taken  
20 to accomplish or facilitate the filling of that  
21 position, director of maintenance?

22 MR. BENNETT: I mean, I'm not sure. It's all  
23 speculation on my part, but, I mean, I would think that

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1 I would have to pursue it through the enforcement  
2 action avenue, if we couldn't come to some resolve to  
3 get that issue immediately taken care of.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Is that essentially what the  
5 PMI did?

6 MR. BENNETT: Not to my recollection, no.

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: He didn't?

8 MR. BENNETT: No, and I don't recall -- I  
9 honestly don't recall --

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I thought there was a letter  
11 that was in process when you took over.

12 MR. BENNETT: Well, okay. Well, there was a  
13 letter in process for the director of safety position,  
14 not for the DOM position.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. I assumed that covered  
16 both vacancies or --

17 MR. BENNETT: No, no, not that I remember. I  
18 -- I know John was very specific on the director of  
19 safety issue, and he was pursuing that quite  
20 aggressively --

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I see.

22 MR. BENNETT: -- toward the end of his time.

23 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I -- I don't have an FAA

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1 background. Is this -- if there are positions required  
2 by regulation, and they go unfilled for two years, is -  
3 - is that not something you could process, say, in  
4 enforcement activity in one letter, kill three birds  
5 with one stone? I mean, is that something you'd have  
6 to do on an individual basis to have sufficient  
7 documentation for it or something? Is there a reason  
8 that I don't understand?

9 MR. BENNETT: With regard to the two separate  
10 positions?

11 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Yeah.

12 MR. BENNETT: Yes. You could do that at one  
13 time.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: You made a comment that your  
15 -- you had assumed there were increases in mechanic  
16 hirings in response to increased utilization based on  
17 new faces and that sort of thing.

18 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you remember that?

20 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What struck me is that new  
22 faces could be replacements, not necessarily additions,  
23 to the working staff. Would you agree or --

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1 MR. BENNETT: Yes, they could be.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: But -- but nonetheless, you  
3 feel like there were more bodies there?

4 MR. BENNETT: Yes. In conversations with --

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: New faces? The old guys were  
6 there, and -- and there were new guys, also?

7 MR. BENNETT: Sure.

8 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you see what I'm driving  
9 at?

10 MR. BENNETT: Yeah. I mean, in talking to  
11 those folks, you know, they said there were new people.

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: New people. Okay.

13 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: On the letter of March -- I'm  
15 sorry -- April 5th, if the change in grease is an  
16 accepted item, when you come back with your letter  
17 advising them to cease doing an accepted practice, what  
18 is the force behind that, if any?

19 MR. BENNETT: The only thing I could figure  
20 was that there is -- it goes back to 4313, one  
21 regulation, that addresses use of the correct products,  
22 materials, manufacturer's recommended things,  
23 Maintenance Manual, things of that nature.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: I think that's all I have.  
2 Thanks very much, Tim.

3           MR. BENNETT: Sure.

4           MR. PAPE: Kevin Pape, Quality Assurance for  
5 Alaska Airlines.

6           Tim, just three -- three questions that I  
7 have. In relationship to the DOM and the director of  
8 safety, is there a FAR requirement that you're aware of  
9 or know of that mandate that that has to be filled by a  
10 singular person and cannot be fulfilled by -- by  
11 multiple persons?

12          MR. BENNETT: With regard to the DOM, no, I'm  
13 not aware, and I'm not that well versed to say yea or  
14 nay, but I'm not aware of anything, any specification  
15 in there that it has to be an individual or one  
16 individual.

17          MR. PAPE: So, there could be one person or -  
18 - or two people that share the same responsibility, to  
19 fulfill the ops spec requirement?

20          MR. BENNETT: Without that specification in  
21 the rule, yes, that's a possibility.

22          MR. PAPE: Does the same stand for the  
23 director of safety?

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1           MR. BENNETT: I don't recall it addressing it  
2 to be one individual. I know it talks about it being a  
3 dedicated position, but I'm not sure if it talks to one  
4 or two.

5           MR. PAPE: Yeah. Thank you. How would you  
6 categorize the relationship between the Certificate  
7 Management Unit and Alaska Airlines as far as  
8 professional, hostile, cooperative? How would you  
9 categorize it?

10          MR. BENNETT: I think for the most part, it's  
11 professional coordination with us. I wouldn't consider  
12 it hostile. It's been fairly open. I mean, I haven't  
13 had problems that I can recall.

14                 Probably the only problem I have with regard  
15 to working with Alaska folks is when we request  
16 something, that we don't get necessarily everything  
17 that's related, and we often just get specifically what  
18 we asked for and have to continuously come back for  
19 more and more information in different areas.

20          MR. PAPE: Pretty much open dialogue between  
21 the two parties?

22          MR. BENNETT: For the most part. I can't say  
23 that I've had any real problems.

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1           MR. PAPE: Thirdly, during the initial LOI  
2 which you've made reference to, at any time, was there  
3 any outside influence from Alaska Airlines on the  
4 decision-making process, on whether or not to issue it  
5 or -- or otherwise?

6           MR. BENNETT: Not necessarily, no. I mean,  
7 it's not like there was a situation where I thought,  
8 well, I'll do this, but taking their attitude, I'm  
9 going to do it a different way. No, I can't say that  
10 my thought process --

11           MR. PAPE: No undue pressure that was -- that  
12 was influenced?

13           MR. BENNETT: No.

14           MR. PAPE: I know that's three, but I just  
15 have one other -- I've got another one.

16           The MSG-2 and the MSG-3 process, Maintenance  
17 Steering Group, --

18           MR. BENNETT: Methodology.

19           MR. PAPE: Methodology process, along with  
20 the OM. Do you know what the MD-82 and 83 is under?  
21 Is it under the Maintenance Chief 2 or the 3 or is it a  
22 combination of the two?

23           MR. BENNETT: Well, to the best of my

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1 knowledge, it can only go one way or the other, either  
2 MSG-2 or MSG-3 philosophy, and I'm not exactly sure,  
3 but I believe those are MSG-2 aircraft, but I think the  
4 possibility exists to utilize the MSG-3, but I'm not  
5 absolutely real certain on that one.

6 MR. PAPE: Is that a mandate? Is -- is  
7 either process a mandated process, either MSG-2 or 3?

8 MR. BENNETT: Yes, you have to follow one.

9 MR. PAPE: And to the best of your knowledge,  
10 you don't know which one?

11 MR. BENNETT: As far as I know, Alaska  
12 Airlines is filling MSG-2.

13 MR. PAPE: Okay. Accepted and approved.  
14 This is five. I'm struggling with accepted and  
15 approved.

16 Say the FM and the NSAR, are those accepted  
17 documents or are those approved documents?

18 MR. BENNETT: Those are approved documents.

19 MR. PAPE: Those are approved?

20 MR. BENNETT: Right.

21 MR. PAPE: So, what would an MEO-1 in which  
22 changes of task cards are?

23 MR. BENNETT: It's part of the accepted

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1 evidence program that's approved under the umbrella of  
2 the operating specifications.

3 MR. PAPE: So, that receives tacit approval?

4 MR. BENNETT: In essence, yes.

5 MR. PAPE: In essence? Which is accepted?

6 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

7 MR. PAPE: That's all I have. Thank you, Tim

8 MR. MCGILL: Tim, thank you very much for  
9 your time.

10 Do we have anything else?

11 MS. VON KLEINSMID: I have just one. You  
12 said you have avionics and a maintenance personnel at  
13 Oakland?

14 MR. BENNETT: Hm-hmm.

15 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Who was the avionics  
16 inspector?

17 MR. BENNETT: He was and still is Jules  
18 Stefoni.

19 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And the maintenance?

20 MR. BENNETT: Currently, it's Earl Napsack.

21 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And he reports to Tom  
22 Tessany?

23 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

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1 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And when you referred to  
2 telecom from an individual in Oakland, was that this  
3 year?

4 MR. BENNETT: Yes.

5 MS. VON KLEINSMID: What was approximately  
6 the date?

7 MR. BENNETT: Probably early March.

8 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was that Tom? That  
9 telecom, was that Tom Tessany?

10 MR. BENNETT: No. That was Jim Puckett. He  
11 was the regional specialist assigned out of the L.A.  
12 office.

13 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. Thank you.

14 (Whereupon, the witness was excused.)

15 INTERVIEW OF BILL WHITACKER

16 MR. MCGILL: Bill, would you -- let's start  
17 -- can you give us just a little short biographical  
18 sketch of your background, how you -- what you did  
19 before and now that you're with the FAA and so forth?

20 MR. WHITACKER: Yes. I started out in the  
21 Air Force Reserves in 1971, in aircraft maintenance.

22 In 1975, I went to work for the Department of  
23 Transportation -- Department of Defense full-time as an

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1 Air Reserve technician out of McCory Air Force Base. I  
2 was out there a total of almost 15 years as a civilian  
3 employee. Eight of those 15, I was a line supervisor  
4 for maintenance.

5 From there, I left there and went to work at  
6 Alaska Airlines in 1989 as a mechanic. I left there in  
7 1991. I was a line supervisor when I left there, and I  
8 came to the FAA up in the Anchorage office, spent a  
9 year up there, and then I did a swap with another  
10 inspector here in the Seattle office.

11 I came down to Seattle in '92, and then bid  
12 over to the Alaska Airlines Certificate Management Unit  
13 over here. I was a program manager over here from '92  
14 till January, I believe, of 1998, and I bid a job in  
15 the Aircraft Evaluation Unit, and I was over there from  
16 1998 till January of this year, 2000, when I bid the  
17 principal maintenance inspector job here and came over  
18 here in the middle of January 2000.

19 MR. MCGILL: Okay. So, you were -- you have  
20 the whole regime in January of '98 till you left just  
21 prior to the ATOS --

22 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

23 MR. MCGILL: -- change- --

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1 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

2 MR. MCGILL: -- over, and then you started  
3 back about six months ago?

4 MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

5 MR. MCGILL: Okay. Real quickly, what do you  
6 see the difference right now under ATOS surveillance  
7 versus what is -- what we had prior to ATOS?

8 MR. WHITACKER: The difference, I can see  
9 some good and some bad. The good part is the safety  
10 attributes. I feel it's given the inspectors a good  
11 checklist to go by, and it's looking at the  
12 organization, the responsibilities, the duties and that  
13 part of it.

14 As far as the bad side of ATOS, I see that we  
15 don't have enough people, enough surveillance, and  
16 being kind of new to this ATOS thing as a principal  
17 inspector, one of the big problems I have with it  
18 personally is the CMT members that are out in the  
19 field, I don't have any real control over them. They  
20 work for their office manager, and they're supposed to  
21 be 100 percent ATOS, but that isn't always the case.

22 They do get other duties, and we don't have  
23 any say-so in the selection of who we get out there in

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1 the field for inspectors, and we don't have any input  
2 on that. So, that's been a burden as well.

3 But as far as the surveillance end of it  
4 goes, it's -- again, I'm new. So, I'm still gaining  
5 experience in ATOS, but I see it's like a program, one  
6 size fits all. There's too many unique things, I  
7 think, for each operator, for each station as far as  
8 that goes, that I see a lot of -- I'm beginning to see  
9 some shortfalls in -- in how surveillance is performed  
10 and what things are being looked at and how they're  
11 being looked at, and one of the others that I'm seeing  
12 from here from my perspective is that the software is  
13 pretty burdensome, pretty laborious.

14 It's -- if I was to do ATOS like it's  
15 designed to be done, I would be spending just a  
16 tremendous amount of time at the computer rather than  
17 out in the field, and under the circumstances, we just  
18 have not been able to do that. We've had to institute  
19 some other types of surveillance to get the  
20 surveillance done. We just don't have the time to  
21 spend at the computer right now.

22 MR. MCGILL: Do you know what the experience  
23 and qualifications of some of these geographic

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1 inspectors that's on this certificate, what their areas  
2 or how much education they know, how much airline  
3 experience they know, how much aircraft type, engines,  
4 so forth?

5 MR. WHITACKER: No. You know, I get -- seen  
6 copies of their resumes, and then talking with them,  
7 and, of course, I ask those questions.

8 I'd say yes, I have a pretty good feel for  
9 what their backgrounds are.

10 MR. MCGILL: Are you comfortable with this  
11 level of background, training and experience that these  
12 guys are doing to do the oversight of Alaska Airlines?

13 MR. WHITACKER: As far as their experience  
14 levels, I'm satisfied with what they have for  
15 experience levels, from what I know. The training, I  
16 would like to see some more training.

17 I'm just -- I'm -- excuse me -- new enough in  
18 this, but I'm not -- I haven't got a real good feel yet  
19 for all of that part of it yet.

20 MR. MCGILL: What kind of training have you  
21 received on MD-80-737, Pratt and Whitney, GE Engine?  
22 In other words, things that's operating off of this  
23 certificate?

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1           MR. WHITACKER: I've been through MD-80 and  
2 737 ground maintenance classes, and I've also been  
3 through the MD-80 ground school, the beginning -- the  
4 pilots ground school back -- they sent us back to  
5 Northwest to go through that.

6           Systems training virtually is operations  
7 training. So, I have not been to any engine training.

8           MR. MCGILL: All of these -- would you say  
9 the people that's assigned to your -- to -- to the  
10 team, would these people all have at least some  
11 background in airline operation, big aircraft operation  
12 or would some of them be strictly from general  
13 aviation?

14          MR. WHITACKER: They all have some airline  
15 background. I suppose there could be somebody slipping  
16 in that's got general aviation background. I don't  
17 know of anyone in that situation right now, but as far  
18 as aircraft-specific training, we've got to get some of  
19 the folks set up for aircraft-specific. I know that  
20 there's some that have not had any MD-80 or 737  
21 training.

22          MR. MCGILL: We tried to address a couple  
23 issues with several other people and just on the op

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1 specs, on the A-6 management personnel.

2 Can you just real quickly -- I don't want to  
3 dwell on this because we've already hit it, but tell me  
4 real quickly why, for instance, two years was spent  
5 trying to fulfill a director of maintenance position,  
6 why director of safety, which is one of these five  
7 positions, is sharing two other positions?

8 Even at the time of the accident, there was  
9 no director of flight operations.

10 So, what is your feeling on this? How -- how  
11 is this being addressed? Do you know?

12 MR. WHITACKER: Director of operations, I  
13 wouldn't know anything on that area since I'm not  
14 involved with the operations.

15 The director of safety, they -- I believe  
16 that was a shared position with the director of quality  
17 control. I believe they're sharing that safety  
18 operation position.

19 The director of maintenance --

20 MR. MCGILL: Just before we get there, you  
21 say that's a shared -- you --

22 MR. WHITACKER: That was one of his -- he had  
23 two responsibilities. He had more than one

1 responsibility, and director of safety, I believe, was  
2 one of them.

3 MR. MCGILL: Okay.

4 MR. WHITACKER: I'm not real clear on what --  
5 what exactly went on during that two-year period.

6 MR. MCGILL: This has something that FAA  
7 takes as being acceptable?

8 MR. WHITACKER: I wouldn't. That's been  
9 addressed here.

10 The director of maintenance, that was, you  
11 know, -- through the in-depth inspections we've done  
12 after the accident, my first inclination was it wasn't  
13 filled, but when I really got to looking at the  
14 organization and interviewing people, that was a shared  
15 position between two people, and what we found on the  
16 team that we were interviewing, actually we thought it  
17 was a pretty good set-up like it was.

18 The only problem we saw was that there wasn't  
19 a crystal clear definition of duties and  
20 responsibilities between the two. Some of the  
21 responsibility could have overlapped, but overall the  
22 way it was, I personally felt it was -- it was pretty  
23 good, but the way the Part 119 is written with the

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1 requirement of a director of maintenance, yes, it needs  
2 to be filled with one, but there is also in the rule,  
3 there's some leeway to make changes.

4 I do know that the two that were sharing the  
5 position, it was documented in the ops specs that it  
6 would be a shared position at times. It wasn't filled  
7 by one individual, and it wasn't vacant either. It was  
8 shared by two individuals.

9 MR. MCGILL: As I recall, that was a -- that  
10 was requested. That was a temporary request from  
11 Alaska Airlines that these two people share that and,  
12 you know, having an adjective in the front of -- that  
13 would -- one would think that meant that a little bit  
14 down the road, we are going to get someone, but, you  
15 know, two years is pretty long.

16 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. I'm not real -- I  
17 don't know all the background on all this.

18 MR. MCGILL: And you didn't seem to think  
19 there's a big problem with how this responsibility is  
20 -- was shared? Was any -- was anything written, if  
21 there was a problem, how it was addressed, and how they  
22 were going to be sharing, and if a problem occurred,  
23 where would one -- who would be the first one to see or

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1 --

2 MR. WHITACKER: That was the problem I had  
3 with what the arrangement was, that it wasn't written  
4 in the procedures clearly, how those things would be  
5 handled.

6 It was -- it was a given that one of them  
7 would handle the base operations, the director of  
8 maintenance responsibility, the other one would handle  
9 the line maintenance, director of maintenance  
10 responsibilities.

11 But you could think of cases where they would  
12 cross over, and in my mind, there needed to be a clear  
13 definition of how -- how that would be handled? Who  
14 would have exactly what duties and responsibilities?

15 MR. MCGILL: When we pick up the director of  
16 safety, do you know who he reported to?

17 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. I believe he -- no. I  
18 think, and that's about as good as I can get it right  
19 at the moment.

20 MR. MCGILL: Would you know as a director of  
21 training, who he would have reported to?

22 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. He reported to the  
23 staff VP.

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1 MR. MCGILL: As a director of training?

2 MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

3 MR. MCGILL: How about the director of QC?

4 MR. WHITACKER: Can't remember who he did  
5 report to.

6 MR. MCGILL: So, it's kind of a -- not a good  
7 scenario, is it?

8 MR. WHITACKER: No.

9 MR. MCGILL: You're not quite sure who -- for  
10 all three of those positions, who he reports to?

11 MR. WHITACKER: Now, I know who he reports  
12 to.

13 MR. MCGILL: Well, --

14 MR. WHITACKER: But early on, I -- I can't  
15 remember exactly who it was.

16 MR. MCGILL: Okay. The -- now that you've  
17 been here, have you had a chance to look at some prior  
18 NASEPs, ASEPs, one in '94, NASEP in '95, the DoD report  
19 in '98? Have you looked at any of these, and in the  
20 current -- what do they call it? Current National  
21 Safety Inspection, AFS-40? Have you been able to look  
22 at some of these reports?

23 MR. WHITACKER: AFS-40, yes. I was part of

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1 the AFS-40 inspection, and, so, I haven't had time to  
2 look at any of the others, no.

3 MR. MCGILL: Okay. Well, let's just talk  
4 real quickly about the AFS-40. What did -- what did  
5 you all uncover or what did you find? What's your  
6 findings on that?

7 MR. WHITACKER: Well, the biggest thing was  
8 the lack of written procedures for their heavy check  
9 program in Seattle and in Oakland.

10 We had a -- prior to the inside inspection,  
11 we did a review here. Actually, we had a brainstorm  
12 session amongst us in the office here of where we  
13 thought we would find problem areas that would relate  
14 to the accident to -- to the whole culture, and we  
15 listed everything on the board, and then went through  
16 the manuals.

17 We had Alaska Airlines demonstrate where the  
18 procedures were, who was in charge of what, everything  
19 -- let me back up just a little bit.

20 We finally concluded on the heavy check that  
21 the production control and the procedures for a heavy  
22 check to be accomplished, we couldn't find them, and,  
23 so, we asked for the demonstration. They couldn't

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1 demonstrate it.

2           So, with that information, we kicked off. We  
3 took that information, and I was down in Oakland during  
4 the NSI, and we asked them to walk us through the  
5 procedures. We checked the day it's planned until the  
6 day it rolled out of the hangar, and an airworthiness  
7 was signed, including how you do an airworthiness  
8 release, is what we wanted to know. Everything in  
9 between.

10           We found just what we felt we would find. No  
11 procedures written, although there were procedures in  
12 place, but they were over -- they were all from memory  
13 or a lot of them. I don't want to say all of them.

14           As far as written procedures went, we  
15 couldn't really find any that were adequate to -- to --  
16 to complete that whole cycle. That was probably the  
17 biggest finding we had during the NSI.

18           MR. MCGILL: Okay. And then, subsequently,  
19 you all -- you issued some statement that they needed -  
20 - you threatened them with closing down.

21           MR. WHITACKER: Correct.

22           MR. MCGILL: So, what was -- what was the  
23 outcome? What did they do to -- what has -- what

1 change has been made in this program?

2 MR. WHITACKER: They put a team of their  
3 experts together and wrote the procedures. We held  
4 them to the regulations on the procedures.

5 MR. MCGILL: Are those procedures in place  
6 right now?

7 MR. WHITACKER: Yes, they are. They rewrote  
8 their -- I guess you could call it rewrote. But wrote  
9 procedures for the heavy check, all the way from  
10 beginning till the end, at their base maintenance  
11 facilities, and then they wrote another section for  
12 vendor maintenance, that covered exactly all the same  
13 things, but there are some different circumstances in  
14 vendor maintenance. So, they've covered those.

15 One thing I wanted to point out with the lack  
16 of the procedures, then we obviously wanted to know why  
17 the CAS Program had not found these lapse in  
18 procedures, and we found that the CAS Program was  
19 lacking as well. So, that's another section that they  
20 have rewritten and put into place, a CAS Program that  
21 will get out and dig like we dig, find -- find the  
22 things we'd find before we'd find them.

23 MR. MCGILL: Well, obviously you felt all of

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1 that was satisfactory, and they were back operating  
2 like they were doing.

3 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

4 MR. MCGILL: Does it look like they're going  
5 to out-source some of these heavy checks to other  
6 vendors?

7 MR. WHITACKER: I'm sure that will always be  
8 the case and limited to what I've found over the  
9 history, it's -- a lot of airplanes come through heavy  
10 check at the same time, and that's when the out-  
11 sourcing obviously goes up, and -- and once they get  
12 through that spike in the numbers, then it goes back  
13 down.

14 MR. MCGILL: Was there procedures in this new  
15 rewritten list of how they're going to represent these  
16 airplanes and these heavy checks?

17 MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

18 MR. MCGILL: Okay. Do you remember anything  
19 about that? How many -- how many people they're going  
20 to send, how long they'll stay there, what --

21 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. They're going to have  
22 --

23 MR. MCGILL: How they approve different, you

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1 know, boards and so forth?

2 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. There's -- I probably  
3 can't hit all of them, but I know there will be one QC  
4 representative for each two airplanes in the facility,  
5 such like AMS, and there was as many as five airplanes  
6 in there at once. So, they would have one QC  
7 representative for every two airplanes.

8 MR. MCGILL: Let's just take that, before we  
9 continue right there. Obviously that was satisfactory  
10 with the FAA to -- so, when an aircraft goes in, and  
11 they may be working three shifts through on that  
12 particular airplane, do you feel that's adequate to  
13 have one person on two airplanes when technically six  
14 shifts could be put on two airplanes?

15 MR. WHITACKER: The way the shifts are  
16 designed was that the QC person -- a minimum of one  
17 would be there through the day shift, most of the day  
18 shift, and -- and a portion of the swing shift, yeah,  
19 because there are QC people as well from the vendor rep  
20 on the day shift as well.

21 Alaska QC people would be in addition to the  
22 vendor's employees, and then one quality assurance  
23 inspector per every two airplanes. A manager from

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1 Alaska Airlines on site, and I don't remember the  
2 numbers on their administrative people, material  
3 control people. I can't remember what they are now.

4 MR. MCGILL: This is something that I can't  
5 quite remember, but you probably could. There was a --  
6 the manager of the 737 Program, he had all 60 something  
7 mechanics, said there was a problem, and they removed  
8 him, and they put him in this position of repping  
9 Alaska -- is he still in that position where he will be  
10 a representative on an airplane when it goes into a  
11 vendor check?

12 MR. WHITACKER: I'm not sure where he is.

13 MR. MCGILL: Okay. Well, I was just curious  
14 where he would be now.

15 Up till now, has the FAA since you've been  
16 here, have -- have you sent anyone to any of these  
17 other -- for instance, Phoenix, where work is at?

18 MR. WHITACKER: Have we sent people there?

19 MR. MCGILL: Yes, sir.

20 MR. WHITACKER: Yes. We've got  
21 representatives out of the Oakland office, two people  
22 down there that have kind of been taking turns doing  
23 oversight over their admin, and we have one here as

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1 well, actually two here that have kind of taken turns  
2 back and forth.

3 We have virtually a hundred percent coverage  
4 of Oakland and of Phoenix at this point with the same  
5 two members on our staff here.

6 MR. MCGILL: Training. Let's just get real  
7 quickly on the training because we've also kind of gone  
8 through this, but what is your perception of the  
9 training that Alaska's doing with the mechanics?

10 MR. WHITACKER: Their classroom training for  
11 airplane-specific, I think they have an excellent  
12 training program and on maintenance and trouble-  
13 shooting.

14 What training I have gotten to see since I've  
15 been here has been with the new procedures on the heavy  
16 check procedures and the training of mechanics. I have  
17 attended that training. I thought that was good  
18 training.

19 In my opinion, it was good training. As far  
20 as any other -- I haven't really had the opportunity  
21 yet to attend too much of their training. So, I -- I  
22 can't give a real educated --

23 MR. MCGILL: Has anyone talked --

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1 MR. WHITACKER: -- answer to --

2 MR. MCGILL: -- about this is -- we're now  
3 addressing after the crash, but prior to the crash, do  
4 you know whether what kind of training they had there?  
5 Was it structured? Was it informal? Did they have  
6 some sort of a criteria for -- some sort of completion?  
7 Was there any --

8 MR. WHITACKER: From what I can remember from  
9 years ago, it was a structured training, and I do know  
10 that during the NSI, we found that the OJT, on-the-job  
11 training, curriculum, that was -- that was a hit and  
12 miss. It was -- it was -- it wasn't formalized on  
13 paper.

14 They had a plan and a program, but you had to  
15 find the individual that had that information. There  
16 was usually a designated training representative at the  
17 facility, to get a piece of paper out of a desk and  
18 show you what -- nothing was formalized. I mean, on-  
19 the-job training. That's -- that's been since their --  
20 that should be formalized. Now, I believe -- I know  
21 that's in the works, formalizing OJT, with specific  
22 criteria and time frames and -- but prior to that, all  
23 I can tell -- say is yes, it was structured. I can't

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1 remember the adequacy of it.

2 MR. MCGILL: Have you had a chance to look at  
3 the maintenance controller's training?

4 MR. WHITACKER: Not yet. That's --

5 MR. MCGILL: As part of being a principal  
6 now, is there some oversight that allows you to look at  
7 the growth fleet -- growth of the airplanes and the  
8 utilization of these aircraft, offset training, number  
9 of people, staffing levels, and so forth? Is somebody  
10 looking at that here? Would you do that? If they  
11 start bringing in more airplanes, do you address how  
12 increasing the times and --

13 MR. WHITACKER: As far as utilization, yeah,  
14 we get a monthly report on the engine utilization and  
15 on the reliability information which also gives  
16 airplane utilization on there.

17 We do track the -- the tracking numbers they  
18 use in the reliability program, and we go over there  
19 monthly charts and graphs of all the different systems  
20 and the engine flight check-downs and all -- all that  
21 information.

22 We have a copy of their growth plan for the  
23 next year. As far as a formula of manpower versus

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1 airplanes, I haven't seen that. It was discussed in  
2 some meetings we've had with Alaska Airlines in recent  
3 time, but the projected growth is all in their growth  
4 plan that they submitted, and it's been reviewed by a  
5 panel actually, including Washington folks out there  
6 and supported as part of the panel, and it's been  
7 discussed.

8 It addresses hiring of employees, facilities,  
9 training. It seems to be, from the panel reaction and  
10 our -- we accepted it as a group.

11 MR. MCGILL: In the last six months, how many  
12 times -- how many times would you think you've been  
13 over to the -- to the base? How often do you go over  
14 there? What do you do when you do go over there?

15 MR. WHITACKER: Well, we're over there weekly  
16 for a meeting, actually twice a week. We've missed the  
17 last couple of meetings over there, but depending on  
18 what's going on, I might be over there 10 times today  
19 and not be over there for three or four days. It's --  
20 it's -- I'm trying -- my role has kind of been  
21 coordinating things in the meeting portion and the  
22 surveillance, you know, trying to keep our inspectors  
23 here doing the surveillance, and I do whatever I can

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1 when I can.

2 But I think you have to understand, I've got  
3 a very full plate every -- every day, six days a week,  
4 around here, since the accident happened. So, I'm just  
5 going --

6 MR. MCGILL: Do you think you got someone  
7 that at least periodically will go over and look at all  
8 the log sheets and see how the discrepancies are being  
9 signed off and seeing how discrepancies are being  
10 deferred, and -- and do they defer them properly per  
11 the MEL and so forth?

12 Is somebody looking at all those kind of  
13 things?

14 MR. WHITACKER: That's -- yes. I can't zero  
15 specifically in on Seattle, but we have an augmented  
16 surveillance request out to all the offices where  
17 Alaska flies, whatever airport they fly into. So,  
18 we've got augmented surveillance going on right now  
19 with all offices and looking for that type of thing,  
20 and putting it into PTRS for us, so I can keep a help  
21 check on what's going on out in the system, system-  
22 wide. That covers MELs. That covers deferrals.

23 MR. MCGILL: Is that how they would do that.

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1 Even though they're part of this Certificate Management  
2 Team, they would put it in a PTRS form?

3 MR. WHITACKER: This isn't just Certificate  
4 Management Team. We've put this out to all offices,  
5 and I thought --

6 MR. MCGILL: Well, let's back up the  
7 question. What is being done just with the Certificate  
8 Management Team right here?

9 MR. WHITACKER: Okay.

10 MR. MCGILL: In the geographic --

11 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, right here in Seattle?

12 MR. MCGILL: Yes. Let's just start with  
13 Seattle.

14 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. We're -- you know, we  
15 -- I got one person that's pretty much been dedicated  
16 to looking at the heavy check over there and the  
17 paperwork and the discrepancies and deferrals,  
18 everything you mentioned here.

19 MR. MCGILL: That's on the 737 side?

20 MR. WHITACKER: Correct. That's being  
21 reported on PTRS under our -- that's another  
22 surveillance plan we have going. Actually, we've got  
23 two of them. We've got the 100 percent going on on the

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1 heavy checks until we feel comfortable that things are  
2 going correctly, and we're starting to slowly back away  
3 with their new procedures in place.

4           Once we feel comfortable that this new system  
5 works and works well enough, then we'll start backing  
6 away.

7           MR. MCGILL: What do you have in Oakland  
8 then, for instance?

9           MR. WHITACKER: We have two CMT inspectors  
10 down there that are -- again, like I said, they're --  
11 they're looking at Oakland and AMS, and then they are  
12 using other inspectors out of the office right now,  
13 too, that are doing the augmented surveillance for us  
14 and that stuff. That will be put into the PTRS there.

15           MR. MCGILL: Those two inspectors, I mean,  
16 what other duties should they have? They do have other  
17 duties, is that --

18           MR. WHITACKER: That office -- that's a  
19 pretty good office down there as far as not tasking  
20 inspectors with too many other duties. So, they've  
21 pretty much been 100 percent Alaska Airlines.

22           MR. MCGILL: So, we got somebody in Oakland  
23 for the heavy checks, a 737 facility. What about just

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1 every-day flying? Who's doing --

2 MR. WHITACKER: That's where the augmented  
3 surveillance comes in, where we've sent the message out  
4 to all the other offices where their geographic  
5 inspectors are -- are doing surveillance and entering  
6 that into the PTRS for us.

7 MR. MCGILL: All of that paperwork, though,  
8 does come right here, right?

9 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. Weekly, we pull up the  
10 report.

11 MR. MCGILL: So, someone could at least come  
12 down there and pull a month's log sheets at one time?

13 MR. WHITACKER: I think I've got about a  
14 month's worth sitting right now on my desk, two weeks'  
15 worth.

16 MR. MCGILL: Has -- since you've been here,  
17 has there been any requests for any type of short-term  
18 escalations from Alaska Airlines?

19 MR. WHITACKER: I think I have two of them in  
20 there.

21 MR. MCGILL: What types of escalations?

22 MR. WHITACKER: They were on the heavy check.

23 MR. MCGILL: What airplane?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: MD-80.

2 MR. MCGILL: What justification was used?

3 MR. WHITACKER: It was the scheduling over --  
4 airplane staying longer than it was scheduled to stay  
5 on one of them. I'm not sure what the other one is. I  
6 haven't got to review it. I just seen it. It was in  
7 my box.

8 MR. MCGILL: Have you approved them?

9 MR. WHITACKER: We don't approve that. We'll  
10 accept it, you know, if it's -- it's kind of the  
11 principles. We monitor it. If it looks like it's  
12 becoming a trend, and it is, there's a justifiable  
13 reason. We can -- we can do something about it.

14 MR. MCGILL: It seemed like when we asked  
15 Bill -- Mr. Hubbard, John Hubbard, he had written a  
16 letter from this office stating that there would be no  
17 further short-term escalations until further notice.

18 Are you familiar with that?

19 MR. WHITACKER: No, I'm not. John Hubbard  
20 was already gone for a few months when I came in here.

21 MR. MCGILL: Yes.

22 MR. WHITACKER: So, I didn't have the benefit  
23 of --

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1           MR. MCGILL: Well, have you had a chance to  
2 look back through any type of correspondence or  
3 whatever -- whatever has been communicated between --

4           MR. WHITACKER: I haven't had a chance to do  
5 anything but what it takes to get through the daily  
6 rhetoric that goes on here ever since the accident.

7           See, I was gone -- let me just fill you in a  
8 little bit. I was gone in training when the accident  
9 happened. I had not even moved into my cubicle here  
10 yet. I'd been here just one day to say hello and off  
11 to training I went, and then the accident happened, and  
12 it was the 31st of January, the accident happened, and  
13 I didn't come back to the office until around the end  
14 of February, before I was back in place, and it's been  
15 total chaos every day, all day, a lot of times on the  
16 weekends.

17           I haven't even moved into my cubicle yet.  
18 It's August, and I'm still not moved in there. My  
19 stuff's still all packed in boxes back there. So, as  
20 far as being able to sit down and review past histories  
21 and past letters written, there's just no way I've had  
22 the opportunity to do that.

23           I -- I go from one project to the next to the

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1 next to the next.

2 MR. MCGILL: It just seems like, you know, if  
3 your predecessor had determined after being here like  
4 eight years, that enough was enough, and this is  
5 basically what he told us, that there would be no more  
6 short-term escalations until they got caught up, and  
7 then now you've received two more.

8 I was just curious what kind of -- how would  
9 you evaluate what is going on if you don't know what  
10 happened in the past.

11 MR. WHITACKER: Correct. But I haven't -- I  
12 have no indications that John had taken that privilege  
13 away. I -- I wasn't -- I hadn't even heard that. So.

14 MR. MCGILL: Since you've been here, have you  
15 had any communications to be able to talk to the  
16 director of safety when he's wearing that hat about any  
17 issues with safety between --

18 MR. WHITACKER: Not on a one-to-one basis, on  
19 any particular subject. He has been here in meetings  
20 on several occasions with our panel, and it's going to  
21 be the final determination whether the ops spec issue  
22 will go away or it will be pulled, and we've had all of  
23 Alaska's top management over here, a couple of teams.

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1 That's -- that's the only time I've had any opportunity  
2 to speak with them.

3 MR. MCGILL: When you say "top management",  
4 does that include Mr. Weaver and Mr. Fowler?

5 MR. WHITACKER: That's all --

6 MR. MCGILL: How about Mr. Thayer?

7 MR. WHITACKER: Mr. Weaver, all the -- from  
8 their level down to the director of quality control.

9 MR. MCGILL: We've tried to cover so much of  
10 this area, that it would be -- I don't want to be going  
11 over -- having to go over all of this stuff. So, I'll  
12 -- are you familiar any with the lubrication issues  
13 that are now --

14 MR. WHITACKER: Yes. Not a hundred percent.

15 MR. MCGILL: Did you look over the -- the  
16 paperwork that was sent to you for -- as justification  
17 for making a switch from Mobil 28 to AeroShell 33?

18 MR. WHITACKER: You're talking all the  
19 paperwork that Tim Bennett has --

20 MR. MCGILL: Yes, sir.

21 MR. WHITACKER: Yes, I've looked through it.

22 MR. MCGILL: Did anything jump out at you by  
23 looking at that?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: As far as --

2 MR. MCGILL: I mean, would that be  
3 appropriate or inappropriate or would you concur with  
4 what happened?

5 MR. WHITACKER: No. No. I agree with Tim.  
6 That wasn't justification.

7 MR. MCGILL: I guess that's pretty difficult  
8 to come in right after a carrier has had such a tragic  
9 accident and then start over in that position. So, I'm  
10 not going to ask you any more right now.

11 Let's pass this to Malcolm.

12 DR. BRENNER: Malcolm Brenner from the Safety  
13 Board.

14 I read the technical guidelines covering your  
15 transition from the airline to the FAA oversight.

16 MR. WHITACKER: I'm not sure I understand  
17 what you mean by that.

18 DR. BRENNER: Well, I think there was talk  
19 before that there has to be a two-year separation in  
20 terms of working for the airline and working for the  
21 FAA.

22 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, yeah. That's what I've  
23 been told, and when I first came over here, it had been

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1 a year and eight months or nine months or something, 10  
2 months, I can't remember exactly, and I told them that  
3 when I bid the job, that I have not been away for two  
4 years.

5 So, they -- let's see. The -- I'm not sure  
6 who. All I know is that if I had left the company on  
7 bad terms, I couldn't fill the position. If I left on  
8 good terms with the company, didn't have some kind of a  
9 vendetta against them, then it would be okay.

10 So, I guess they -- somebody verified with  
11 the company whether I left on good or bad terms, and,  
12 so, I came into the position, and somebody from within  
13 the office complained about it on a hot line complaint.

14 So, I had to go back to the Geographic  
15 Section then for two months. Nobody remembered that I  
16 had -- we had discussed this situation, that they had  
17 checked it out, but the bottom line was I never did --  
18 nobody could ever produce any guidance in writing that  
19 said you had to wait this two-year period.

20 So, I don't know where -- where that came  
21 from, if it's -- if it's real, if it's true, or I had  
22 to abide by it.

23 DR. BRENNER: Does anyone else on the

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1 Certificate Management Team fall into that situation as  
2 well? Anyone else from -- that came from the airline?

3 MR. WHITACKER: Yes. A supervisor,  
4 airworthiness supervisor, Tim -- Tim Miller.

5 DR. BRENNER: Did he come directly from the  
6 airline?

7 MR. WHITACKER: He came from the airline to  
8 the FAA, but it's been -- it was more than two years  
9 ago before he came over here.

10 DR. BRENNER: And how about the other way,  
11 someone going from the -- let's go the other way, I  
12 guess. From POI to manager at the airline, an  
13 overnight transition?

14 MR. WHITACKER: I've heard that. I wasn't  
15 here. I don't know that firsthand.

16 DR. BRENNER: Has anyone else made that  
17 transition?

18 MR. WHITACKER: I've heard there was one  
19 other person. I don't remember who that was, though.

20 DR. BRENNER: Was that in the past?

21 MR. WHITACKER: That was back then in the  
22 '80s or '90s, some time.

23 DR. BRENNER: Are there guidelines about

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1 members of your family working for the airline or in  
2 some way being employed?

3 MR. WHITACKER: I don't know of any.

4 DR. BRENNER: You talked about the culture at  
5 Alaska Airlines Maintenance. Can you describe it for  
6 me as you see it?

7 MR. WHITACKER: Can you be a little more  
8 specific?

9 DR. BRENNER: Okay. What kind of changes  
10 have you seen since you worked there, for example?

11 MR. WHITACKER: Well, obviously I've seen  
12 that they've put resources available into the  
13 Maintenance Department to do whatever they need to do  
14 to get these problems fixed.

15 I mean, we've seen that with just the sheer  
16 number of tech writers that they've -- I can't tell you  
17 how many we've contracted for tech writers. They've  
18 brought in contractors for all kinds of different  
19 positions, in tooling. They've bought a lot of new  
20 tooling. Whatever resources are needed to write any of  
21 these manuals, equipment, facilities. I've seen a shop  
22 set up in another building they've leased. Just  
23 outright cooperation.

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1           Where we find areas that we feel are weak  
2 points or wrong or procedural problems, we're getting  
3 immediate reaction to our concerns and as fast as we  
4 can get them.

5           DR. BRENNER: This is since the accident?

6           MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

7           DR. BRENNER: That's good to hear. I guess I  
8 was thinking also in terms of the size of it. When you  
9 worked for it before, it must have been a much smaller  
10 operation. Just any impressions as to how they've  
11 handled the growth or --

12          MR. WHITACKER: I -- it's probably not -- it  
13 wasn't much smaller, I wouldn't think. It was less  
14 airplanes, but as far as -- not that many fewer  
15 airplanes, I don't believe. Relatively about the same  
16 size, I would say.

17          I mean, I think there was 10 less airplanes,  
18 15 less airplanes at the most when I left there. The  
19 facility has grown internally infrastructure-wise in  
20 areas. That's been part of their growth that's not  
21 visible, that a lot of people over here didn't  
22 recognize. The number of airplanes didn't increase  
23 tremendously, but there were things added to the

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1 company, such as their 536, 480 Engineering Authority,  
2 Reliability Program, just expansion of their  
3 maintenance capabilities.

4 So, there was a lot of internal growth that  
5 wasn't visible to somebody that wasn't on the inside  
6 watching this.

7 I actually talked myself out of forgetting  
8 what you had asked me.

9 DR. BRENNER: That's fine. That was helpful.

10 While we're on the older history, Mary Rose  
11 Diffenderfer. Her name has come up, and I don't know  
12 that it is relevant to the investigation, but can you  
13 kind of give me a perspective on what happened in the  
14 FAA on her and her relations with the oversight?

15 MR. WHITACKER: I don't know what happened.  
16 I thought Mary Rose was an excellent inspector, at  
17 least from my perspective being in maintenance and not  
18 knowing the operations side, but I thought she was a  
19 good inspector. I'm not sure what happened.

20 I thought she had some real key issues and  
21 some -- I don't know what the -- I really don't know  
22 what to say. I don't know what happened there.

23 DR. BRENNER: I guess one perspective was

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1 that perhaps the FAA management wasn't encouraging  
2 strong enforcement. Another is that the FAA was having  
3 internal problems with -- is there any validity to any  
4 of these views, do you think?

5 MR. WHITACKER: I think there could be some,  
6 yes. A lot of it would be hearsay on my part, and I  
7 personally didn't experience this, but --

8 DR. BRENNER: Do you think John Hubbard was  
9 too strict?

10 MR. WHITACKER: Strict? No. No, I don't  
11 think so.

12 DR. BRENNER: Why do you say that?

13 MR. WHITACKER: John was a regulations kind  
14 of guy. He knew the regulations. He understood them,  
15 and he enforced them. If that's being -- I can't  
16 imagine calling that being too strict. I don't -- I  
17 never saw him trying to run the company, try to force  
18 anything that wasn't regulatorily required.

19 He always seemed to keep focused on the  
20 regulations, and that may be strict in some people's  
21 minds, but I felt that he wasn't too strict.

22 DR. BRENNER: How were his relations with the  
23 company?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: How were they?

2 DR. BRENNER: Yes.

3 MR. WHITACKER: I think they respected John.

4 I think they learned not to argue with him when it  
5 came to the regulations, especially because he wouldn't  
6 argue.

7 DR. BRENNER: Thank you.

8 MR. HAMILTON: One quick question. Regarding  
9 -- Dean Hamilton.

10 Regarding your time at Alaska, you've been  
11 with the FAA what, a little over six years, overseeing  
12 Alaska. Did you ever feel compromised for some reason  
13 by your past working for the FAA? Did you feel you  
14 were inhibited from doing remedial action or vice  
15 versa, being more lenient than you would normally?

16 MR. WHITACKER: No. Even the short time I  
17 was gone from Alaska, before I came back down here and  
18 then came on to the Certificate, it was pretty much all  
19 new faces over there in the management.

20 I didn't really know that many people in the  
21 upper management anyhow before I left here. So, it's  
22 not like I was dealing with friends or enemies or  
23 whatever. I didn't know most of the people, especially

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1 the new people, you know, I didn't know them prior to  
2 having been here. So, no, I never felt pressured.

3 MR. PAPE: Kevin Pape, Quality Assurance,  
4 Alaska.

5 Bill, in the recap of your training, was that  
6 pre- or post-FAA as far as systems?

7 MR. WHITACKER: Systems training on the 737  
8 and MD-80, I had at Alaska Airlines when I was a  
9 mechanic there.

10 MR. PAPE: Had you had any additional  
11 training on the MD-80 type after -- after being hired  
12 by the FAA?

13 MR. WHITACKER: The ground school training on  
14 the MD-80, and I'm drawing a blank on anything past  
15 that. I don't believe I have.

16 MR. PAPE: Not on the policy as far as  
17 internal -- have you requested any additional training?

18 MR. WHITACKER: Not on the MD-80 or the 737,  
19 no.

20 MR. PAPE: And you were a partial program  
21 manager before you were on the MD-80, correct?

22 MR. WHITACKER: Correct.

23 MR. PAPE: And how long was that,

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1 approximately?

2 MR. WHITACKER: Five or six years.

3 MR. PAPE: I don't know if you touched on  
4 this, just real quick. How would you categorize the  
5 relationship between the CMU itself and Alaska

6 Airlines? Professional? Was it hostile? Was it --

7 MR. WHITACKER: Currently, you're talking  
8 about?

9 MR. PAPE: I mean past.

10 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, past?

11 MR. PAPE: Yeah. How would you consider it  
12 with the involvement you had?

13 MR. WHITACKER: I'd -- professional.

14 MR. PAPE: Always on a positive?

15 MR. WHITACKER: No, not always on a positive.  
16 Definitely not always on the positive.

17 MR. PAPE: What do you mean if not on a  
18 positive?

19 MR. WHITACKER: Well, from regulator to  
20 regulatee, I don't know how you could possibly always  
21 have a positive --

22 MR. PAPE: Maybe I -- maybe I should  
23 requalify that as, did they react positively as far as

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1 the direction or the violation which was --

2 MR. WHITACKER: There was --

3 MR. PAPE: -- discussed?

4 MR. WHITACKER: There were cases where, yes,  
5 and then there were some, you know, where there would  
6 be some argument. Sometimes it took clarification.  
7 Sometimes I -- you know, I don't know why.

8 MR. PAPE: Let's clarify, though. We came to  
9 a common -- to --

10 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah, yeah.

11 MR. PAPE: To a common area to where we --  
12 both sides agreed or --

13 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

14 MR. PAPE: Have you issued any LOIs against  
15 Alaska?

16 MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

17 MR. PAPE: Do you have any number,  
18 approximately?

19 MR. WHITACKER: I don't know.

20 MR. PAPE: Were you ever influenced within  
21 Alaska by your decision-making process on whether or  
22 whether or not to issue an LOI? In other words, was  
23 there any undue pressure put on you by anybody within

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1 Alaska?

2 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, no.

3 MR. PAPE: Sometimes I have a hard time  
4 getting to the question, Bill.

5 One last question. Does the FAR that  
6 requires the DOM and the director of safety, does it  
7 say it has to be a singular person or can it be shared  
8 by -- by --

9 MR. WHITACKER: I don't want to quote it. I  
10 can't think off the top of my head what it -- what it  
11 says. I know it says there will be a director of  
12 maintenance, and then there are some --

13 MR. PAPE: So, it could be shared  
14 responsibilities possibly?

15 MR. WHITACKER: I -- without reading it, I  
16 don't want to --

17 MR. PAPE: Okay. Thank you, Bill. That's  
18 all I have.

19 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Kristen Von Kleinsmid.

20 You said you were from '98 to 2000, you were  
21 in the Evaluations Group?

22 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. Aircraft Evaluation.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And what were your

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1 responsibilities there?

2 MR. WHITACKER: I was the MRB chairman for  
3 the Airbus 8300, 800, 600, A-310, and the 747 fleet.  
4 That was a shared responsibility on the 747 fleet.

5 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was that primarily -- so,  
6 that wasn't key to Alaska, it was within the FAA, and  
7 --

8 MR. WHITACKER: Correct. Yeah. I had  
9 nothing to do with Alaska.

10 MS. VON KLEINSMID: So, you didn't have  
11 anything to do with Alaska at all because none of these  
12 apply?

13 And then, when you went to Anchorage, you  
14 took a job with FAA in Anchorage, right?

15 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

16 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Were you working in  
17 Alaska items, planes, aircraft, up in Anchorage?

18 MR. WHITACKER: No. The only thing I ever  
19 had to do with Alaska in there was on an air turn-back  
20 one time, and I believe that was all. I was a  
21 geographic inspector.

22 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And, so, you -- you got  
23 the -- you bid on the PMI job, like you said, the

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1 beginning of January, and then you said the middle of  
2 January 2000, you were selected?

3 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. I was selected. I  
4 think the end of December, the selection was made, and  
5 I didn't start work, I think it was, until the 15th of  
6 January.

7 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. And you stopped  
8 in, said hi, and then off to training you go? What  
9 kind of training was that?

10 MR. WHITACKER: ATOS. Well, excuse me.  
11 First, I had two classes in advance composite repair  
12 training, and then as soon as that was over, then I  
13 went right to ATOS training.

14 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And what was the advance  
15 composite repair training? Did you apply for that  
16 training prior to --

17 MR. WHITACKER: Right. And it's one that I  
18 can use here. So, they said go ahead and take that. I  
19 was put in the class while I was in the AEG.

20 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. So, that -- that  
21 took awhile, and then you switched over to ATOS?

22 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was that in Dallas?

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1           MR. WHITACKER: No. That was down in  
2 Oklahoma City.

3           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Where were you when the  
4 crash occurred? Were you still attending the composite  
5 training or the ATOS training?

6           MR. WHITACKER: I was in the composite  
7 training then.

8           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was there any discussion  
9 at that time to pull you out of training to come back  
10 here?

11           MR. WHITACKER: I had asked to come back, if  
12 they thought I would be of any use, and at that point,  
13 Tim Bennett was acting as the principal, and it just --  
14 there didn't seem to be any real point because nobody  
15 knew anything of what was going on here, even an idea  
16 of what the product might be. So, they said go ahead  
17 and finish the training first, and I had to finish the  
18 ATOS training before I could even be part of the  
19 Certificate Management Team. You have to have that  
20 training. So, that class wasn't going to be out for  
21 quite some time. So, I had to go to that one.

22           MS. VON KLEINSMID: And how long is that  
23 class?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: I think that's a week-long.

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And it's offered every so  
3 often.

4 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

5 MS. VON KLEINSMID: You had mentioned that  
6 aircraft-specific training was needed for some folks?

7 MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

8 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Which folks are you  
9 talking about?

10 MR. WHITACKER: Earl's in Oakland, and I  
11 believe Bill Stefoni needs it as well. We're going to  
12 try and get one of them into the MD-80 and one of them  
13 into 737.

14 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And Earl, where is he  
15 from?

16 MR. WHITACKER: They're both in Oakland.

17 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Oakland? And when we  
18 talked about going ahead and putting a team together, I  
19 guess you went into Oakland, and you had your check  
20 procedures, saw that there was written procedures not  
21 established. You came in, put a team together.

22 But only after you had gone down there and  
23 notified and come up with these -- these items of --

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1 you went in and this is what we found?

2 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

3 MS. VON KLEINSMID: You weren't here until  
4 February. So, are you aware of any activities on the  
5 part of Alaska Airlines from February of 2000 until the  
6 time when you guys went in and did your audit and came  
7 out with -- with findings as to any activity on the  
8 part of Alaska for -- for evaluating themselves? Any  
9 self-inspections as to their heavy check or any other  
10 areas?

11 MR. WHITACKER: I'm not aware of any, no.  
12 I'm not aware of any.

13 MS. VON KLEINSMID: What are your  
14 responsibilities as PMI in terms of Maintenance Control  
15 and oversight over Maintenance Control? Do you have  
16 any responsibilities over Maintenance Control?

17 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, yes. I mean, we need to  
18 do oversight on -- on what their procedures are. I  
19 mean, we need to know all the procedures, and  
20 Maintenance Control is part of it. The requirements,  
21 if there's recurrent or if it's required.

22 You know, how they handle any situations,  
23 deferrals. All the regulations pertaining to

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1 Maintenance Control and the maintenance functions.

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: I think you responded in  
3 your answer that that -- I think we were specifically  
4 talking about training, and you said you hadn't looked  
5 up that yet.

6 What have you done regarding interactions  
7 with Maintenance Control since you've assumed  
8 responsibility as PMI?

9 MR. WHITACKER: Since I've come in as PMI,  
10 the main thing has been on MEL issues, you know, items  
11 that are being put on MEL or deferred, you know, and  
12 the deferral codes.

13 We had found some items that were put on MEL  
14 that maybe had been put under the wrong MEL and should  
15 have been deferred as an interior item or possibly they  
16 should have been a light under the lighting system,  
17 items of that nature.

18 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Do you have anything to  
19 compare the type of MEL problems that you've  
20 experienced in the past three months with Maintenance  
21 Control to any other airline or is this --

22 MR. WHITACKER: No. No.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Have you spent some time

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1 talking to Jim McClendon or any of the other people in  
2 Maintenance Control?

3 MR. WHITACKER: Not to sit down with them,  
4 no. I've talked with them in meetings, yeah. I've  
5 introduced myself, yeah.

6 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Any discussion with any  
7 pilots regarding their interaction with Maintenance  
8 Control and any frustrations that they might have had  
9 --

10 MR. WHITACKER: No.

11 MS. VON KLEINSMID: -- or be having currently  
12 or anything like that?

13 MR. WHITACKER: Well, I did -- I did step  
14 into a meeting that was held in here with some check  
15 airmen and talked a little bit with them on the -- on  
16 the new way of deferrals being put into the -- the log  
17 book now, so they have -- that was one of the  
18 requirements we put on them, is that daily, they run  
19 all of the deferred items, put the listing in the back  
20 of the log book, so pilots have access to it.

21 I did get some feedback from the pilots in  
22 here on that, and how they liked it or not, and we  
23 talked a little bit about airworthiness release and

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1 procedures on that.

2 After that meeting, myself and Pete Ohi here,  
3 we were -- I've already talked with Maintenance. I  
4 don't know if he's talked with Operations yet, but  
5 we're going to set up a meeting to bring our Operations  
6 and Maintenance together and bring Alaska to all the  
7 meetings here and get everybody talking. We've got to  
8 open up a dialogue here.

9 MS. VON KLEINSMID: So, in your opinion,  
10 maybe there is some closedness and doors that are --

11 MR. WHITACKER: That's my personal opinion,  
12 and there's some communication -- lack of communication  
13 between Maintenance and Operations, and I want to -- I  
14 want to set this meeting up and open that dialogue up,  
15 and we're going to -- next month, I believe, we're  
16 going to -- we have a -- we have a solid day here. We  
17 have a tentative date for when the meeting's going to  
18 be, but -- then we're going to have -- initially, we're  
19 going to do it quarterly, and at the first meeting,  
20 we'll discuss maybe we need to do it monthly, maybe  
21 every six months. We don't know yet. See what issues  
22 come up, and whether it's beneficial or not. If this  
23 meeting looks like it's good, we'll adjust it, but

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1 we've got to open up a communication line.

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. And you had stated  
3 that you've received or the office receives monthly  
4 reports, interim reports, on engine utilization and  
5 reliability, monthly reliability reports.

6 How about overall aircraft utilization and  
7 flights and --

8 MR. WHITACKER: That's included.

9 MS. VON KLEINSMID: That's included in that?

10 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. That's all included.

11 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And regarding your  
12 training to become a PMI, I assume that there is a job  
13 description put out for the bidding process and stuff,  
14 but do you have any other training requirements in this  
15 current role or is it just based on your past  
16 experience, you're qualified in having cleared the ATOS  
17 class?

18 MR. WHITACKER: Right. There's no specific  
19 training for PMI. You have to have all the initial  
20 training that any inspector has, but there's no PMI  
21 class that I know of.

22 MS. VON KLEINSMID: You made a statement that  
23 you sent out an announcement regarding -- Mr. McGill

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1 had asked you about inspectors in Oakland, and you had  
2 sent out an announcement, and you were going to do  
3 augmented surveillance from the geographic -- I was --  
4 I was under the impression that under ATOS, you have no  
5 control over the geographic inspectors.

6 How -- how does that work, where you're all  
7 of a sudden getting support from them to help out with  
8 your surveillance?

9 MR. WHITACKER: Okay. I think we've got a --

10 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Am I confused?

11 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. I think there's a  
12 little miscommunication.

13 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay.

14 MR. WHITACKER: When I say "geographic  
15 inspectors", this is kind of old terminology and new  
16 terminology. In the old days, a geographic inspector  
17 was somebody that was not assigned to any certificate  
18 at all.

19 Since the advent of ATOS, now they have taken  
20 selected people and made them certificate management  
21 team members assigned to a specific airline. They took  
22 those folks from the geographic inspector force.  
23 There's still some geographic inspectors out in our

1 system in the FAA, but not all airlines are under ATOS  
2 yet.

3 So, they still do the traditional geographic  
4 inspector duties of looking at the small airlines,  
5 other than the top 10. So, I know sometimes when I  
6 talk, I'll say geographic inspector in Oakland meaning  
7 our CMT members. I'm probably confusing you on that,  
8 but we have our CMT members under ATOS doing a hundred  
9 percent inspections down in Oakland for -- and AMS at  
10 the facilities.

11 Along with that, since we are not able to get  
12 to all of our ATOS normal surveillance duties from here  
13 because of our workload up here, what we have done, we  
14 got permission to go ahead and ask for help from the  
15 other remaining geographic inspectors out in the field  
16 in Sacramento, wherever Alaska flies.

17 So, we've sent out a message to all the  
18 office managers asking that we get this extra help from  
19 these geographic inspectors. So, that's -- when I'm  
20 saying geographic, that's really what I mean. These  
21 aren't CMT members. These are just the old traditional  
22 geographic inspectors. They're just helping us out  
23 during this time frame, doing extra surveillance for

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1 us.

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was that -- is that with  
3 the approval of Alaska Airlines? Because I thought  
4 that the deal was that you no longer could have just a  
5 rogue geographic inspector, you know, take a look at  
6 something going on on a flight ramp if he wasn't under  
7 the CMT level to be able to assist the FAA.

8 MR. WHITACKER: I see what you're saying. I  
9 don't -- I haven't personally communicated with Alaska  
10 Airlines at all on that. This was kind of handled at a  
11 higher level here. It was up in the division because I  
12 -- I don't have the authority to go out and ask  
13 geographic inspectors to do anything for me. CMT  
14 members are my only realm of people to work with.

15 So, this was done from the division level,  
16 and I don't know if they worked anything out with  
17 Alaska Airlines or -- I know Washington, I believe, was  
18 even involved in this. So, it wasn't just a decision  
19 made, that we just went ahead and did it. It was  
20 coordinated, at least on the FAA side.

21 MS. VON KLEINSMID: But you haven't gotten  
22 any memorandum or complaints from Alaska regarding  
23 this?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: No.

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. That you're aware  
3 of at least?

4 MR. WHITACKER: No.

5 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And when things come into  
6 the office, I mean, are they routed through all -- all  
7 the partial program managers and POIs? I mean, is  
8 everything generally routed throughout the six of you,  
9 looking at this --

10 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. Usually we just have a  
11 canned initial sheet for everything that comes through.

12 Not all operations will come to the maintenance side  
13 of the house, and if it's something that connects  
14 between Operations and Maintenance, yeah, we'll all  
15 take a look at it, both sides.

16 If it only pertains strictly to Maintenance  
17 or strictly to Operations, it will just go to, you  
18 know, Operations or Maintenance.

19 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. Last question I  
20 have is, when the question had been posed to you  
21 regarding whether or not you thought Hubbard had -- was  
22 too strict, you sort of questioned "strict".

23 Did you think he was too lenient?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: No, no.

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay.

3 MR. WHITACKER: Absolutely not. No. I like  
4 a person that follows the rules and stays with the  
5 rules. To me, that's not strict in my mind. That's an  
6 easy person to follow. You always know where you stand  
7 with a person like that.

8 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Would you -- did you like  
9 his approach in terms of how he went about addressing  
10 problems with -- with Alaska, if you were around enough  
11 to know in terms of his approach versus other PMIs or  
12 --

13 MR. WHITACKER: No, I couldn't really compare  
14 it. I didn't ever really find anything wrong with his  
15 approach.

16 MS. VON KLEINSMID: That's all I have. Thank  
17 you.

18 MR. SEYER: Lance Seyer. There's two  
19 approaches in looking at a maintenance program with  
20 respect to Alaska Airlines and the MD-80s. There's  
21 MSG-2 and MSG-3. Do you know which program they're  
22 following?

23 MR. WHITACKER: They're MSG-2.

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1           MR. SEYER: Do you know if, under the MSG-2  
2 program, whether lubrication or lubrication intervals  
3 are considered during that process?

4           MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. It's in the process.

5           MR. SEYER: During the time that Alaska  
6 Airlines were -- they were buying more aircraft,  
7 utilizing them for longer hours, and extending the time  
8 between checks from like 12 months to 15 months, as  
9 well as the A checks being expanded from -- since the  
10 accident, has there been any investigations from the  
11 FAA to go back and look at this Maintenance Program and  
12 go back and look at other tasks or jobs, lube  
13 intervals, that were inadvertently extended with these  
14 time extensions past their original period?

15           MR. WHITACKER: I'm not real -- real clear on  
16 your question.

17           MR. SEYER: If they take a C check, and it  
18 has to be lubed once every 12 months, they okay to push  
19 the C check out to 15 months. Okay. Does that lube  
20 still get done at 12 months or does that lube card  
21 follow the C check to 15 months?

22           MR. WHITACKER: In some cases, it will  
23 follow, and some, it might fall out and be picked up at

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1 a different interval, other than the C check.

2 MR. SEYER: Is this something that the FAA is  
3 currently looking at in -- in light of the accident?

4 MR. WHITACKER: Not -- from an investigative  
5 -- it's all being looked at, yes. Briefing papers have  
6 been put together and explanations on how the program  
7 escalated and the history of it, you know, how it's --  
8 where it started, and how it got to -- it's -- it's  
9 being investigated.

10 MR. SEYER: Prior to the accident, you were  
11 an inspector, and one of your duties was to inspect  
12 Alaska Airlines, is that correct?

13 MR. WHITACKER: For two weeks prior to the  
14 accident. Before that, I was an AEG. So.

15 MR. SEYER: Okay. You said during this  
16 latest NSI inspection, you said you participated in  
17 that?

18 MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

19 MR. SEYER: One of your findings was that the  
20 CAS Program did not catch the shortcomings. Could you  
21 explain this -- this program in short terms?

22 MR. WHITACKER: Which program?

23 MR. SEYER: The CAS Program, and how it's

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1 supposed to work.

2 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, okay. That's a  
3 continuous -- continuing analysis of the Surveillance  
4 Program. We're supposed to be looking internally at  
5 the company, looking at components. You know, they  
6 should be looking at the Reliability Program, the  
7 components and failure rates and -- and installation  
8 and things of that nature.

9 They should also be out looking at  
10 procedures, such as like down in Oakland, when we  
11 discovered that there virtually weren't any procedures  
12 on -- on doing this.

13 My first question is how come the CAS Program  
14 didn't discover this as well? They should be, you  
15 know, obviously doing the traditional duties that most  
16 CAS Programs do, and that's looking at housekeeping,  
17 cleaning, parts tagged, and things of that nature.  
18 That's part of it, but that's just a part of it.

19 The CAS Program should be out on the line  
20 looking at tooling, looking at parts on the shelves,  
21 looking at records checks, are the records being done  
22 properly. All the things we look at really are what a  
23 CAS Program should be out doing, being the operator's

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1 own internal police force before we find them, and --  
2 and it's -- it's required by regulation, 121.273. It's  
3 pretty clear in there that the company will have one,  
4 and it will have an analysis portion. That's where the  
5 reliability comes into it if you have a Reliability  
6 Program. If you don't, then the CAS Program assumes  
7 those duties, supposed to be.

8 So, they need to be an internal police  
9 department, and that's my words, police department, but  
10 continually, though, that's the key in there. Always  
11 looking at the company, looking for shortfalls and  
12 areas to improve.

13 MR. SEYER: Would this be a function of a  
14 quality control department?

15 MR. WHITACKER: No. That would be quality  
16 assurance.

17 MR. SEYER: Quality assurance. Do you think  
18 part of the shortfall was being understaffed?

19 MR. WHITACKER: I think that was part of it,  
20 yes.

21 MR. SEYER: That's all I have.

22 DR. CRAWLEY: Dave Crawley with the Airline  
23 Pilots Association.

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1           As far as the heavy checks procedures in  
2 Oakland and Seattle, you said Alaska does now have  
3 written procedures, and do you have copies here in this  
4 office of those new written procedures?

5           MR. WHITACKER: It's in the General  
6 Maintenance Program.

7           DR. CRAWLEY: Okay. That's the only question  
8 I had about that.

9           Early on in the NTSB investigation, and I'll  
10 have to ask Mr. Rodriguez to confirm that I'm correct  
11 on this and tell me if I'm not, I believe it was the  
12 Systems Group did a very careful evaluation of the  
13 procedures used to do end plate checks on the  
14 stabilizer jack screw, both by going to another major  
15 air carrier and seeing how they did theirs, and looking  
16 very carefully at the procedures and the tools and so  
17 forth of how Alaska Airlines did theirs, is that  
18 correct?

19          MR. WHITACKER: Yeah.

20          DR. CRAWLEY: Did -- did you personally get  
21 involved in any of these end plate checks that were  
22 subsequently done, you know, due to this emergency AD  
23 on --



1 MR. WHITACKER: No.

2 DR. CRAWLEY: Did you get involved in any way  
3 with any discussions of these -- the results of these  
4 end plate checks on the other airplanes that were  
5 coming through and getting checked as required by this  
6 emergency AD?

7 You were the principal maintenance inspector  
8 during that period of time, right?

9 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

10 DR. CRAWLEY: Did you get involved with any  
11 of those checks? You must have had discussions about  
12 them.

13 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, yeah. I had lots of  
14 discussions.

15 DR. CRAWLEY: Was there any concern about how  
16 the checks were being performed, about the tools that  
17 were used, about the calibration of the tools, that the  
18 tools were the proper tools, certified tools?

19 MR. WHITACKER: There was -- there was lots  
20 of questions, you know. I raised some to the IC for  
21 clarification of the procedure. I had lots of  
22 questions. The torque settings.

23 DR. CRAWLEY: Did you go out and see how it

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1 was done?

2 MR. WHITACKER: No. We had other people here  
3 that -- by the time I got on the scene here, after  
4 coming back from training, all this had already been in  
5 place, and I -- there was plenty of coverage on it from  
6 this office.

7 I personally didn't have the opportunity to  
8 go out there.

9 DR. CRAWLEY: It just seems to me that would  
10 be a high priority at that point, very high priority.

11 MR. WHITACKER: Believe me, I've got so many  
12 people who think they know what my high priority is. I  
13 mean, it's -- I've got lots of high priorities from all  
14 kinds of people.

15 DR. CRAWLEY: Just last week, a tool was  
16 discovered that was being used, and I'm sure you're  
17 aware of this, that was not a proper tool and did get  
18 false readings.

19 In these checks, according -- that had to be  
20 performed to be in compliance with this emergency AD,  
21 started in February, and this tool was just discovered  
22 last week, and, I mean, do you have any explanation for  
23 that?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: No, I sure don't.

2 DR. CRAWLEY: You talked about reviewing MEL  
3 procedures as Maintenance Control applied MELs to  
4 airplanes, and you mentioned that sometimes the wrong  
5 MEL was applied, and you didn't really mention any  
6 other significant problems.

7 I have a term that I call "rolling MELs".  
8 That's my term, but it's -- it's MELs that were -- it's  
9 a 10-day item, and at the end of that 10 days, it's  
10 cleared, and then the aircraft goes out and flies maybe  
11 one leg, maybe two legs, and then the same item is  
12 written up again for the same problem. It's put back  
13 on an MEL for another 10 days, and sometimes this  
14 happens over and over and over again.

15 Did you encounter any of that when you were  
16 reviewing MELs?

17 MR. WHITACKER: I didn't specifically see  
18 that problem, no.

19 DR. CRAWLEY: Maybe they got that problem  
20 solved. I hope so.

21 So, you had talked about a meeting that you  
22 had with some check airmen over the deferred  
23 maintenance item list that's put in the back of the log

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1 book, and you said that the FAA had made that a  
2 requirement to make it available for the pilot.

3 MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

4 DR. CRAWLEY: During this meeting about this  
5 requirement to have the deferred maintenance item list  
6 available to the pilot, was there any objections by the  
7 pilots here or -- or by any of the Alaska personnel to  
8 having that in the log book?

9 MR. WHITACKER: That group that was in here  
10 at the meeting?

11 DR. CRAWLEY: Has anyone at Alaska objected  
12 to that requirement?

13 MR. WHITACKER: Maintenance has brought it  
14 up, that possibly -- I believe they're including the  
15 Sand Dent Program item in there as well, and they're  
16 saying maybe that one doesn't need to be in there, and  
17 I think I'm leaning to agreeing with that, that that's  
18 a program that's -- that's -- the dents are  
19 identifiable usually by dots, visible dots on them.

20 So, to put that back there, I don't know if  
21 there's any benefit to anybody having that or not, but  
22 it's something I know that Alaska, in their procedures,  
23 are going to write a new -- format a new form to have

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1 in the back of the deferred items on it, so this  
2 computer sheet that's in there now, I understand it's  
3 created a little bit of a problem in itself, just  
4 messy-wise, and that's going to change, and we'll be  
5 looking at that whole procedure when they get to that  
6 part, when they write their new form or whatever it is  
7 they're going to do. We'll discuss it at that time.

8 I do anticipate it will probably be different  
9 than what it is now.

10 DR. CRAWLEY: Okay. I think that's all I  
11 have.

12 MR. LASLEY: Mike Lasley. Has Alaska  
13 submitted any -- an alternate restraining fixture tool,  
14 the tool that checks the stabilizer, to the FAA for  
15 approval or acceptance?

16 MR. WHITACKER: Not that I'm aware of right  
17 now. It's my understanding they use a Boeing-  
18 manufactured fixture right now. The other ones are  
19 quarantined that were manufactured by Alaska.

20 MR. LASLEY: Thank you.

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I was going to say no  
22 questions, but I didn't want to have a bunch of heart  
23 attacks.

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1 I was intrigued by the composition of the  
2 special inspection that was just completed, --

3 MR. WHITACKER: Okay.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- and you were part of that?

5 MR. WHITACKER: Hm-hmm.

6 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Would you comment on the --  
7 either the techniques that you followed or the  
8 composition of that team, in that, as I look it,  
9 roughly, it was practically the whole CMS.

10 I mean, I don't know all the people, but  
11 there was a fistful of them in there, --

12 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- headed by an outsider from  
14 AFS-40, whoever that is.

15 Typically on special inspections, isn't that  
16 people from outside coming in?

17 MR. WHITACKER: Under the old NASEP  
18 philosophy, yeah, that's exactly what it was.

19 This, I believe, is the first time the NSI,  
20 National Safety Inspection, has ever been done. I  
21 think this was the very first time, if I'm not  
22 mistaken, and originally, the CMT, we were going to try  
23 and get as many people as we could from wherever we

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1 could and conduct this inspection. That's under the  
2 ATOS plan, and that was decided no, we needed to have  
3 outside leadership on it. That's when AFS-40 was  
4 brought in.

5 So, there was AFS-40 leading it. We were  
6 participants. CSEP was called. There was CSEP members  
7 that came in from wherever, you know, whoever they  
8 sent, and we had some help from Oklahoma City, an ATOS  
9 instructor down there, that had a good background, came  
10 up and helped.

11 We had some help from FSDO over here. So, it  
12 was a pretty diverse group of people from all around  
13 the country that were here, and we did have part of the  
14 team, though.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, would you -- would you  
16 classify this as a successful inspection?

17 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. Yeah. I think it was  
18 a successful inspection.

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Did the -- did the team do  
20 anything other than -- I guess you've never been on a  
21 NASEP.

22 MR. WHITACKER: I've been on lots of NASEPs.

23 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Oh, you have?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Did you do anything in this  
3 inspection that was different from the techniques that  
4 might be employed by the NASEP inspection?

5 MR. WHITACKER: Not really, no. Other than  
6 we weren't working with the guidelines of NASEP, you  
7 know. I mean, there were different guidelines, but,  
8 ultimately, they had turned out to be about the same.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Has Alaska shared its  
10 internal audit with you? Did you know they had --

11 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, yeah.

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- an internal audit?

13 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. I'm sorry. You said  
14 internal audit, I was thinking something else. Yes, I  
15 have a copy of it. I haven't got to review it yet, but  
16 I do have a copy.

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Did you approve the -- did  
18 you have approval authority or anything over the  
19 director of maintenance appointment?

20 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. Yeah. Right. Now,  
21 we do. I mean, we always did, but this particular one,  
22 yes, I was -- you know, we looked at the resume and had  
23 to meet the guy under Part 119.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Now, one of the things that  
2 has intrigued me is that seemingly overnight, Alaska  
3 has committed to hire a 130 mechanics.

4           Do you have any idea how many mechanics they  
5 have?

6           MR. WHITACKER: No, I can't remember that.  
7 I've read the --

8           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Is a 130 mechanics for an  
9 airline the size of Alaska a significant increase?

10          MR. WHITACKER: It's -- it's approaching  
11 significant, I would say, yes.

12          MR. RODRIQUEZ: From your background, do you  
13 have any idea how -- how best to implement a 130  
14 mechanics in the space of a relatively compressed short  
15 time period?

16          MR. WHITACKER: You mean how to use them?

17          MR. RODRIQUEZ: How do you -- where do you  
18 find them? What is the labor market for mechanics?

19          MR. WHITACKER: I'm not sure what it is at  
20 this particular time. I know Boeing has a big effect  
21 on what the labor market's going to be for mechanics,  
22 and the health of the rest of the industry, if it's  
23 good, they're hard to find. If it's not good, they're

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1 easy to find.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: So, you don't really know as  
3 the PMI how Alaska proposed to indoctrinate these 130  
4 mechanics they were going to hire?

5 MR. WHITACKER: As far as indoctrinating, I  
6 mean, I wouldn't use that --

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, I mean, --

8 MR. WHITACKER: Training, yes.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- you've got to train  
10 people, huh?

11 MR. WHITACKER: Right. Yeah. They'll bring  
12 them in, and they'll bring them through their  
13 indoctrination, of course, at the very beginning, which  
14 is teaching the General Maintenance Manual procedures  
15 and the company philosophy, and then as the classes  
16 become available, then they will go through the task-  
17 specific, the technical training on the airplane and --  
18 and on-the-job training as well.

19 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Have you discussed that with  
20 Alaska? Specifically, they've told you that's what  
21 they're going to do?

22 MR. WHITACKER: No, no. That's -- I just  
23 know that that's the procedure.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you have anybody who's  
2 gone over there to see if they actually conducted  
3 indoctrination classes?

4           MR. WHITACKER: Not yet, no.

5           MR. RODRIQUEZ: I believe that's all the  
6 questions I have, Bill.

7           MR. WHITACKER: Okay.

8           MR. MCGILL: Since we were told we could keep  
9 you till 4:30, I was just -- I had a couple of  
10 questions left, Bill, before we -- I noticed that on  
11 the MRB Control Board Directives in '96, you were --  
12 when they -- C checks were escalated from a 13-month  
13 interval to a 15-month interval, your signature was on  
14 that approval.

15          MR. WHITACKER: Yeah.

16          MR. MCGILL: That -- that check picked up the  
17 end plate check which is part of the C check, the task  
18 of it, because it was on a two-C interval.

19          MR. WHITACKER: Right.

20          MR. MCGILL: That moved from a -- now a 26-  
21 calendar month end plate check, at that time was  
22 approximately 6,400 flight hours, to a 30-month  
23 interval which was now 9,955, approximately. That's

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1 about a 3,000-hour increase in when that check would  
2 occur.

3 Do you remember offhand when you were part of  
4 that approval process, was this discussed?

5 MR. WHITACKER: I don't remember that  
6 individual. I -- that individual item probably was not  
7 discussed, you know. The Data Reliability Program,  
8 past history, the data that they provided for  
9 justification on that, would be considered, and if  
10 there was nothing that would have shown a problem in --  
11 in that area, then I -- I can only say you do try to  
12 look at everything that's on there, what it's going to  
13 affect, before you make a decision like that, but I  
14 can't be specific if -- if that particular item itself  
15 was discussed or not.

16 MR. MCGILL: Three months later, on another  
17 meeting, in which you signed off on, the lubrication  
18 was -- was taken off of a -- a segmented 8-A check and  
19 moved on to a stand-alone card.

20 On an 8-A interval at that time, the A checks  
21 was 200 flight hours, which would have put the  
22 lubrication at 1,600 flight hours. Moving it to an  
23 eight-month stand-alone card, it escalated the time to

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1 approximately 2,550 hours.

2 So, again, we moved about a thousand hours  
3 increase in lubrication time. Do you remember if that  
4 was discussed?

5 MR. WHITACKER: I can remember bits and  
6 pieces of it, you know, looking at the -- at the other  
7 airlines, their intervals, the fact that to move that A  
8 check out to 250 and drop it down, and I believe there  
9 was another lube that was -- would have been shortened  
10 up on the elevators and at the same time put under  
11 that, and then, you know, looking at the data, you  
12 know, there was no data to indicate that there was a  
13 problem, and that's the process for escalating things.

14 I mean, you know, that's -- you have to look  
15 at the data, and on that particular one, I remember  
16 that they included in there a copy of the MSG-3  
17 document, which had that interval for an initial start-  
18 up operator of 3,600 hours. I think it was 3,600  
19 hours.

20 MR. MCGILL: Yes, it was 3,600.

21 MR. WHITACKER: It doesn't really mean  
22 anything, other than information. You can look at a  
23 brand-new operator with no background with this

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1 airplane at all, no experience, who go ahead and start  
2 out operations tomorrow, and it's only 3,600 versus an  
3 experienced operator, who wanted to go 1,100 and some  
4 hours less than that.

5 So, it was all part of the decision-making on  
6 that that I can remember now.

7 MR. MCGILL: You said earlier, that you were  
8 part of the MRB Board.

9 MR. WHITACKER: Right.

10 MR. MCGILL: Have you had a chance lately to  
11 understand the MRB of MSG-2 and following through the  
12 OEMP for this aircraft, and how it's being applied to  
13 the current task cards, for instance, on a C check?

14 MR. WHITACKER: I'm not sure I understand  
15 what you mean.

16 MR. MCGILL: Well, in MRB, what do you do  
17 with the MRB?

18 MR. WHITACKER: With the MRB? That's the  
19 Baseline Maintenance Program for initial start-up.

20 MR. MCGILL: Okay. And what happens after  
21 you've reviewed the MRB? What is the next step?  
22 Wouldn't you think either a -- the Maintenance Planning  
23 Document or OEMP is created off of that MRB?

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1 MR. WHITACKER: Correct.

2 MR. MCGILL: From that, a set of task cards,  
3 along with the Maintenance Manual, is what -- so, it  
4 looked like one would be looking at what guidance was  
5 given out for initial operators, like you said, as --  
6 and how those cards are at least correlated with  
7 maintenance tasks and are far better on a maintenance  
8 program now.

9 Periodically, I would think one would review  
10 that. Do you think you would have -- you're going to  
11 be able to check that against the maintenance cards  
12 that are now on the Alaska --

13 MR. WHITACKER: Oh, I see what you're saying.  
14 Okay. Oh, yeah. I'm sure we will. I know, I  
15 remember we did years ago kind of go through and take a  
16 look at the original MPB and the MRB and take a look at  
17 a lot of the programs and questions, and we actually  
18 had to bring up some old justification of how they got  
19 to where they were from prior principles and that.

20 When we get the time, I'm sure this is all  
21 relevant and --

22 MR. MCGILL: When -- when they made those  
23 escalations in '96, was any of that kind of data used

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1 as substantial -- like you mentioned MSG-3, off of the  
2 -- from the MRB on the -- that was 3,600 hours. So,  
3 therefore, even if I told you we went up roughly one-  
4 third, from 1,600 to 2,500, it was still under the MSG-  
5 3.

6 MR. WHITACKER: The reason that one sticks in  
7 my mind so well is one of the justifications that they  
8 used was that the MSG-3 had put a quota in, and I  
9 believe it's right in the document there, that, in so  
10 many words, saying you can use MSG-2 or MSG-3 if you're  
11 an existing operator, and that one stuck with me, and  
12 after I got into the Aircraft Evaluation Group, I  
13 brought that to light.

14 We had a lot of discussions between the  
15 different offices on that, and since that time, that  
16 statement in all the MRBs was changed to be clear that  
17 you don't pick and choose, you use one or the other.

18 MR. MCGILL: So, you're saying it's just been  
19 changed recently because --

20 MR. WHITACKER: Yes.

21 MR. MCGILL: -- I've used this for 20 years  
22 like that.

23 MR. WHITACKER: Well, in the next revision of

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1 each MRB, so until this MD-80 is revised again, it will  
2 remain the same --

3 MR. MCGILL: I see.

4 MR. WHITACKER: -- on the next revision of  
5 that statement. It will be changed on there.

6 MR. MCGILL: Okay.

7 MR. WHITACKER: And any new airplanes that  
8 would come along.

9 MR. MCGILL: Well, since you brought up the  
10 MSG-3 for the -- part of the justification on this  
11 lubrication, did you check to see what the MSG-2 was at  
12 that same -- off of the MRB?

13 MR. WHITACKER: I don't remember if I did or  
14 not. I doubt it. I probably didn't.

15 MR. MCGILL: Because I think that would have  
16 said like 600 hours to a maximum of 900, and, so, that  
17 would have been considerably less.

18 MR. WHITACKER: Yeah. I remember looking at  
19 that MSG-3 being prevalent on that because obviously  
20 that's the one with the current information, and the  
21 only thing I can remember on that was there's a  
22 different process of analysis between MSG-2 and MSG-3,  
23 but looking at lubrication in that particular area,

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1       there's only -- you still come out with the same  
2       results no matter how you analyze it. You can visually  
3       inspect it. You can remove it.

4                   In looking at that 36-month or 3,600-hour,  
5       MRBs aren't made up of a bunch of rookies. I mean,  
6       there's a lot of experienced and visionary people on  
7       these work groups, and, you know, so, again, they'll  
8       just use existing information as a part of their data  
9       package.

10                   MR. MCGILL: Do we have some more questions  
11       here for Bill?

12                   (No response)

13                   MR. MCGILL: That's it.

14                   INTERVIEW OF BOB HILL

15                   MR. MCGILL: Bob, could you please start off  
16       by giving us a short biographical sketch of your  
17       background in aviation, and then follow that up with  
18       your hiring with the FAA and up to where you're at  
19       currently?

20                   MR. HILL: I'd be glad to. I started flying  
21       in about 1963 and went through my private, commercial,  
22       instrument, and got my various ratings, and then went  
23       to work for a flight FBO in the San Carlos area, San

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1 Francisco area, and progressed as a flight instructor,  
2 and then I moved up to chief pilot and director of ops.

3 Then I was later designated as a pilot-  
4 examiner for the FAA, and I was a pilot-examiner for  
5 several years and conducted 4 or 500 flight checks and  
6 issued various pilot certificates.

7 Simultaneously, I went to work at a local  
8 community college there at night class and started  
9 teaching in the Aviation Department and obtained state  
10 teaching credentials and then moved into the college  
11 full-time, and I still kept my chief pilot's job at  
12 this fixed-based operator, and started putting my  
13 applications out for airlines and the FAA in the late  
14 '60s, and I was hired by the FAA in 1970.

15 So, I started my career 30 years ago this --  
16 this December, hired in December, and I first went to  
17 work in the Sacramento FSDO, Sacramento ADO, at that  
18 time, they were called, Aviation District Office, spent  
19 about three and a half years there as an inspector and  
20 moved to the Seattle area, where I moved into the  
21 regional office, and I spent a couple of years in the  
22 regional office as a specialist.

23 Then I moved on to Milwaukee, Wisconsin,

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1 where I was -- had a dual role. I was the POI of Air  
2 Wisconsin and also over the unit supervisors. So, I  
3 occupied a dual role in about '75-76, spent about a  
4 year and a half there, moved up to the Chicago Regional  
5 Office as a supervisor in the Chicago-Great Lakes  
6 Regional Office, spent about a year and a half there,  
7 moved on to Spokane, and I was a ADO manager there in  
8 Spokane for about six years.

9 They closed that office in 1984 because of  
10 budget constraints. So, I moved on to Helena, Montana,  
11 and I was the FSDO manager there for about a year and a  
12 half, and then I moved on to Salt Lake City, and I was  
13 the FSDO manager and interacted quite heavily with  
14 Western Airlines at that time.

15 After Salt Lake City, I came back to this  
16 regional office, and then I went to -- as the  
17 Geographic Section in the Seattle FSDO and stayed there  
18 for awhile. When Operation Desert Storm came, our  
19 manager went away. So, I moved up and occupied the  
20 FSDO manager's spot for about a year while he was gone  
21 in Operation Desert Storm.

22 Then after that, I returned to Geographics,  
23 spent a little time in Geographics, and then went over

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1 as the operations supervisor, and then we lost our  
2 manager, the current FSDO manager, back in -- in the  
3 November-December time frame of '99. Marlene Leaback.

4 She went on to Washington. So, then I occupied again  
5 the acting manager position of the Seattle FSDO which I  
6 was the acting manager at the time of the accident, and  
7 then, the first of June, our division manager, along  
8 with Dick Lacey, decided to break the Alaska Group from  
9 the Seattle FSDO to bring it up closer, up a notch or  
10 so.

11 So, I got rotated to take it over here the  
12 first of June as the CMO manager, and that's where I am  
13 now. I tried to go through that fast for you.

14 MR. MCGILL: Well, you lost me a couple  
15 places there, but I was -- were you then on the Alaska  
16 Certificate when the ATOS started in October of '98?

17 MR. HILL: No.

18 MR. MCGILL: So, your first time aboard was  
19 after the ATOS of '98. When was --

20 MR. HILL: Well, I missed that little point,  
21 which was a good point. Back at Operation Desert  
22 Storm, I was the office manager while our manager was  
23 gone.

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1           At that point -- at that -- at that  
2 particular time, I made a decision that there was ops  
3 -- the POI was in the Ops Section, and the PMI was in  
4 there in that section.

5           In one of my conversations with the  
6 maintenance inspector, he had certain visions that  
7 Alaska was going this way, and the ops guy had -- it  
8 was going a different -- so, what I came forward with  
9 was the concept of putting the principals together and  
10 a unit together.

11           That happened in about 1990-1991, where we  
12 got a group, because there was a very small group, but  
13 I did put it under one umbrella and take it out of Ops,  
14 so that the POI and PMI, the PMI did a little more  
15 talking and stuff like that. That happened when I was  
16 the acting FSDO manager there during Desert Storm.

17           When Keaton returned, there was a short time  
18 that I was the assistant manager of the FSDO, before I  
19 went back to Geographics, to help with the transition  
20 of that, and they had that Alaska Group report to the  
21 assistant manager's position. So, that happened for, I  
22 don't know, maybe about six months while we were  
23 getting it under way initially, when we first formed

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1 that group.

2 That was the last time I had any connect with  
3 Alaska, until this past December, when our office  
4 manager left, and I was rotated back in as the FSDO  
5 manager again. So, there was an eight-year spread  
6 there that I didn't have -- of course, ATOS came in in  
7 the middle of that, in '95 or something. So, I had no  
8 connect with the ATOS portion of it, until this last  
9 December.

10 MR. MCGILL: Where did Leaback go to?

11 MR. HILL: She -- the FAA was moving toward a  
12 Core Compensation Program, and nationally, they put  
13 together a team to look at the core compensation  
14 issues, and she's representing Flight Standards on that  
15 Core Comp Committee in Washington, D.C.

16 MR. MCGILL: So, you think that's an increase  
17 -- that's an upward step to go to Washington, D.C.,  
18 then?

19 MR. HILL: She'd been there once before. So,  
20 she's actually returning.

21 MR. MCGILL: Well, since this is a  
22 Maintenance Group, I don't know what your depth is in  
23 maintenance, but --

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1           MR. HILL:  It's getting better all the time.  
2           I can tell you that.  I know the difference between a  
3 routine work card and a non-routine card.

4           MR. MCGILL:  Well, let's -- let's just kind  
5 of start off then and talk about something like --

6           MR. HILL:  It is limited.

7           MR. MCGILL:  -- the operations specs.

8           MR. HILL:  Okay.

9           MR. MCGILL:  Were you aware that when you  
10 first came up, that, I guess, Mr. Hubbard had -- John  
11 Hubbard had sent a letter to Alaska Airlines talking  
12 about the director of safety position, and I don't know  
13 if he included the director of maintenance in that or  
14 not, but are you -- have you followed any of the A-6  
15 ops specs on the management side?

16           MR. HILL:  I did become aware that those  
17 positions became -- were vacant in about the March time  
18 frame, after the accident, and before we actually  
19 engaged this NIS, this National Safety Inspection that  
20 was led by our Washington Headquarters.  That was the  
21 time frame that I became aware of those two positions  
22 being vacant.

23           MR. MCGILL:  So, really, up to that time, you

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1 really hadn't had much time to get too involved in any  
2 of the maintenance aspects and very little of the  
3 operational aspects?

4 MR. HILL: Because -- yeah. I was in as the  
5 FSDO manager which is a fairly large FSDO with large  
6 complex operators, whether it's B.F. Goodrich, ProAir  
7 and, of course, Alaska, and it's got a lot of general  
8 aviation. So, my time was very much limited to running  
9 the FSDO.

10 MR. MCGILL: Okay. Let's talk more general.  
11 Let's just talk a little bit right now about ATOS  
12 itself.

13 Can you give me what your feelings are, how  
14 that's working, and how the oversight of Alaska  
15 Airlines -- what that looks like to you right now?

16 MR. HILL: You know, until I got rotated into  
17 the manager's position in December, I mean, I heard a  
18 lot about ATOS and everything, but I never had any  
19 direct involvement. Even as of today, I've never been  
20 to ATOS training.

21 So, I don't understand the total concept of  
22 ATOS. However, just because of the -- occupying the  
23 manager position and occupying this role, I've learned

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1 a lot about it. I am scheduled to go to a class in  
2 October.

3 I have an assistant manager. He is ATOS-  
4 qualified. I mean, I know the concept of EPIs and SAIs  
5 and systems thinking. I've taken a course, a one-week  
6 course on systems, but I -- I don't have a lot of depth  
7 on -- on ATOS. I know where we are with the plan. I  
8 know that last year, we didn't perform very well. I  
9 know that this year, that we're not doing that.

10 We have a board of ATOS -- board's an  
11 incorrect word. We've augmented our present  
12 surveillance of Alaska. We're still doing ATOS, but  
13 we've taken a side direction to it, just to ensure  
14 proper coverage.

15 MR. MCGILL: Well, let's talk then a little  
16 bit about the -- were you on the -- that National  
17 Safety Inspection Group, AFS-40? Were you part of that  
18 team?

19 MR. HILL: No. Some of the inspectors in the  
20 office were, but I wasn't actually a part of that, but  
21 I was a part of the briefings that occurred  
22 periodically there, but I was not a part of the team.  
23 There was debriefings. They started off daily, and

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1 then we went to like every other day, unless something  
2 became significant, and then I got a debrief at the  
3 end.

4 MR. MCGILL: At this time, do you think  
5 that's a -- was a fairly successful inspection of  
6 Alaska?

7 MR. HILL: Well, I mean, there's areas that I  
8 would have liked to have seen maybe more in-depth on.  
9 Do I think it's successful? I mean, yes, because I  
10 think we discovered a heavy check problem and that  
11 needed to get identified, and we did, and we  
12 implemented a lot of fixes to go with it on that heavy  
13 check.

14 MR. MCGILL: And obviously you have accepted  
15 their -- your recommendation -- Alaska has accepted  
16 those recommendations that you all put forth and  
17 continue on.

18 Right now, is there -- are you verifying that  
19 whatever they said they were going to do, that all of  
20 this is being done?

21 MR. HILL: Yes, and -- and, of course, it's  
22 at the division level, and I don't know if you heard  
23 about it. We have a FAA management oversight reviewing

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1 those findings, especially on the heavy check, and it's  
2 an 11-member panel, and I'm one of the 11 members.

3 It includes the PMI of Delta, includes a  
4 representative from AFS-40. It also includes Steve  
5 Douglas, who's from our AFS-300, branch manager. Brad  
6 Pearson is our division manager. He's chairing it,  
7 along with the three principals, myself, Tim Miller,  
8 and we've set up four gates that we're looking at, and  
9 we just completed Gate 2, which we're moving into Gate  
10 3 now, and Gate 3 meeting is scheduled in October, and  
11 what we have is a focused inspection on -- occurring on  
12 the heavy check, validating that we are -- our comfort  
13 level is up on the heavy checks, and what we'll do at  
14 Gate 3 meeting is review the input that our  
15 surveillance has to see if we're happy with that before  
16 we decide to move on to Gate 4.

17 MR. MCGILL: What -- just the last few days  
18 or within the last week, there's -- we've had this --  
19 this tooling problem.

20 MR. HILL: Yes.

21 MR. MCGILL: What currently is the unit doing  
22 to --

23 MR. HILL: Okay. We learned about that

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1 Thursday morning. Tim Bennett, when he walked in  
2 Thursday morning, had a voice mail message that alerted  
3 us. My understanding is Tim went over there Thursday  
4 morning, looked at it, brought some information back.

5 We had a group meeting here and set up kind  
6 of a team to go in and meet with Alaska Thursday at  
7 2:00, which included Tim Bennett, my assistant Tim  
8 Miller, who has an airworthiness background, and a  
9 person from the regional office, Ted Hutton.

10 So, the three of them as a group went over  
11 and compared the two tools, the correct one and the one  
12 that they've been using, and basically there was an  
13 acknowledgement, I think, by all sides that that tool  
14 doesn't work. It's not the same, and, so, they're not  
15 -- and Alaska was not able to tell us where -- which  
16 tool was used on which airplane.

17 So, I had engaged Bill several times  
18 throughout the day, and at, I think, about 5:15 in the  
19 afternoon, we were in agreement that that AD note,  
20 whether the right tool was used for that AD note for  
21 compliance was in question.

22 So, Bill felt that the best thing that they  
23 should do is shut down the MD-80s, and that's what they

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1 did.

2 MR. MCGILL: I asked this earlier. I think  
3 it was to Tim, but I don't know how much -- how much  
4 data is kept here. Would you have records going back  
5 to, say, '84 or '85 on Alaska Airlines? Do you keep --  
6 it was during that period that they went to the MD-80  
7 program, and to be able to do the check procedures for  
8 an MD-80, you have to apply to get that certification  
9 that allows you in your Maintenance Program to do your  
10 own checks.

11 MR. HILL: Right.

12 MR. MCGILL: A listing of all of these tools,  
13 and -- and I've asked for that, if it were available,  
14 and, of course, he didn't know, and he didn't -- I  
15 would like to ask you. Do you know if you would have  
16 something?

17 MR. HILL: I don't know.

18 MR. MCGILL: A documentation that was filed  
19 within -- submitted by Alaska Airlines? I've asked  
20 Alaska the same question, and they can't seem to find  
21 anything about tooling here, but I know that it is --  
22 it was in the 8400 portion, that that had to be  
23 submitted, and I've done it myself on other carriers,

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1 but I was just curious if, you know, you would have had  
2 that -- some documentation on that.

3 MR. HILL: We could sure look tomorrow and  
4 find out if it's there or not. Very seldom do I ever  
5 find anything that goes back 15 years in a file.

6 MR. MCGILL: Yeah. That's probably so.

7 MR. HILL: Yeah.

8 MR. MCGILL: Well, since you haven't had the  
9 ATOS, it would be unfair to try to get evaluations  
10 about -- do you have -- at this time, do you think you  
11 have just in this immediate right here -- do you have  
12 the people that you think that you need to do the  
13 surveillance of --

14 MR. HILL: No.

15 MR. MCGILL: But do you have people in -- do  
16 you think they would be qualified to do it? Is there  
17 training? Is there any training issues or -- that you  
18 need right now to send any particular person or two to  
19 -- to get trained on MD-80-737-type aircraft?

20 MR. HILL: You know, I've only been here two  
21 months. The people that I know -- and, so, I say that  
22 with a limited knowledge of the two months. Training  
23 is not an issue on my part right now. Resources is

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1 definitely on.

2 I have put forward a chart that shows this  
3 organization being 29 people. That has one all the way  
4 up to our Director of Flight Standards, and because I  
5 am aware that -- and I am somewhat familiar with ATOS.

6 It takes a lot more resources within the FAA to do the  
7 traditional surveillance. It's much more focused.  
8 It's much more in-depth, much more time-consuming.

9 So, I -- I do have a little bit of knowledge  
10 but not the formal training that you need those  
11 resources, and obviously I don't have the resources  
12 because I can't keep up with the day-to-day activities  
13 right now.

14 MR. MCGILL: Malcolm, would you like to take  
15 over? Thank you very much.

16 DR. BRENNER: Are there guidelines in terms  
17 of hiring someone from the airline to work for the FAA?

18 MR. HILL: There used to be an order that  
19 said that if you hire somebody from the airlines, that  
20 they couldn't oversee them for a minimum of one year,  
21 but I don't know if that order still exists. But, you  
22 know, whether it exists or not, I think it's pretty  
23 much -- pretty much used as a standard, a minimum of

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1 one year between the time that they leave the company  
2 till the time that they would be back on that  
3 certificate.

4 DR. BRENNER: There was a case, I guess,  
5 going back to '91 time period, where a POI here was  
6 then hired by Alaska Airlines overnight. It just went  
7 day-to-day.

8 MR. HILL: Yes.

9 DR. BRENNER: Are there considerations that  
10 apply to that?

11 MR. HILL: Okay. That would be the reverse  
12 method. I am aware of that happening, and I was the  
13 acting FSDO manager at the time when that happened, and  
14 it was a gentleman named Ed Dechsnowski.

15 DR. BRENNER: That's right.

16 MR. HILL: And Ed came to me and told me that  
17 this job was coming open with Alaska. When -- and he  
18 was considering doing that. I removed him as the POI  
19 of Alaska at that moment, as long as he was in  
20 consideration for it, and put him in a different job,  
21 and, of course, he went on and interviewed for the job  
22 and was the successful candidate for it.

23 I don't know of anything that would prevent

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1 that from happening.

2 DR. BRENNER: How long was it from the time  
3 that he was removed until he went to work for Alaska?

4 MR. WHITACKER: I mean, I could give you a  
5 guess. A couple of months, you know. I mean, it  
6 wasn't fast or it wasn't anything short or anything.  
7 Normal time. I know that it was a couple of weeks out  
8 before the interview, and they had an interview. They  
9 had a decision, and he gave two weeks notice. So, I'm  
10 guessing 90 days, but it is a guess. 60 to 90 days.

11 DR. BRENNER: And again, if I understand,  
12 there were no -- no spelled-out ethical guidelines  
13 about that at that time, is that correct or is that --

14 MR. HILL: Someone quitting the FAA and then  
15 going to work for a company?

16 DR. BRENNER: Yes.

17 MR. HILL: Not that I know of.

18 DR. BRENNER: There's a report that came up,  
19 and I don't know that it's related to the accident, but  
20 again we're going back in history because --

21 MR. HILL: Sure.

22 DR. BRENNER: ASF-30. Are you familiar with  
23 that report?

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1 MR. HILL: Unfortunately, yes.

2 DR. BRENNER: Can you tell -- tell us what  
3 it's about and what it means? Help us put it into  
4 perspective because we're not sure what all this is.

5 MR. HILL: Do the best I can. Let me stop  
6 and think. I don't even remember what year that was,  
7 but --

8 DR. BRENNER: '94.

9 MR. HILL: '94. Okay. The Seattle FSDO was  
10 in a -- having internal problems in multiple areas, and  
11 one of the gigantic areas was pilots giving each other  
12 certificates, and let me stop and think a little bit  
13 about this.

14 It was mainly in the General Aviation Ops  
15 Section of the office, and there was also an issue of  
16 one individual owning a helicopter and an airplane,  
17 that rented the airplanes back to the FAA through their  
18 Aircraft Rental Program, and he used fictitious names  
19 when they got paid. So, he would submit billings for  
20 these different things. That was an issue.

21 These pilot certificates, some of the -- and  
22 it turned out to be a large network, including pilot-  
23 examiners, and there was a big investigation on how

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1 long flight checks were done and some ratings were  
2 authorized, and it involved probably a half a dozen  
3 different people in our office.

4           There was a big security investigation.  
5 There was other things that happened, but that was one  
6 of the -- probably the biggest significant -- those two  
7 items, but there was other things that were occurring  
8 within the FSDO that were getting all the way to the  
9 national level, which then generated our director to  
10 ask for a special inspection of Seattle FSDO, and he  
11 assigned it to FS-30, who came out with a team of  
12 people and spent about a week.

13           DR. BRENNER: Who was FS-30?

14           MR. HILL: You know, it was -- it was like an  
15 evaluation group. Very similar to the current FS-40 as  
16 it exists now. There's been a reorganization, but I  
17 would tie it fairly close. They're evaluators, and  
18 they send in a group of people, and they were trying to  
19 figure out the health of the Seattle FSDO, where we  
20 were with these problems and things like -- many of  
21 them were being handled in different arenas, whether  
22 like this one, was a security investigation-type thing.

23           But they were looking at the -- the -- just

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1 the health of it, and, of course, we were all told  
2 there was no report. My understanding is that one of  
3 our ex-employees, Mary Rose Diffenderfer, made a FOIA  
4 request, and this all is hearsay, but it's my hearsay  
5 of this thing, that that report was produced in  
6 response to that FOIA request, and the only copy that I  
7 know exists is that one that was given to Mary Rose.

8 Of course, when I read that report, I mean, I  
9 went to DFCOM-6 because I find that a very offensive  
10 report, very unfactual, and, so, I proceeded up my  
11 chain of command, asking for clarity on that, and they  
12 tell me that that report is not an official report.

13 I wrote the Director of Flight Standards a  
14 letter, feeling very upset about that report. I even  
15 considered filing a grievance, hiring an attorney. I  
16 find that report very offensive, and I did not --

17 DR. BRENNER: Was any action taken by the  
18 FAA?

19 MR. HILL: Pardon?

20 DR. BRENNER: As a result of this report, was  
21 any action taken by the FAA?

22 MR. HILL: With -- internally?

23 DR. BRENNER: Yes.

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1           MR. HILL: I -- I don't know. I mean, I  
2           can't answer that question. I know that that report  
3           reflects that the current manager that was in there  
4           should not be the manager any more. The fact is, he's  
5           now with -- whether I can tie that to the report, I  
6           could not say, though. But as far as anything other  
7           than -- I don't believe there was any other action  
8           taken.

9           DR. BRENNER: So, if I understand, nothing  
10          was provided to the FSDO? This was to the -- any  
11          action that was taken at the Headquarters level, may or  
12          may not have been, it's not -- it's not as if it was  
13          getting to the FSDO for correction or for guidance?

14          MR. HILL: No, nor was it even given to the  
15          division level.

16          DR. BRENNER: Okay. Thank you. While we're  
17          --

18          MR. HILL: Sure. Go ahead.

19          DR. BRENNER: A more recent one that came to  
20          us, again may not be related, but evidence that one of  
21          the senior managers was involved in an assault  
22          situation with local law enforcement and received bail  
23          support from a subordinate. Are you familiar with this

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1 or these allegations?

2 MR. HILL: I am familiar with that. I  
3 believe it was the same one.

4 DR. BRENNER: Okay. Can you help us out?

5 MR. HILL: What do you mean by an "assault"?

6 DR. BRENNER: Was arrested on assault charge.  
7 We have not pursued it, but --

8 MR. HILL: It involved children?

9 DR. BRENNER: I don't know.

10 MR. HILL: Okay. I guess before I speculate  
11 whether they're one and the same, I need more clarity.

12 DR. BRENNER: I think this was in terms of  
13 Mr. Kelly and -- and --

14 MR. HILL: Okay. That helps me. It's one  
15 and the same. I didn't want to start off on a path  
16 here if we're not talking about the same thing.

17 DR. BRENNER: Sure, sure.

18 MR. HILL: I am familiar with that.

19 DR. BRENNER: Are there any ethical  
20 considerations on the part of the FAA that would apply  
21 in this situation, either to any sort of criminal  
22 arrest or in terms of getting bail supplied by -- bail  
23 was supplied by the subordinate, is that correct?

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1 MR. HILL: No, he was not a subordinate.

2 DR. BRENNER: Okay.

3 MR. HILL: And my understanding is actually  
4 two people provided that bail, Dennis Hahn was one, and  
5 Bill Baldwin was the other one. At that particular  
6 time, Bill Baldwin would have been, if you use the GS  
7 grade, Bill Baldwin would have been a higher supervisor  
8 but not in the chain of command because he's a 15, and  
9 Mike at that time was a 14.

10 Dennis Hahn was located here at the Alaska as  
11 the POI, as a GS-14, and Mike Kelly was in the Seattle  
12 FSDO as a GA Ops Supervisor 410.

13 DR. BRENNER: Okay.

14 MR. HILL: And why I'm fairly familiar with  
15 it, I was Mike's immediate supervisor when it happened.

16 DR. BRENNER: I see.

17 MR. HILL: Just to help things.

18 DR. BRENNER: Sure. And --

19 MR. HILL: I'm pretty familiar with it.

20 DR. BRENNER: -- any ethical issues in terms  
21 of whatever might come out of that activity in terms of  
22 his fitness for management? Guidelines or  
23 considerations that are relevant?

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1           MR. HILL: I think that was -- well, you  
2 know, there was a security investigation on that.  
3 There was an evaluation like you're talking about in  
4 that whole arena, and that evaluation group decided  
5 that it did not have a connect with his employment.

6           DR. BRENNER: Okay. Thank you.

7           MR. HILL: Hm-hmm.

8           DR. BRENNER: FSDO has a history of rotating  
9 some of the principal managers. What are the  
10 advantages, what are the disadvantages?

11          MR. HILL: Of rotating?

12          DR. BRENNER: Yes.

13          MR. HILL: Oh, there's so many advantages and  
14 disadvantages. Well, disadvantages is you're on the  
15 receiving end, and it doesn't always feel good because  
16 I've been -- I've been in that rotation, and I'm sure  
17 that you're already aware of that, and it's sometimes  
18 very challenging, and just like I'm having this  
19 opportunity for growth and development as we speak.

20           I -- I think the advantage -- I mean, it just  
21 brings in a new set of eyes, a new perspective, a  
22 different way to do it, you know. I don't know.

23          DR. BRENNER: Disadvantages?

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1           MR. HILL: Well, I think the disadvantages is  
2 you're on the receiving end.

3           DR. BRENNER: I see. Now, possible criticism  
4 could be that it's -- it's too inbred, that we should  
5 be bringing people in from outside. They have the same  
6 people rotating on whatever problems might be there.  
7 Is that a fair criticism or --

8           MR. HILL: Well, you know, I've seen over the  
9 years -- I mean, we just don't move as much as we used  
10 to, mainly because people don't want to move. I mean,  
11 culture has changed.

12           I know I've been in multiple positions here,  
13 and we're not getting outside bidders. So, there is no  
14 great incentives to go from a 12 to a 13 to a 14.  
15 People just don't see the cost of that. Most people  
16 can work within their local area.

17           So, -- and I don't know if you could get any  
18 better bidders. My experience is we have not. I know  
19 that Brad Pearson just got done, our division manager,  
20 been the assistant division manager, had -- and that's  
21 kind of a key position, had very limited bidders.

22           DR. BRENNER: A possible criticism that may  
23 come out through this period is that the management has

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1       been -- has discouraged enforcement on the airline,  
2       that it's too cozy a relationship.

3                    Could you give us -- could you share any  
4       thoughts that would help us in evaluating that?

5                    MR. HILL:   On Alaska Airlines?

6                    DR. BRENNER:  Alaska Airlines, specifically.

7                    MR. HILL:   Yes.  You know, my experience,  
8       I've been here two months, and then two months is up.

9                    DR. BRENNER:  Okay.

10                   MR. HILL:   I'm not aware of it.  I mean, that  
11       general philosophy is not what I see within the FAA,  
12       but whether there's something unusual that's happened,  
13       I can tell you currently that doesn't exist.

14                    What we have now as a general agency, we've  
15       moved into different relationships that didn't exist  
16       traditionally 20 years ago, like self-disclosure, where  
17       airlines come forward to self-disclose.  If it meets  
18       that criteria, then we apply that.

19                    So, I mean, the relationship in some areas  
20       has changed.

21                    DR. BRENNER:  Okay.  Thank you very much.

22                    MR. HILL:   Okay.

23                    MR. HAMILTON:  I'll pass right now.

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1                   MR. PAPE: Bob, Kevin Pape with Alaska  
2 Airlines.

3                   MR. HILL: Hm-hmm.

4                   MR. PAPE: Just one question.

5                   MR. HILL: Hm-hmm.

6                   MR. PAPE: Do you know if Alaska has formal  
7 procedures, like the GMM, to manufacture in-house  
8 tools? I mean, like restraining fixtures, which was  
9 referenced to back on Thursday.

10                  MR. HILL: I mean, I don't know about the  
11 GMM. I mean, just by general knowledge, I'm aware that  
12 all airlines and repair stations make tools, but  
13 whether it's specifically written in the GMM, I don't  
14 know. I don't know how that authority comes about.

15                  MR. PAPE: Right. If they have the  
16 authority, and it's -- and it's a written procedure,  
17 within -- would they necessarily have to go to the --  
18 to the -- to the OEM for --

19                  MR. HILL: You forgot I'm a pilot.

20                  MR. PAPE: Okay. The same question. Just  
21 give me your --

22                  MR. HILL: I don't even know what an OEM is.

23                  MR. PAPE: An original equipment

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1 manufacturer. Do you think they'd have to go back to  
2 Boeing for approval, if they have the authority do it  
3 in-house?

4 MR. HILL: I don't know.

5 MR. PAPE: That's all I have.

6 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Kristen Von Kleinsmid.  
7 I'll stay on the tools.

8 MR. HILL: Thanks.

9 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Just want to get some  
10 background.

11 MR. HILL: I know more about tools than I  
12 ever wanted to know.

13 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Any ideas or -- who -- is  
14 Tim Miller and Ted Hutton over there?

15 MR. HILL: That is correct. I believe that  
16 they were in actually the group that went over there to  
17 make that decision for us, but I believe they had one  
18 or two observers with them.

19 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Did anyone report back to  
20 you afterwards?

21 MR. HILL: Yes.

22 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And was there any  
23 discussion as to why it took so long for Alaska

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1 Airlines to self-disclose the tooling? How long did it  
2 -- I mean, they performed these inspections back in  
3 February. Here it is August. Was it August last week,  
4 too? I mean, did any -- any communication as to what  
5 triggered this revelation about a tool problem?

6 MR. HILL: You know, we haven't drilled down  
7 on that. We will be sending them a letter of  
8 investigation over this, this use of a tool, that was  
9 not -- not an acceptable tool, and I would assume that  
10 would come out in the normal course of that  
11 investigation.

12 As a matter of fact, we talked about it this  
13 morning, that we're going to send a letter of  
14 investigation this week.

15 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And how was the  
16 determination made that it was not an acceptable tool?

17 MR. HILL: We had the drawings as well as  
18 these three experts were able to look at the tool.  
19 They could see the Boeing tool as well as the one that  
20 was manufactured, and my understanding is the  
21 characteristics of them are different, and they may not  
22 do exactly quite the same thing, depending on how  
23 they're used.

1 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was the suspect tool  
2 confiscated?

3 MR. HILL: No.

4 MS. VON KLEINSMID: No? So, it's -- it's in  
5 --

6 MR. HILL: First of all, we don't have any  
7 power to confiscate things. So, that's something  
8 that's not in our vocabulary, confiscate people's  
9 equipment. At the FAA, we just -- we just --

10 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Issue them a search  
11 warrant?

12 MR. HILL: No.

13 MS. VON KLEINSMID: No.

14 MR. HILL: Not in our vocabulary.

15 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Where is the tool right  
16 now?

17 MR. HILL: Alaska has them all in one area.  
18 They have confiscated them, Alaska has, and put them --  
19 and -- and are holding them.

20 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And --

21 MR. HILL: I have no reason to believe that  
22 they're going to make them disappear.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: I hope not. I'm a

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1 pessimist by trade. Results of the recheck. Any  
2 information that -- I guess you've done a recheck now  
3 of 17 aircraft?

4 MR. HILL: Correct, and we have a spread --  
5 yeah. I have a spread sheet on that showing the -- the  
6 current readings. I also have what the old readings  
7 were, but the problem is one cannot compare that that  
8 was an incorrect or a good tool. We can't tell what  
9 kind of tool we used previously. So, it would be wrong  
10 to assume that the left column, which has got these  
11 readings, was the bad tool, but something could have  
12 been a good tool. Maybe they're all good tools.

13 We do have the previous reading, plus the  
14 current reading.

15 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. Do you know -- do  
16 you have information regarding -- was only one tool  
17 used instead of maybe multiple tools used on the  
18 original check? Is that what you're saying?

19 MR. HILL: Well, they had -- you know, we --  
20 they had one tool prior to the accident, and I forgot  
21 the exact number they made after the tool -- after the  
22 accident when the AD note came out. They went and made  
23 more tools. So, they had like 10 or 11 tools.

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1           They bought some, too, at different stages,  
2 and I've got a briefing paper that goes -- drills down  
3 on this that I can make available if you want, that  
4 spells it out.

5           At the end, there turned out to be, I think,  
6 19 tools total, and 12 of them being unacceptable tools  
7 and seven. It's in the briefing paper. So, I'd rather  
8 you read that briefing paper and take the figures there  
9 rather than what I'm saying here.

10           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Fair enough, and I think  
11 that the members of the team would enjoy a copy of the  
12 briefing paper.

13           MR. HILL: Okay.

14           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Going back to your time  
15 at Seattle FSDO, and I don't want to bring up too much  
16 on this -- this paper in '94, but I just had a couple  
17 questions.

18           MR. HILL: Sure.

19           MS. VON KLEINSMID: What was your role at the  
20 time when -- when the request was made for -- for this,  
21 you know, inspection to be conducted internally? Where  
22 -- where -- were you the highest-ranking person in the  
23 FSDO office of Seattle at the time --

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1 MR. HILL: When that report came out?

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Yes.

3 MR. HILL: No, no. No, no.

4 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Were you on the --

5 MR. HILL: I was back in Geographics, where I  
6 started from before Desert Storm occurred, and minding  
7 my own business, enjoying life.

8 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. So, -- so, the  
9 fact that you may not have had any knowledge about all  
10 these items -- I guess, did anyone have any clue that  
11 these questionable activities were being conducted, you  
12 know?

13 MR. HILL: Well, yeah, because it all became  
14 open, and then the next thing we all -- there was a  
15 security investigation is occurring, and, of course,  
16 it's involving -- I mean, we're an office at that time  
17 probably of about 75 people, and at that particular  
18 time, it's probably involving 20 people.

19 So, security is doing this, and this drags  
20 over months because this one person that owned several  
21 airplanes that was renting them back, well, multiple  
22 people flew these airplanes and submitted bills, and  
23 there was some question. Was there kickbacks occurring

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1 here, and the U.S. Post Office is using -- being used  
2 to -- to send bills out, and checks were coming back.

3 So, that was a big --

4 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Mail fraud?

5 MR. HILL: Mail fraud, and -- and, of course,  
6 this other area with people exchanging certificates and  
7 collecting ratings and running pilot-examiners. I  
8 mean, we were in a mess just about a year, and there  
9 was a lot of secret interviews, where employees are  
10 taken out and interviewed and come back, and it is not  
11 cause, you know, for trust and teamwork environment.

12 So, it was -- it was pretty sad for that one  
13 year.

14 MS. VON KLEINSMID: But as far as you're  
15 aware, following the security investigation, the only  
16 item you noticed being different was one individual no  
17 longer was a supervisor?

18 MR. HILL: Well, after -- from that report, -  
19 - I mean, out of the security investigation, people got  
20 terminated. We fired people or demoted them and  
21 reassigned them. So, there was personnel actions that  
22 materialized out of that, and to the tune of about five  
23 people, I think it was, four or five people that either

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1 resigned. There was one that resigned. There was one  
2 that took an early retirement. There was, I think, one  
3 terminated, and I think one was demoted and resigned to  
4 a different thing as an out-of-court settlement with a  
5 judge and things like that.

6 So, there was multiple personnel actions in  
7 that whole thing but not tied to that report.

8 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. And you answered  
9 that regarding you have not yet completed ATOS  
10 training, but you're scheduled to go in October.

11 MR. HILL: Yes.

12 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Now, it's my  
13 understanding that an individual couldn't be involved  
14 with this whole new ATOS hierarchy without having the  
15 training.

16 Now, how are you as a CMO able to hold the  
17 title of CMO without having gone through ATOS training  
18 or does not that apply to you?

19 MR. HILL: I think it applies to the  
20 inspector. It doesn't apply necessarily to the  
21 management, but I think how we're looking at it as an  
22 agency, I mean, it makes sense that I would be trained,  
23 and that's why we came over as a team, myself and my

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1 assistant, and he is ATOS. So, I think the agency's  
2 looking at it, hey, they have a certain comfort level  
3 that the management does have some experience in ATOS.

4 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And then the question  
5 that I was going to ask first. What is the function of  
6 the CMO? What are your roles and responsibilities? I  
7 guess you are now over Alaska Airlines since the split.  
8 So, you've got the POI under you and PPMs under you.  
9 What -- what is your -- just basically supervise them  
10 and manage the ATOS Program or --

11 MR. HILL: Well, it's the management of the  
12 whole office, when we get totally up and running, which  
13 will, as you mentioned, it will cover the three  
14 principals, principal OPS, principal Maintenance,  
15 principal Avionics, and under them, they drill down  
16 with various positions underneath them.

17 None of the principals are supervisors. They  
18 are only lead for their particular program. In  
19 addition, we got a cabin safety inspector that looks  
20 into the flight attendants and works under the arm of  
21 the POI.

22 We will have an administrative officer and an  
23 automation person. We'll have two ASAs, which are the

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1 clerical support, and, so, my job is to manage that  
2 from a budget point of view, from training point of  
3 view, and making sure we're going forward with the  
4 programs that we need to.

5 MS. VON KLEINSMID: You used the term "we  
6 will have". So, is this -- these are spots that are  
7 currently vacant that are going to be filled?

8 MR. HILL: Right. I went forward with a  
9 chart showing 29 people as what we were. Basically,  
10 it's been approved in concept, but we have budget  
11 limitations and things like that.

12 Last week, we moved forward, and we hired  
13 four people that are going to be attached to the CMO.  
14 So, we are progressing forward with additional people.  
15 Whether we'll ever get to that 29, I don't know.

16 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And then, my final  
17 question regarding ATOS is that you had originally --  
18 you said you eliminated, changed the word -- I think  
19 you're deviating slightly from ATOS --

20 MR. HILL: We're augmenting it.

21 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Augmenting?

22 MR. HILL: That's the word I like, augment.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Augmenting surveillance,

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1 I think was your exact word. What does augmenting the  
2 present surveillance mean in terms of what change has  
3 occurred in recent months, say the last two months,  
4 regarding ATOS?

5 MR. HILL: Okay. It didn't take me long to  
6 recognize that as I got into ATOS with my limited  
7 experience, that it took a lot of -- of time from the  
8 individuals assigned to this particular office, whether  
9 it's the SAIs, which is the most complex of it, which  
10 are kind of like mini-in-depth inspections and focus on  
11 particular areas.

12 It's obvious to me this group has had so much  
13 going on in the last six months, they're not able to  
14 lead what the original plan was to do this. So, I  
15 wasn't feeling comfortable that this ATOS CSP with the  
16 EPIs, we were going to get where we needed to be to  
17 tell where we were surveillance-wise.

18 So, we came up with augmented surveillance,  
19 and what we did is I put out a message to -- through  
20 our division manager, to both the WP region and to the  
21 Alaska region, asking for traditional surveillance by  
22 all offices on Alaska Airlines, and -- and normal  
23 traditional PTRS things.

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1           If Alaska's Number 10 carrier out of the 10  
2 would be the same type of surveillance that would be  
3 occurring in the Number 11 carrier. So, we're -- and  
4 that's why I call it augmented.

5           Within the staffing and the ability, I can --  
6 we're going to try to do what we can with ATOS and the  
7 CSP. So, that's why I don't want to say we're  
8 abandoning it. We've augmented it to increase our --  
9 our confidence.

10           In addition, besides the augment of  
11 surveillance, we got what we call focused inspection,  
12 and that focused inspection is directed to surveillance  
13 that we're doing out of the NSI, like this heavy check,  
14 where we're going in and monitoring 100 percent audit  
15 of the checks. That's what we're calling focused.

16           Fourthly, what we're doing is nationally, if  
17 you're Number 11 carrier, we have a national program  
18 guideline called an NPG which has traditional  
19 surveillance in there with required inspections,  
20 otherwise known as R items.

21           I have copied that and put that out in a  
22 form, and what we are is trying to go forward and match  
23 all items, if you want to call them, or Bob Hill's

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1 items, and we're trying to do every R item that would  
2 be on Number 11 carrier. We're mandating that locally  
3 here to do that.

4 So, in a way, I've got four -- four different  
5 programs going simultaneously in my mind, so that we --  
6 we will get it -- the same amount of surveillance on  
7 Alaska as Number 11 carrier would get under that NPG  
8 program, in addition to ATOS, in addition to the  
9 augmented, and in addition to the focused inspections.

10 MS. VON KLEINSMID: You said you went through  
11 the Western Pacific Division and the Alaska Division in  
12 terms of asking for traditional surveillance.

13 What approval did you have to get to go make  
14 these -- these changes? Did you go out to the ATOS?  
15 Did you have to go talk to anyone in -- in ATOS  
16 command?

17 MR. HILL: No.

18 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Your superior. Who do  
19 you report to?

20 MR. HILL: Brad Pearson, our division  
21 manager.

22 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And that's the only  
23 person that you had to go up to and talk to?

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1           MR. HILL: Well, I told him what I was going  
2 to do. I don't think I went up there and asked him.

3           MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay.

4           MR. HILL: And he was aware of the letter  
5 because it did go through him to the other division  
6 managers.

7           MS. VON KLEINSMID: All right. So, do you  
8 know who -- who the commander people are at ATOS or who  
9 would have contacted -- if you had to get ahold of  
10 someone in the ATOS Program, do you know who that  
11 person is?

12           MR. HILL: Yes. Larry Youngblood, and he's  
13 the -- the ATOS CMO manager. He has an assistant named  
14 Nancy.

15           MS. VON KLEINSMID: I think that is it for  
16 me. Thank you.

17           MR. HILL: You're welcome.

18           MR. SEYER: Lance Seyer. I have a couple  
19 questions on tools for you.

20           MR. HILL: Okay.

21           MR. SEYER: On these end plate tools that  
22 Alaska Airlines had previous to this last week, did any  
23 of them have a MIG-11 or MIG-11 inspection sticker on

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1 any of the tools?

2 MR. HILL: I mean, from my point of view,  
3 because I'm just a manager person, we -- I put three  
4 people over there, highly technical in that area, to  
5 look at that tool and make that decision, and when they  
6 bring that back to me, that the tools don't match, I  
7 mean, I just accept that on their word.

8 MR. SEYER: So, you don't know if there was a  
9 recalibration inspection sticker?

10 MR. HILL: No.

11 MR. SEYER: Do you know if there was serial  
12 numbers on the tools?

13 MR. HILL: I understand that the tool had,  
14 you know, -- and I understand it's common that it will  
15 have a manufacturer and a serial number on it, just so  
16 it can be identified with the original, but that  
17 doesn't necessarily mean it's a Boeing, and somebody  
18 just told me that as a part of my briefing, but I don't  
19 have any direct knowledge of it.

20 MR. SEYER: When your inspectors were looking  
21 at these tools and found some of the unacceptable, was  
22 there any requirement for reinspection and  
23 recalibration of these tools as a basis for

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1 unacceptable?

2 MR. HILL: Run that question through me  
3 again.

4 MR. SEYER: They have a set of 19 tools, --

5 MR. HILL: Right.

6 MR. SEYER: -- I believe is what you said.

7 MR. HILL: Right.

8 MR. SEYER: And they're looking at them. Is  
9 there a requirement from the manufacturer of these  
10 tools, whether they're from Boeing or home-made, to  
11 recalibrate these at a certain time period, let's say  
12 once a year, or was there any tracking of that?

13 MR. HILL: I don't know if the manufacturer  
14 has a -- a -- a calibration. I was briefed that Alaska  
15 did not have a calibration thing on it, but I am aware  
16 that they just instituted one. Every six months,  
17 they're going to be calibrating the thing. But again  
18 that's all hearsay in briefings that have been provided  
19 to me.

20 MR. SEYER: Let's go to LOIs. Do you review  
21 and approve all the LOIs that would go out from like  
22 the PMI or the POI --

23 MR. HILL: Normally, --

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1 MR. SEYER: -- in your office?

2 MR. HILL: Normally, they go out, and they  
3 come to me as a topic, and I sign off on the sheet.  
4 So, it's usually after the fact.

5 MR. SEYER: As far as Alaska Airline compared  
6 to the industry standard, do you know if there's more,  
7 less or about the same LOIs issued against Alaska as  
8 other carriers in the top 10?

9 MR. HILL: I haven't done a comparison.

10 MR. SEYER: That's all I have.

11 DR. CRAWLEY: Dave Crawley with ALPA. I've  
12 got tool questions, also.

13 MR. HILL: Alpha?

14 DR. CRAWLEY: No. I understood you to say  
15 there were 12 of these restraining devices that -- that  
16 did not meet specs.

17 MR. HILL: I think that's right, and I'm  
18 doing that by memory, but I can give you that briefing  
19 paper right after this thing, and I believe it's 19 and  
20 12 and 7.

21 DR. CRAWLEY: Did I also understand you to  
22 say that these were manufactured after the crash of  
23 Flight 261?

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1 MR. HILL: They all were.

2 MR. SEYER: And the rest of them were all  
3 manufactured after --

4 MR. HILL: Because there became a big need to  
5 comply with the AD note, and before that, they just had  
6 one, and my understanding was down in Oakland, and when  
7 they did the end plate check, then it was --

8 DR. CRAWLEY: Since you found out about this  
9 problem last Thursday morning, have you initiated an  
10 inspection of other tools, jigs or fixtures at Alaska?

11 MR. HILL: We're planning to, but we have not  
12 at this time, and I have talked to Bill Ayers about it,  
13 as the quickest way we can get through that tool  
14 problem is for him to put together his own crew and go  
15 in and audit that because I'm not just prepared  
16 staffing-wise to go over there.

17 DR. CRAWLEY: Okay. You answered my last  
18 question just then.

19 MR. HILL: Okay.

20 DR. CRAWLEY: Okay. That's all I have.

21 MR. LASLEY: Mike Lasley. Let's start with  
22 the tool problem. You said that it couldn't be decided  
23 which airplanes had been checked with Boeing tools and

1 which had been checked with the Alaska tools. So, --  
2 but only -- it's my understanding only a portion of the  
3 MD-80s were grounded for recheck.

4 How was the decision made which ones needed  
5 to be grounded and rechecked?

6 MR. HILL: Good question. Of course, when  
7 you talk about the 17 or 18, I'm not sure exactly what  
8 it was, we're talking about airplanes that were --  
9 needed to come out that were flying. It doesn't mean  
10 that's how many airplanes that needed in-flight checks.

11 For example, when they -- when we talked,  
12 there was three airplanes in C check. So, they're not  
13 a part of the 17 or 18 -- I mean, they're already  
14 grounded, and they still needed the end plate check.

15 So, there was more airplanes that needed that  
16 end plate check than what they took out of ground, and  
17 there is an -- I don't remember the exact number or how  
18 it broke up, but there was like 30 -- they have a total  
19 of 34 MD-80s, and there was like 13, and I'm trying to  
20 remember the -- and I -- I think I might even have a  
21 briefing paper on that, something like 13 that --  
22 somewhere or another, the jack screw changed.

23 So, then it was not applicable to those

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1 particular airplanes, and there was some that were done  
2 down at AMS in Phoenix that the proper tool was used  
3 because they did have the proper tool, and those were  
4 excluded from the numbers.

5 So, we drilled down from the 34 and got down  
6 to this 17 or 18 that had come out of service, but  
7 remember there was some C checks that did have -- so,  
8 there was a chart laid out and drilled down to those.

9 MR. LASLEY: Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I'm not going to ask you  
11 about tools.

12 MR. HILL: Thank you.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: How many are on your staff of  
14 this 29-man plan?

15 MR. HILL: Right now, today?

16 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Yes.

17 MR. HILL: 14.

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: 14? Who was the assistant  
19 chief?

20 MR. HILL: Didn't have one prior to Tim and I  
21 coming over.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Tim who?

23 MR. HILL: Tim Miller.

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1 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Tim Miller.

2 MR. HILL: My assistant. He's my assistant.  
3 Phil Hoy was here by himself.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Was -- what is his  
5 background?

6 MR. HILL: Phil Hoy's?

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: No. Tim Miller.

8 MR. HILL: Tim Miller? He is air carrier  
9 maintenance.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Maintenance?

11 MR. HILL: Yes, and that's why we kind of  
12 balance each other.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Yeah. That's why I asked

14 MR. HILL: Right.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you -- did you both bid  
16 the jobs or was this an assignment?

17 MR. HILL: This was an assignment.

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And what is your relationship  
19 with the division manager?

20 MR. HILL: What is my relationship?

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Yes. How long have you known  
22 him or --

23 MR. HILL: Probably 15 years, somewhere in

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1 that area but not very close.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Who made the assignment of  
3 the two of you to this CMO -- CMS/CMO?

4 MR. HILL: Brad Pearson, our division  
5 director.

6 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you know for a fact that  
7 it was his decision or was he instructed to do -- I  
8 mean, how did this come about? Do you know?

9 MR. HILL: I don't know how it came about. I  
10 know that he came in the office one day and said  
11 congratulations, you have a new job. I said thank you  
12 very much. Where's it at?

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Was there a promotion  
14 involved or a lateral?

15 MR. HILL: No. Lateral.

16 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I wrote down here that you  
17 had this augmented surveillance that you referred to a  
18 couple of times. Who is doing this?

19 MR. HILL: Almost every office, either in the  
20 three regions, WP, even our own region, and Alaska  
21 Region.

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I mean, is it 10 inspectors?  
23 Four inspectors? The same guys, just whoever's

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1 available, or what?

2 MR. HILL: Well, what we did is, you know,  
3 under ATOS, and I think she would have, too, it was  
4 that normally, if it's an ATOS carrier, you need to be  
5 ATOS-qualified to work on an ATOS surveillance-type  
6 thing.

7 By me going out with this augmented thing and  
8 opening it up to any FSDO manager that's open, I kind  
9 of supplemented the ATOS and opened it up to inspectors  
10 that are not ATOS, and, so, any inspector that they  
11 have, I've asked for them to engage inspectors in this.

12 So, I mean, out of the possibility -- I mean,  
13 we're talking hundreds of inspectors that could engage  
14 Alaska Airlines. WP.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: So, it's a random selection  
16 of individuals rather than a dedicated team --

17 MR. HILL: Correct.

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- that's augmenting?

19 MR. HILL: Correct. Each office has a  
20 Geographics Section within the office that can do  
21 geographic surveillance. Whether they would have said  
22 no, don't do Alaska because of ATOS, they would now  
23 engage Alaska on it.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: If we can't -- if we can't  
2 get a handle on it by terms of how many are doing this,  
3 can we get a handle or can we quantify it by how many  
4 inspections are we talking about to augment? I'm  
5 looking for some way of quantifying we've augmented it.  
6 Well, that could be one guy and that's the last guy.

7           MR. HILL: Hundreds of inspections.

8           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Hundreds of inspections per?

9           MR. HILL: Well, I think we've only augmented  
10 in a couple months, but I -- I would say that there's  
11 been a couple hundred inspections done in that, and, of  
12 course, they're all entered in the PTRS. So, it would  
13 be easy to pull a PTRS record.

14           I do weekly get a copy of all the PTRSs that  
15 have come across my desk. June makes a run of all PTRS  
16 entries so that we can review the comments, and they're  
17 provided to me and each one of the principals to  
18 review.

19           I've got in about the last five weeks right  
20 there on my desk.

21           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Have you looked at them?

22           MR. HILL: I have scanned them.

23           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Any -- any discrepancies

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1 found?

2 MR. HILL: Oh, they write up different  
3 comments and things like that.

4 MR. RODRIQUEZ: That's what I'm asking.

5 MR. HILL: Yeah. I have not seen anything  
6 significant that raises a flag with me. Usually if  
7 there's something that's a real red flag, inspectors  
8 won't just put it in a PTRS, they'll pick up the phone  
9 and call, but as far as routine stuff, they will.

10 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Have you gotten any calls?

11 MR. HILL: At various times, yeah, on  
12 different activities.

13 MR. RODRIQUEZ: On what issues?

14 MR. HILL: Whew. Give me a minute to stop  
15 and think. I mean, there must be 15-20 different calls  
16 that we've gotten on different issues, and they're not  
17 always necessarily a problem. It's more inspectors  
18 asking questions, doing things.

19 I mean, we just went through one with oxygen  
20 bottles, portable oxygen bottles. How many different  
21 oxygen bottles can you have, and how many can be MEL?

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Some are points of  
23 clarification?

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1 MR. HILL: Most of them are.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Most of them are, and how  
3 much -- are there any of those calls red flags?

4 MR. HILL: I --

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Hey, guess what I found?

6 MR. HILL: I'm not aware -- I've had some  
7 that started that way, but then, after you drill down  
8 further, it turned out to not be that way.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. And how long is this  
10 going to continue?

11 MR. HILL: The augmented surveillance?

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Hm-hmm.

13 MR. HILL: I haven't even thought about it.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Is it your call?

15 MR. HILL: Yes. It was my call to put it in  
16 there.

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I understand it was your call  
18 to put it in, but there was a lot of heat behind it. I  
19 just wondered -- as one guy said, there's a lot of  
20 energy in this.

21 MR. HILL: Yeah. That's a -- that's a great  
22 question. I haven't even thought about how long it is.  
23 I guess, I mean, the answer is until we as a group

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1 here feel our confidence level is high enough to  
2 withdraw from that position.

3 I mean, I see our job clearly as trying to  
4 make sure that we're overseeing Alaska Airlines enough  
5 to feel that we're doing our job with the traveling  
6 public. So, I didn't feel comfortable with ATOS alone.

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I have -- in answer to a  
8 question about ATOS, you haven't been through the  
9 training. You kind of dodged things. I'd like to get  
10 as a manager your sense of the effectiveness of ATOS  
11 and the possibilities of modification to the program  
12 and that sort of thing.

13 What are you getting feedback from your  
14 people and from other CMT managers or whatever? I  
15 guess you do talk to them, don't you?

16 MR. HILL: I do, yes. But I still say within  
17 a limited amount of exposure. I mean, there is  
18 questions whether we're getting as much surveillance  
19 through ATOS as we should have or we did under  
20 traditional surveillance.

21 On the other hand, I can see a lot of merit  
22 to ATOS, that you're able to drill in on an area and go  
23 in-depth which a lot of times we didn't do with

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1 traditional surveillance. So, there's merit to both  
2 sides of it.

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, if they haven't fed  
4 back to you, let me advise you that your subordinates  
5 are anticipating or thinking or they hinted at possible  
6 changes in ATOS. There's a review going on or  
7 something.

8 MR. HILL: Correct.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Are you familiar with that?

10 MR. HILL: Yes.

11 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Do you anticipate there may  
12 be some modifications to that program?

13 MR. HILL: I -- I -- I mean, all of it that I  
14 hear is that they're maybe going the direction that  
15 we're going, is continue with ATOS and support it with  
16 augmented surveillance.

17 So, I mean, that's what I'm hearing that is  
18 being considered. I know that the division manager of  
19 the Great Lakes Region and Flight Standards there has  
20 been tasked to, within a very short order, 90 days, 120  
21 days, to take a look at it because there is a dilemma  
22 there. Are we getting as a whole agency, getting the  
23 proper surveillance we want? In addition, the issue

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1 with geographic inspectors, whether they should report  
2 to our office or continue the way they are?

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. I have one more but it  
4 escapes me. Is the analyst position filled at your  
5 CMT?

6 MR. HILL: No. My understanding is that, of  
7 course, we've got 10 ATOS carriers. It's my  
8 understanding in Washington, they're presently hiring  
9 seven analysts, and that they are -- I don't believe  
10 they're even on board yet, but there's only one on  
11 board that I'm aware of, and he's in the Southwest  
12 Region.

13 They're presently doing that, and they're  
14 going to talk about which of the -- where these people  
15 are going to reside. I don't know if we'll get one or  
16 we'll be combined with another certificate because they  
17 only hired seven, and seven doesn't go into 10 too  
18 well. So, I'm not sure how they're going to fill that  
19 gap.

20 MR. RODRIQUEZ: You made reference to your  
21 POI and PMI are not supervisory. Do any CMTs have  
22 supervisory POIs and PMIs?

23 MR. HILL: Yes, they do.

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1 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What is the distinction?

2 MR. HILL: Well, I think it's a choice that  
3 higher management can make within our organization to  
4 have supervisory principals or not have, and there's an  
5 argument both ways of which way is the better way to do  
6 it.

7 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, would they -- would  
8 these supervisory POIs and PMIs, would they actually --  
9 perhaps, do they have control or whatever you want to  
10 describe it of these new geographic support people that  
11 are working, that are on the team, in other FSDOs and  
12 that sort of thing?

13 MR. HILL: No, nor do I either.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I understand that.

15 MR. HILL: Well, just -- and they don't have  
16 --

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: So, what are they  
18 supervising?

19 MR. HILL: The people within the office that  
20 would drill under them, where if you've got a POI, and  
21 you had PPMs or assistant PPMs --

22 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay.

23 MR. HILL: So, it would be a very limited

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1 group, --

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay.

3 MR. HILL: -- depending on the size of the  
4 CMO.

5 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And you've -- you've  
6 mentioned this 11th carrier inspection philosophy.

7 MR. HILL: Hm-hmm.

8 MR. RODRIQUEZ: I must have been writing, so  
9 I came in the middle of the comments, I was here, but  
10 who's going to do that?

11 MR. HILL: We're doing it locally.

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Who? You?

13 MR. HILL: Our group here by assigning it  
14 through other offices and making sure -- what I've done  
15 is make a chart up of what it would look like if we --  
16 if we were Number 11 carrier, what the R items would  
17 look like, and what I've done is made up a chart of  
18 where we are today in comparison with that, and as a  
19 matter of fact, I just handed it out to our group  
20 today, and I said, hey, these are the areas we're  
21 missing. So, in your normal surveillance within our  
22 group here, I would like to target those areas, so that  
23 I'll be able to say that we did these various

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1 surveillance programs, including trying to match the  
2 National Program Guideline and do the RMs.

3 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Without getting too deep into  
4 the line diagram because I don't have one in front of  
5 me nor do you, who does your PMI supervise? I mean, --

6 MR. HILL: We don't have supervisory  
7 principals.

8 MR. RODRIQUEZ: So, who -- who is he going to  
9 -- are you saying your PMI should go do these R items?

10 MR. HILL: I handed it out to the entire  
11 group, and there are times that the PMI or the POI will  
12 go out and do surveillance, and I want them to focus on  
13 those particular areas.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: How many maintenance  
15 inspectors are assigned to the CMT?

16 MR. HILL: Today, there's four, and --

17 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Four.

18 MR. HILL: -- one -- one on temporary detail,  
19 which is four permanent and one temporary maintenance.

20 MR. RODRIQUEZ: So, since the PMI isn't doing  
21 much besides putting out fires and crisis management,  
22 these four maintenance people would do the 11th carrier  
23 inspection stuff?

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1           MR. HILL: Or our geographic inspectors can  
2 do those as well.

3           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, my understanding was  
4 that you weren't getting much out of the geographic  
5 inspectors because they're reporting to a FSDO some  
6 place else.

7           MR. HILL: Well, they're domiciled there, but  
8 they are supposed to be 100 percent dedicated to -- to  
9 Alaska's Certificate Management, and I'm aware that  
10 Phil Hoy back in the March time frame because I was the  
11 supervisor over Phil made a call to each one of the  
12 geographic inspectors that are assigned to the CMT to  
13 find out how much time they were devoted to Alaska  
14 Airlines' certificate.

15           Other than normal counter duty and telephone  
16 duty, we were pretty much assured by all those  
17 geographic inspectors that they were dedicated to the  
18 Alaska certificate.

19           I do now hold monthly telephone calls with  
20 all those geographic inspectors, and we talk about, you  
21 know, what our direction is, what we're doing. So, we  
22 have all the CMO people here as well as those  
23 geographic inspectors on the telephone once a month.

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1           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. Well, I guess I need  
2 education, not here but later, on what items are  
3 envisioned for the geographic inspectors through ATOS  
4 that are not -- that are -- that don't include those  
5 things which they might have been doing if they were  
6 back under the PTRS System. So, I'll do that on  
7 another time.

8           MR. HILL: Okay.

9           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Could you characterize for me  
10 your confidence level of your surveillance of Alaska  
11 Airlines at this point?

12           MR. HILL: At this point right now? I think  
13 -- I think we're getting good surveillance at this  
14 time. I have some concerns with analyzing the data.  
15 So, we are very much improving in that area, but that  
16 would be my concern, not more surveillance but  
17 analyzing when I've got more and move forward with  
18 areas that we know have been identified as areas  
19 needing improvement.

20           MR. RODRIQUEZ: When do the 900s come on  
21 board?

22           MR. HILL: Not until April of 2001.

23           MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. Is the work starting

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1 on that?

2 MR. HILL: Not to my knowledge right now. I  
3 mean, I've been focused on the maintenance side of the  
4 house. We're still working on the 700 -- on the heavy  
5 check/C check package, and we're coming close to that,  
6 but I don't know of much work that's begun on the 900  
7 nor am I aware that Alaska has submitted anything on  
8 the 900 to date yet.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Well, how -- well, it's  
10 probably unfair to ask this, but you ought to know  
11 better than me, even with your limited experience.

12 How far in advance does the FAA begin to get  
13 involved in bringing on of the new aircraft?

14 MR. HILL: Well, it's before and after the  
15 airplane is brought on. I mean, the 700, for example,  
16 has been put on for awhile, but you're not hit with a  
17 heavy maintenance check for 18 months. So, I mean, the  
18 airplane can come on, and we don't need to get through  
19 all the task cards and the C check and everything until  
20 some time before the first C check comes up.

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: What about from the  
22 operations standpoint?

23 MR. HILL: Operations? I don't know if the

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1 FSB has finished all their -- their things about it,  
2 but a lot of it will come out of that, will be  
3 differences in training and stuff like that. I don't  
4 think that's materialized yet, and, of course, that  
5 needs to materialize from the FSB as well to come out  
6 with suggested training before Alaska can move very far  
7 on what -- because they'll follow the manufacturer's  
8 recommendation and the FSB report.

9 MR. RODRIQUEZ: If that were to involve a  
10 separate type rating, --

11 MR. HILL: Right. Could.

12 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- it could escalate the work  
13 flow significantly?

14 MR. HILL: Significantly.

15 MR. RODRIQUEZ: You're not concerned about  
16 that at this point? I mean, April 2001 is --

17 MR. HILL: A long ways away.

18 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Oh, it is? It's nine months  
19 by my count here.

20 MR. HILL: Yeah.

21 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Okay. I've asked everybody,  
22 and, so, I'll ask you. In the arrangement to retain  
23 maintenance, heavy maintenance at Alaska Airlines,

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1 there was an agreement that they would hire a 130  
2 mechanics. Are you familiar with that figure?

3 MR. HILL: I don't remember the exact  
4 numbers. When we went out to -- with the proposal to  
5 amend their ops specs, they had seven days to respond  
6 to that proposal, and they did respond in that seven-  
7 day period with a fairly thick package, and in there,  
8 there was multiple positions, and I believe those  
9 numbers come out of there, but that was just the  
10 maintenance number.

11 There was positions on ops. It was a total  
12 package that they were adding to that, and that's what  
13 this panel, 11-member panel is overseeing, is -- is  
14 that -- how they're progressing with their fixes to  
15 this thing.

16 MR. RODRIQUEZ: So, your FSDO -- I'm sorry --  
17 your CMS doesn't have the -- directly concerned about  
18 that? Someone is doing that for you --

19 MR. HILL: Well, --

20 MR. RODRIQUEZ: -- and reporting to you?

21 MR. HILL: Well, no. We're a part of it.  
22 Each one of the principals is a part of that panel as  
23 well as myself and Tim Miller. So, there's five of us

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1 that sit ont that panel, 11-member panel. That's the  
2 one being headed by our division manager. We have the  
3 PMI of Delta and a couple of Washington people on  
4 board.

5 What we're doing is evaluating Alaska's  
6 movement for that. At the Gate-2 meeting, we had  
7 Alaska come in, and they brought, I think it was, about  
8 six people with them, including the president who came  
9 in and spoke to us about that plan and where they were  
10 with hiring positions, and they gave a presentation.

11 MR. RODRIQUEZ: And Gate-2 was when?

12 MR. HILL: Whew. About -- about three weeks  
13 ago, a month ago.

14 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Gate-3's in October?

15 MR. HILL: Correct. Yeah. I'm trying to  
16 remember the dates of it. I think we went out with a  
17 proposal to amend their ops specs June 7th. So, they  
18 responded by the 14th. It was middle of July that we  
19 had the first gate meeting because it was 30 days -- it  
20 was 30 days afterwards.

21 Now, Gate-3 meeting is set for 90 days out.  
22 We looked at it at the end of the 30 days, and at which  
23 time, Alaska will come back in and address their plan

1 and the hiring of -- of -- of positions.

2 MR. RODRIQUEZ: That's all the questions I  
3 have.

4 MS. VON KLEINSMID: I just need to clarify.  
5 Gate-1 is -- was there a response by Alaska Airlines?  
6 You said it was the middle of July when they -- seven  
7 days. June 7th was when you put out the report, and  
8 you gave them seven days to respond.

9 MR. HILL: I believe it was June 7th when we  
10 went forward with the amendment of the ops specs. We  
11 proposed to amend it, and they had seven days to  
12 respond.

13 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Was that Gate-1?

14 MR. HILL: Gate-1 was reviewing their  
15 response.

16 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay.

17 MR. HILL: Which was shortly after we  
18 received Alaska's package. So, that would have been  
19 probably somewhere towards the end of June, Gate-1  
20 occurred, which was reviewing Alaska's response to us,  
21 and basically what we did is decided to re-evaluate it  
22 in 30 days.

23 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And Gate -- that was

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1 Gate-2, this 30 days for evaluation --

2 MR. HILL: Something like that. That was  
3 Gate-1, and Gate-2 was held 30 days after Gate-1,  
4 which, what we did then is looked at the 30 days that  
5 we -- we did the heavy check surveillance.

6 So, Gate-1 was accepting Alaska's plan.  
7 Gate-2 was done at the end of 30 days, and we looked at  
8 the surveillance oversight or what we're really calling  
9 focused inspection that had occurred during that period  
10 on the heavy checks, and now what we're going to do at  
11 Gate-3 is -- which we expanded it to 90 days now,  
12 because the CAS Program should be up and running more,  
13 is we'll be able to look at the focused inspection and  
14 see if the CAS Program has kicked in and working  
15 functionally the way we think it is.

16 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. And Tim Miller,  
17 did he get a promotion on his -- his -- what's his  
18 official title?

19 MR. HILL: Assistant manager.

20 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Assistant manager?

21 MR. HILL: Right.

22 MS. VON KLEINSMID: And was that a promotion  
23 for him?

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1 MR. HILL: No.

2 MS. VON KLEINSMID: So, it was a lateral from  
3 -- was he in the FSDO office?

4 MR. HILL: Correct.

5 MS. VON KLEINSMID: In Seattle?

6 MR. HILL: He was in the Geographics Section  
7 or our Air Carrier Section as an airworthiness  
8 supervisor over the B.F. Goodrich, Tramco, and ProAir  
9 certificate, and he had a group of about eight-nine  
10 people over there that either oversaw B.F. Goodrich or  
11 the ProAir, which is a 121 carrier certificate,  
12 operating 737s but small scale, to three-four  
13 airplanes.

14 MS. VON KLEINSMID: Okay. That's all I have.  
15 Thanks.

16 MR. MCGILL: Bob, one further question I  
17 would have. You said you put the plan together, that  
18 you hoped that at some point, you would have 29 people  
19 in the -- and I was just looking at the member profile  
20 list here of 3 of '99. It was -- you had 33 people  
21 over here at that point.

22 MR. HILL: That's got to be an error.

23 MR. MCGILL: And, so, you --

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1 MR. HAMILTON: Can I jump in there?

2 MR. MCGILL: Yeah.

3 MR. HILL: It wasn't 33.

4 MR. HAMILTON: What Bob's talking about is 29  
5 people in this office. That includes geographic  
6 inspectors.

7 MR. MCGILL: Okay. Right here, you -- I  
8 would be looking at -- I'm looking at maybe 15 in the  
9 office, and you're -- you're actually increasing that  
10 without the geographic?

11 MR. HILL: Correct. I think the number --  
12 I'm not sure the number ever went more than 12, 12-13  
13 here, in the Alaska Group that we had, and now, I'm  
14 looking forward to -- well, part of it is a little bit  
15 overhead because we want to break away from the Seattle  
16 FSDO. So, you get a little overhead in here with an  
17 administrative officer and a computer specialist, but  
18 then adding mostly inspectors, either in the Ops  
19 Management or Avionics area.

20 MR. MCGILL: Okay. It was brought up -- you  
21 had a couple items here I would like to be able to get  
22 supplied to me, if I could, --

23 MR. HILL: Sure.

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1           MR. MCGILL:  -- when you talk about that  
2 briefing paper.

3           MR. HILL:  Right.

4           MR. MCGILL:  Also, if you have the latest  
5 PTRS, I have an older list, but I'd just kind of like  
6 to look at the current list, and -- and then, whatever  
7 the latest update of -- if you have a profile, whether  
8 -- that's obviously on some computer at one point, and  
9 I've got that, but --

10          MR. HILL:  Yeah.  I mean, I've got a copy of  
11 just an organizational chart that I can give you that  
12 shows --

13          MR. MCGILL:  Yeah.

14          MR. HILL:  -- the current --

15          MR. MCGILL:  That's probably very similar to  
16 this or something.

17          MR. HILL:  It's got boxes, and it's got names  
18 in it and everything.

19          MR. MCGILL:  Yeah.  If I could do that, it  
20 just helps to better understand all these people --

21          MR. HAMILTON:  That one there?

22          MR. HILL:  I mean, do you have an updated  
23 version of that?

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1                   MR. HAMILTON: Jack had that in his computer,  
2 and Jack's gone.

3                   MR. HILL: Okay. So, you don't know how to  
4 get it either.

5                   MR. HAMILTON: So, I don't know.

6                   MR. HILL: Okay. I can get you something.

7                   MR. MCGILL: But if you could give it to us,  
8 maybe three items, I would appreciate it.

9                   MR. HILL: Okay.

10                  MR. MCGILL: To kind of keep it going.

11                  MR. HILL: Be glad to.

12                  MR. MCGILL: Are there any other questions  
13 anybody would like to ask Bob?

14                               (No response)

15                               (Whereupon, the interviews were adjourned, to  
16 reconvene tomorrow morning, Wednesday, August 9th,  
17 2000, at 9:00 a.m.)

18

19

20