

DCA22MA193

OPERATIONAL FACTORS

Group Chair's Factual Report - Attachment 1
Interview Transcript - West Isle Air Chief Pilot
March 15, 2023

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL CRASH AND SINKING OF
DE HAVILLAND DHC-3 IN MUTINY BAY,
NEAR FREELAND, WASHINGTON ON
SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

Accident No.: DCA22MA193

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Interview of: SHANE CARLSON, Chief Pilot
West Isle Air

Anacortes, Washington

Thursday,
September 8, 2022

APPEARANCES:

JAMES VANDERKAMP, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHAWN ETCHER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT RIGSBY, Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:20 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. VANDERKAMP: Okay, we're recording. Today is the 8th of
4 September 2022. It's Thursday at 10:20 a.m. My name is Jim
5 VanDerKamp. I'm the operational factors investigator with the
6 NTSB, and with me is Shawn Etcher, another operational factors
7 investigator for the NTSB and Matt, go ahead.

8 MR. RIGSBY: I'm Matt Rigsby with the FAA's office of
9 aviation accident investigation. I'm just re-iterating I have no
10 power. I have no enforcement steps so, you know, things you say
11 in here can't be used for any type of enforcement or anything like
12 that.

13 MR. CARLSON: Yes.

14 MR. RIGSBY: Things that FAA, people always fear the FAA for,
15 but I have no power.

16 MR. VANDERKAMP: And would you say your full name for us,
17 please?

18 MR. CARLSON: Shane Carlson.

19 MR. VANDERKAMP: Do you have a middle name?

20 MR. CARLSON: Yes, Lewis. Shane Lewis Carlson.

21 MR. VANDERKAMP: Thank you.

INTERVIEW OF SHANE CARLSON

22
23 BY MR. VANDERKAMP:

24 Q. And your title here is?

25 A. Vice president, chief pilot.

- 1 Q. For West Isle?
- 2 A. For West Isle.
- 3 Q. Air?
- 4 A. Yes. West Isle.
- 5 Q. West Isle.
- 6 A. Yes. West Isle Air.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. DBA Friday Harbor Seaplanes.
- 9 Q. Okay. Before we go any further, I'd like to make sure you
10 know that you could have a single representative with you if you
11 want. It could be anybody you want. It's up to you. You can or,
12 you don't have to.
- 13 A. Well, at this point we're in this conversation and there's no
14 representatives.
- 15 Q. Okay. Thank you, and we want to reassure you that this is
16 for safety information. There's nothing punitive can come out of
17 this.
- 18 A. Of course.
- 19 Q. We're here for you to educate us on how your operation works.
20 What your position is, what your duties are, anything you can tell
21 us about the pilot that sort of thing. We're trying to gain
22 information so we can establish what happened --
- 23 A. Exactly.
- 24 Q. -- make sure it doesn't happen again.
- 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Common goal.

3 Q. And as you know, we've discussed you're okay with us
4 recording.

5 MR. ETCHER: Is he okay for us recording? Just to make sure
6 it's all right.

7 MR. CARLSON: Yes.

8 MR. VANDERKAMP: Thank you.

9 MR. ETCHER: Sorry. Thank you.

10 Q. First thing I'd like to do is just kind of say can you tell
11 us your normal duties, what's a normal day for you like?

12 A. Obviously it's variable. I do management of the company,
13 oversee operations, as well as line pilot, and many other duties
14 that small business do from helping load bags, to answering the
15 telephone, to overseeing the entire operation, overseeing the
16 maintenance department.

17 Q. Okay. I'm going to stop typing here and taking notes so I
18 can concentrate a little better, as long as we have a recording so
19 I can back it up in case something happens.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. What kind of duty day do you have? When does it start, when
22 does it end?

23 A. Duty days vary, you know, within the season such as now,
24 flights start -- first flight leaves at 10:00 a.m. gets back --
25 last scheduled flight gets in about 7:00 p.m., so duty days are

1 not as long as they are in the peak of the summer. Duty days can
2 be for me, depending on what's happening, upwards of 13 or 14
3 hours.

4 Q. And you said you're a line pilot as well. How often do you
5 fly?

6 A. It varies from season to season depending on the staffing,
7 but I've -- sometimes fly two, three, four days a week more or
8 less my position flying is filling in gaps. So, I may fly once in
9 a day, one round trip locally. I may do a flight to Canada. I'm
10 generally just one round trip in a day since it's variable.

11 Q. How long is the Canada flight?

12 A. It depends on where we go because we service different lodges
13 up in Canada and different main resorts and things of that nature.
14 So, like days can be up to seven and a half hours on a round trip.
15 Sometimes even more if there's weather.

16 Q. Okay, and just for the record, you guys are day-VFR only.

17 A. Day-VFR only. That's correct.

18 Q. Okay, and how many airplanes, you had --

19 A. One turbine Otter and five de Havilland Beavers.

20 Q. Five Beavers. All right, and how many pilots do you have?

21 A. I can't answer that question right off hand. We're a
22 seasonal operation. Some fly extremely at part time. One of them
23 that was going to fly this summer had a pregnant wife and didn't
24 fly so I don't have an answer but I can come up with a firm answer
25 of how many staff or pilots that we have on this season.

- 1 Q. Can you give me a ballpark?
- 2 A. I'd say nine or ten.
- 3 Q. Nine or ten, and do you have five --
- 4 A. There's six --
- 5 Q. They're only flying Beavers?
- 6 A. Six aircraft.
- 7 Q. Six aircraft?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. You and -- I'm sorry, who was flying the Otter?
- 10 A. Jason.
- 11 Q. And?
- 12 A. So, Jason and I.
- 13 Q. Just Jason --
- 14 A. Jason was the primary pilot. I would fly on his days off.
- 15 He had two to three days off per week.
- 16 Q. Okay.
- 17 A. I would fly the days that he didn't fly but we service
- 18 fishing lodges and go to Canada in the summer six days a week.
- 19 Q. Yeah.
- 20 A. So generally speaking, one day, which was Tuesday, is a
- 21 slower day for us, that's a maintenance day, 100 hours and/or if
- 22 100 hours aren't due, you know, a quieter day for us, so I did fly
- 23 a couple Tuesdays. But, for the most part, the plane was here for
- 24 the day.
- 25 Q. Okay, and who does the maintenance?

1 A. Northwest Sea Planes.

2 Q. So, they don't work directly for you?

3 A. Essentially Northwest Sea Planes was under the same family
4 ownership. So, West Isle Air operates the planes and the flights.
5 Northwest Sea Planes does the maintenance on the aircraft.

6 Q. If I remember correctly, Northwest Sea Planes owns some of
7 the airplanes?

8 A. They own -- yes, they own four out of six of the airplanes.

9 Q. Did they own the Otter?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And that's registered under Northwest Sea Planes, yeah.

13 Q. I see.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Some of the questions I'll ask I'll know the answer to but --

16 A. Yeah --

17 Q. -- I just --

18 A. I just wanted to clarify as well.

19 Q. Thank you. Yes. Okay, and how many mechanics are there?

20 A. There are three mechanics, a mechanic's helper, and a parts
21 manager.

22 Q. Do you have any trouble getting parts for any of your planes?

23 A. Basically, everybody has problems getting parts for airplanes
24 these days. We have a parts manager that's been with us since the
25 early 1990s and he is excellent in foresight of finding parts. He

1 can steer me to parts from his house and tell me a part number out
2 of his brain sitting in his living room.

3 Q. That's convenient.

4 A. Yeah, and what shelf, and where to look for it.

5 Q. Hmm.

6 A. It's as simple as snap-vents that are air vents in the window
7 of the Beaver. Those two snap-vents, where they at? Oh, it's --
8 on the AN Number it's a this, this, this, this, this. Go out
9 there and take a look for it, and walk in, walk upstairs, walk to
10 back parts shelf, go to the right, look in the upper portion,
11 don't go the end of the shelf, okay, there we go.

12 Q. Hmm. That's good.

13 A. Yeah. So, extremely capable as well. He has the ability --
14 people call him from all over the United States sometimes to help
15 resource parts.

16 Q. Well, okay. So the other seven or the nine pilots are flying
17 the five Beavers, is there one particular plane that's down all
18 the time, or having trouble? The hanger Queen as it's said.

19 A. No, Beavers and Otters are very simple, reliable airplanes.
20 Rarely down, rarely any airworthy squawks. There's always squawks
21 there's a sheet metal screw that fell out of a door or something
22 trivial. They're very simple, reliable, aircraft and there's
23 minimal downtime. We do a lot of maintenance in order to complete
24 all it needs to get through the summer. So, we maintain the
25 planes and do heavy maintenance in the winter. Just to operate

1 the planes, do the required inspections, fix things as needed, so
2 keeping our reliability as high as possible because we do
3 essentially operate in a five-month season. The bulk of it is in
4 about two and a half months.

5 Q. Okay. You said the pilots vary seasonally --

6 A. They're all seasonally employed.

7 Q. All seasonally employed. So, how do you maintain their
8 training. If I understand correctly, you're the only instructor
9 here?

10 A. Company instructor, company flights, company ground
11 instructor, company flight instructor, company check airmen or
12 check pilot.

13 Q. On both the Otter and the Beaver?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. So, you've flown with all of them. All your pilots?

16 A. Yes. Every single one of them.

17 Q. When they come in for the season do you give them --

18 A. I do.

19 Q. -- check ride to get them started or --

20 A. For the most part, yes.

21 Q. How about Jason?

22 A. Jason, yes. His base month had changed to August, so we were
23 to do his check ride today.

24 Q. He was on his grace month which expires at the end of the
25 month?

1 A. And his grace month. It was in his -- yeah, August was his
2 base month, so we were going to do it in his late grace month.
3 His base month had changed during COVID because most the planes
4 were parked, and we operated basically two airplanes. The
5 director of maintenance was also a line pilot and during that time
6 it was so slow, director of maintenance would fly a little bit. I
7 primarily did most of the flying, and Jason did not fly, but Jason
8 wanted to fly.

9 He has -- his other primary employment was in the state of
10 California, and he wanted to be up here to do a little bit of
11 flying. His family -- things had picked up during the uncertainty
12 of it. They didn't want to come up here and do a, you know, it's
13 like, I'd like to fly. I said, why don't you come up and do a
14 couple stints? He had obviously expired so we -- he had completed
15 the ground, we later did requalification flight training for him
16 and completed his check in August, so that became his base month
17 in 2020, and in 2021 he did his flight check in the de Havilland
18 Otter, with representative Matt Dahl from the Juneau FSDO, and he
19 came down and was blessed by the Seattle FSDO as they had no
20 inspectors qualified to conduct a check, and at that point it was
21 part of the process to add the de Havilland Otter onto the West
22 Isle Air certificate, so that was his last check ride was late
23 July.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And the training records were from -- I don't know which

1 date; I can't remember. It's July 27th or 28th, but you have a
2 copy of his training records to confirm that.

3 Q. Okay. You said his family life was picking up. What was
4 that -- you started to say something --

5 A. Well, his family -- he lives in Washington state, in north
6 central Washington in a town called Chelan, and when he works --

7 Q. In a town called?

8 A. Chelan.

9 Q. Chelan, okay.

10 A. And being down in California working takes him away from his
11 family.

12 Q. Mm-hmm.

13 A. So, he's able to come up here, work a little bit, spend time
14 with his family and be at home. If he had to work 12 months out
15 of the year, it's difficult to travel and take days off to go from
16 central California back to Chelan. So, it afforded him more time
17 with his family.

18 Q. Can you tell us about his family?

19 A. Yes, he is not married but he has a significant other, [REDACTED]
20 [REDACTED]. He has three children ranging -- I think [REDACTED] is close
21 to a teenager, or a teenager. Another son shortly thereafter and
22 a daughter I think that's seven. I think [REDACTED] is seven.

23 Q. Okay, and when he's here he gets to go home? Is he close
24 enough to do that?

25 A. No, when he's here he stays over here, and then when he goes

1 home, he goes home. So, on his days off he has between two three
2 days a week he would go home.

3 Q. Roughly how far to Chelan?

4 A. About three hours.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Yeah, some days you get off early and some days he'd spend
7 the night, get up in the morning and go home, spend the night,
8 spend another night, come back and fly on Thursday. Our flights
9 come in at 10:00 a.m., so it gave him ample time to drive his car
10 to get over here before that flight departed.

11 Q. And that three-hour drive wasn't influencing a commute
12 fatigue kind of thing?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. Anything that you know of that was -- could have been
15 stressful from his home life that could have --

16 A. No.

17 Q. -- affected him.

18 A. No.

19 Q. No drama at home?

20 A. No drama at home, not at all. No.

21 Q. And don't let me put words in your mouth, please. If I say
22 something that you don't --

23 A. Yeah, no.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I mean just for the record I can't state what his home life

1 is, but, as someone that worked for me and a friend, he never
2 complained about his home life.

3 Q. Oh, good. Yeah, We, we just want to know if there was
4 outside influences.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Stressors that --

7 A. Of course, stressors --

8 Q. I'm not trying to pry --

9 A. Fatigue. Things like that.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. I understand.

12 Q. Sometimes somebody could be sick, or have an argument, or
13 whatever that affects, you know, everything. So, we're all
14 subject to that, so.

15 A. Of course.

16 Q. It's good to know. You talked about his flight training.
17 When he comes back each year when the pilots come for their season
18 do you run them through a ground school?

19 A. Yes, we do ground school. Basically, we conduct a ground
20 school that includes everybody because it's Beavers, regulatory
21 company policy and things of that nature, all your basic stuff of
22 ground school, and then supplementary since Jason and I fly the
23 Otter and we have separate ground time, him and I, for the Otter
24 to complete that portion of it. So, he flies both planes, the
25 Beaver and the Otter, so he's completed his Beaver training and

1 the ground school includes all the recurring pilots of course,
2 obviously, initial pilots go through a separate ground school.

3 Q. Emergency procedures?

4 A. Absolutely.

5 Q. Covered in ground school and in flight? Or is it just --

6 A. Of course, no there's all of that. Well, everything that is
7 required through a flight training program and conducting checks
8 is completed.

9 Q. Okay, how about the safety side of things? Is there a safety
10 -- kind of safety reporting? I mean you're an awful small
11 company. I guess --

12 A. We don't. We're a small company, you know, things of that
13 nature, if there's problems with the planes, any safety aspects,
14 you know, from day to day pilots get done at the end of the day
15 and they'll hang out and we talk about these things and Jason just
16 himself was an assistant to me that I was going to move him to a
17 chief pilot role and had already expressed intent of FSDO was busy
18 and that was a winter project was to formally move him into that
19 position. But he essentially helped me with my duties as a chief
20 pilot. The things he'd do, assist other pilots, especially the
21 new pilots. Jason does spool up fields on going into -- we don't
22 fly into airports so there isn't operational literature such as
23 airport diagrams, things like that --

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. So, we use technology. Hey, here's Google Earth, here's

1 where you're going. Here's the waypoint, you know, just type in
2 this in the GPS that'll get you there. This is how we approach
3 it. Watch out for this. Here's where the dock is, this dock is
4 kind of higher, you got to watch it, watch the tail. You know,
5 things like that. Okay, if the wind's blowing this way, or if
6 you're taxiing this hold, if you want to go out this way, you
7 know, back -- taxi here and go. So, he assisted with a lot of
8 those types of things as well. When we fly, planes fly together
9 going to a lodge.

10 Q. Formation?

11 A. Two or three or four planes.

12 Q. In formation, or just trailing?

13 A. Well, they're all leaving together, there's --

14 Q. So, they don't do a Blue Angel formation?

15 A. No, we -- obviously that's not allowed in 135 to begin with.
16 But, no, when planes leave here it's common you taxi out, they ask
17 for a departure, the other plane's right behind it and it takes
18 off, another plane's behind it and it takes off, and we're in some
19 semblance of the departure within proximity --

20 Q. Yeah, but you're not filed as a flight --

21 A. No.

22 Q. You just --

23 A. I mean occasionally if let's say there's special VFR here,
24 hey it's 800-foot ceiling and 20-mile visibility we will fly as a
25 flight of three, okay we're a flight of three Beavers, departing

1 off the east channel. We leave at once to clear the air space,
2 depends on controllers. Some will not allow you; they'll go okay,
3 one plane can depart. Once they clear the airspace the other
4 plane can depart. It happens on occasion; when the weather --

5 Q. Do you have any kind of a book or a record, or, you know, an
6 electronic book on local course rules like you've just described,
7 the training, you're going to, you know, this particular inlet or
8 harbor you're going to go here. Use this waypoint if --

9 A. No.

10 Q. You just expect them to pick it up on that training? The
11 ground training?

12 A. Yeah, I mean sometimes there's images shared that it's easy
13 enough even on your telephone to go get Google Maps or Earth, zoom
14 in, you can edit a picture, take a -- take your finger, make a
15 plane, park on the dock this way, draw an arrow to go in this way.
16 Because many of these destinations are not always frequented.
17 Some of them as few as one or two times a year, in the nature of
18 our business, if someone has a home on Mercer Island, you may pick
19 them up once, it may never happen again. It may be five or six
20 times, so, with the world that we live in, in seaplanes, there's
21 no formal flight book.

22 Q. Okay, do you have any places that you go that are special
23 qualifications, only certain pilots can go to an inlet?

24 A. No. As an overall rule of thumb, if I was to have seasoned
25 pilots that have been here for years, non-seasoned pilots if they

1 need to go to some tricky dock or go somewhere of course it's
2 obvious that if I had to send three planes out and there's simpler
3 mission -- another simple mission and a complicated mission, I'm
4 going to put that on an experienced pilot.

5 Q. Which --

6 A. It -- none of -- I mean, how would you explain technical some
7 of it -- for the most part with the little sea planes is just
8 docking.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. That can be the most technical part because when those planes
11 land, put on the brakes, once they're on the taxiway everything
12 becomes easy.

13 Q. Yea.

14 A. And the little float planes, now you're on the water, the
15 wind's trying to blow you off the dock, you have currents running.
16 That's --

17 Q. Now you're --

18 A. -- some of the most challenging part of float plane flying is
19 after you come off the step and now you need to go to the dock.

20 Q. Okay. Let's go back to Jason. It sounded like he was -- you
21 trusted him. You're going to move him up, an assistant sort of
22 thing.

23 A. Oh, absolutely.

24 Q. Oh, that's great. Has he ever failed a check ride?

25 A. No.

1 Q. And even before he got here that you knew of?

2 A. He said his only part 135 flying employment has been with me.

3 Q. Oh, I see. What does he do during the summer? What's he
4 flying down in California?

5 A. Well, he's not flying.

6 Q. Oh.

7 A. He was involved in a soil business. But he had aspirations
8 of flying. He didn't love the soil business. Just like most
9 people in the world there's a lot of unhappy people that make a
10 lot of money. There's a lot of happy people that do what they
11 want to do. So, Jason had a mix of his work that he flew in the
12 summers, and he worked in the soil business in the winter with his
13 former partner and he had flexibility in his life to -- he wasn't
14 clocking in per se. So, he could come home, stay for two weeks,
15 he was an avid snow mobiler. We were friends. I snowmobile.
16 Hey, the powder's here, I'm coming home for ten days. The snow is
17 terrible, I'm going to go back to California and work.

18 Q. What did you mean by soil business? What exactly -- I mean

19 A. Soil like dirt.

20 Q. I'm familiar with the dirt but I meant --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. What -- he's selling dirt?

23 A. They -- no, they basically sell -- they manufacture dirt for
24 the marijuana industry.

25 Q. Is this like worms?

- 1 A. It has nothing to do with the marijuana.
- 2 Q. Is this like the worms?
- 3 A. Worm castings.
- 4 Q. Worm castings. Okay. I understand --
- 5 (Crosstalk)
- 6 A. -- the soil. Yes.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. High grade soils.
- 9 Q. Yeah.
- 10 A. They do use it for other stuff, but --
- 11 Q. Okay. Has he ever failed or drug or alcohol test?
- 12 A. No.
- 13 Q. How about a DUI?
- 14 A. No.
- 15 Q. Does he have one in his background anywhere?
- 16 A. No. I wouldn't -- it's like anything, you can have a pre-
- 17 employment drug test today, something tomorrow -- I can't state
- 18 his history. But I am unaware of that.
- 19 Q. Okay. Let's see, on the day of the accident you said that he
- 20 fueled up after his first round trip.
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. He went and he had ordered 20 gallons. Is that what you
- 23 said?
- 24 A. No, I said I didn't -- he -- they had shorted him
- 25 approximately 20 gallons.

1 Q. Oh.

2 A. To not allow him to make his two round trips.

3 Q. Oh.

4 A. He was going to be light on fuel. So, he ordered fuel.

5 Q. And so, you had to pull the plane out of the water --

6 A. We -- I pulled the plane out of the water. He had gone I
7 think to Tacories. I'm going to go get a taco and I'll be back.
8 So, I think he went to Taco Time. I ordered fuel. He was not
9 here, and I said, I'll pull the plane out of the water, and the
10 fuel truck was going to show up, and he was going to give them the
11 order. So, I was not directly involved with the fuel.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Sometimes we do that, the pilots will call.

14 Q. Sure.

15 A. Sometimes the office will call.

16 Q. And does he fuel his own plane or does -- do they do it, or
17 how's --

18 A. It depends. Like here, they fuel it. When we're up in
19 Canada we do a lot of our own fueling.

20 Q. But, it's not unusual for him to fuel the plane?

21 A. No, yeah, like in Canada --

22 Q. In Canada --

23 A. -- essentially if we fly to Canada, we leave here with fuel
24 onboard. We go to port of entry, we take on fuel, we fly up to
25 our destination, fly part way back, take on more fuel, and then

1 come back.

2 Q. But it wouldn't be irregular or surprise you if he actually
3 did the fueling as opposed to --

4 A. He would, but for Pro-Flight Aviation, Pro-Flight Aviation
5 does the fueling.

6 Q. Oh, okay. All right. Can you tell me where the GPS is
7 located in the plane?

8 A. There were two GPSs.

9 Q. That's them over here.

10 A. One GPS was Garmin 796.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And it was a panel dock in the center of the panel.

13 Supplementally above the radio stack, there was a ram mount with a
14 Garmin 296 was on the panel on the right side.

15 Q. Thanks. How about an ELT?

16 A. ELT was a 406 ELT in the aircraft.

17 Q. And where is that located?

18 A. In the aft portion of the -- behind the baggage I believe.
19 You'd have to ask the maintenance staff to confirm its location
20 since I'm not a mechanic.

21 Q. It's not a pre-flight?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay, and if I understand correctly there was no signal from
24 the ELT?

25 A. I am unaware. The Coast Guard called me and identified the

1 aircraft so I would assume, or I guess I can't assume when the
2 Coast Guard called me to ask about the aircraft and alert me to
3 the accident, they gave me the tail number. I didn't give them
4 the tail number.

5 Q. Thanks. Does it have a GPWS?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And where is that located?

8 A. The display is on the panel above the attitude indicator --
9 or not the display, but the little remote box.

10 Q. I'm sorry. Where was it?

11 A. Above the -- it was on the panel above the attitude
12 indicator.

13 Q. So right there on the left side?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Above the --

16 A. Yeah, it's right in front of the pilot.

17 Q. And is there a card in it that you know of?

18 A. I'm not familiar with the system above and beyond the basic
19 function of it.

20 Q. Okay, and that's just a single unit? There's not a --

21 A. It's a little box that's like this big and this big. It has
22 an annunciator, it has a light, and it has an inhibit light.

23 Q. Okay. Do you know what kind of -- it's an EGPWS. Right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And do you know the make or model or any of that?

1 A. I don't off-hand, no. There would be, obviously, --
2 (Crosstalk)

3 A. -- in the logbooks in the equipment list.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. Can you describe a normal pre-flight?

5 A. Normal pre-flight --
6 (Crosstalk)

7 A. -- the Otter is on the trailer, obviously going through the
8 preflight as a manufacturer there's certain things I do above and
9 beyond as a float plane and with aircraft being manufactured
10 however many, 65, 70 years ago, they're things that we look at
11 that are not specified in manuals. At that point in time, they're
12 not as elaborate as they are in your aircraft today.

13 Q. How do you physically get to some of those places? I mean
14 they're up really high. Right?

15 A. There's a scissor lift that you'll notice behind that
16 trailer. So, we use the scissor lift at some point in time, not
17 every pre-flight by any means. But we do look at the tail
18 obviously, look at the rest of the airplane to the best that we
19 can see.

20 Q. What do you look at with the tail, what are you looking for?

21 A. In terms of a pre-flight obviously, in float planes are
22 pumping floats. We have to maneuver the plane on the dock and we
23 launch it, so we have a long line that we get out and gauge what
24 the wind's doing so you tie the line appropriate for the wind on
25 how we're going to launch it. This is after, me personally, after

1 I pump the floats and then I get out and I will walk around the
2 aircraft and look at the engines, then the propeller, walk
3 underneath the fuselage, look at the bracing wires for the floats,
4 then you look at the attach fittings, things like that, take a
5 good look. I'll walk around and look at the wings and look at the
6 tail and there's another set of bracing wires in the back that you
7 check tension on, obviously, all the rigging to the floats, look
8 at the tail section up to the other wing, you know, in a pattern
9 and you've completed your pre-flight.

10 Q. Is there anything in particular in the tail, the elevator,
11 the trim tabs, anything you need to pay attention to?

12 A. Yeah, I mean obviously --

13 Q. I'm not a float plane pilot, so --

14 A. Yeah, well it's just that --

15 Q. -- I understand it's different --

16 A. Yeah, you're looking at the elevators, you're looking at the
17 anti-servo tabs, or what looked like trim tabs on the trailing and
18 the elevator, checking attachment integrity and any sort of play,
19 along with the horizontal stabilizer get up to the scissor lift
20 and feel it. You know, there's a placard that says, do not
21 handle, but of course you don't handle it when you're in the dock.
22 In the Otter you can reach up and grab it because the tail of the
23 plane is higher than it is on the Beaver.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. So, once launched, it's part of pre-flight I'll go back there

1 and --

2 Q. Must be hard to do a pre-flight when it's on the water --

3 A. No, well you do part of it on the water, but you do part of
4 it on the ground. I can reach the tail without having to get on
5 the scissor lift and check the integrity of the tail.

6 Q. Okay. How are you doing. Do you need a break?

7 A. No, I'm fine.

8 Q. Okay.

9 MR. VANDERKAMP: I'm going to let Shawn ask some questions
10 now since he's dying to, I'm sure.

11 MR. ETCHER: Sure.

12 MR. VANDERKAMP: If you're ready.

13 MR. ETCHER: I'm ready.

14 BY MR. ETCHER.

15 Q. Thanks again. I know you've helped us the other day. You
16 educated me quite a bit. I'm like Jim, I'm not a seaplane guy, so
17 I appreciate the time --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- walking me through it. Since you were just talking about
20 the preflight let's talk -- let's continue to talk about that just
21 a little bit. When you fly from here to some other seaplane base
22 and you pull up to a dock, how do you guys do a preflight there?
23 I'm guessing no scissor lift there to get you out there, it's over
24 the water.

25 A. Well, essentially your preflight is conducted here at the

1 first flight of the day. When you land most -- 99 percent of the
2 time in these situations, you're landing, you're letting
3 passengers off, you're loading passengers, you're briefing
4 passengers, and you are what they call tailing the plane out and
5 departing the dock.

6 Q. Do you always pull in -- forget it's going to be hard for me
7 to ask, I guess. When you pull into a dock, do you pull in to the
8 left side?

9 A. Generally speaking --

10 Q. Or on the right?

11 A. Generally speaking, left side obviously most preferable,
12 Beaver, Otter, whatever you're flying because that's the seat that
13 you're sitting in.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. There are -- the plane is a weathervane, so there are times
16 when the wind does not cooperate for you to go into a dock left
17 side to. You have to go onto the right side to -- in the Otter
18 you have the ability to take your copilot if someone's sitting in
19 that seat, say okay, you're going to have to go in the back if all
20 of the seats are full. There's an aisle that they can kneel down
21 in and you go over to the right seat and generally speaking, if
22 you're taxiing in somewhere that you have to let him sit there and
23 you get close to the dock and go okay, yeah, I got to get you to
24 move on back there, hop over from the left seat to the right seat,
25 the rudder pedal is over there, and then dock, exit the co-pilot

1 door, tie your plane up, use the main cabin door in the back on
2 the right side to load and unload passengers.

3 Q. That helps, thanks, because I was wondering how you'd --

4 A. Yeah, generally, you know, we'll just say 95 percent of the
5 time we're left side to.

6 Q. I know it's all ballpark --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- it kind of helps me understand what's typical. Do you --
9 and you mentioned sometimes you have a copilot. Do you have
10 copilots in the Otter, or you mean --

11 A. I mean somebody's seated in the copilot seat.

12 Q. Like a passenger?

13 A. A passenger.

14 Q. Oh, okay.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Not another pilot.

17 A. No.

18 Q. Or an employee.

19 A. No, no we're a single pilot operation. If somebody is in the
20 copilot seat it is either me conducting IOE or operational,
21 obviously, training and check rides. Occasionally new pilots
22 riding along to learn, but they're not obviously conducting those
23 pilots any sort of training or pilot command duties relative to
24 the operation of 135.

25 Q. Okay. Again, being not a seaplane pilot, help me kind of --

1 I'm going to say, let me be a fly on your shoulder if you will.
2 Walk me through, if you were doing that same route that the pilot
3 did the day of the event, kind of walk me through what do you do
4 if you were flying that same route and you come in kind of walk me
5 through that.

6 A. In terms of what phase would you be requesting?

7 Q. From the time you started, like okay, I'm going to
8 wherever --

9 A. But, I mean, the plane's launched in the water -- it's like
10 hey boys, I'm at work, I'm ready to go, and I show up here.

11 Q. Start me there.

12 A. Okay, yeah, they come in, obviously, pilots know their
13 assignments generally speaking the day before.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So, you know what they're doing, you're flying up to Canada,
16 what are we doing, we actually use a little white board down there
17 -- okay, here's what's going on tomorrow. Fields and Bennett and
18 Micah are flying to the San Juans. Fields in 680. Mike is in
19 681. Bennett is in 685, or whatever. Okay VC (ph.) planes,
20 pilots, what they're doing, and then we run multiple round trips
21 per day to the San Juans. Three round trips per day. Some
22 require more planes than others. Sometimes you might have three
23 planes going at the morning flight, two planes going, or one plane
24 going in the midday and three planes or two planes in the evening.
25 It's not always -- it's based on demand. So, sometimes pilots,

1 okay, based on what's happening you're doing the morning flight
2 and the midday flight, and you're showing up doing the midday and
3 the late day, and you're doing all three.

4 So, we break that down sometimes relative to many different
5 factors. You know, how much has the pilot flown? Okay, he had to
6 do three round trips yesterday, so today he's going to do two and
7 you're going to do three. Things of that nature. So, a pilot
8 comes in, knows what he's doing, grabs his pilot book, flying to
9 the San Juans, to -- we have an aircraft release that shows which,
10 you know, get a scanned copy that shows the maintenance status of
11 the plane. Okay, release, look at it and sign it. If they fly to
12 the San Juans, they can take their padfolio book, a book I believe
13 you guys have in your possession that was recovered from the
14 airplane. They take that padfolio book with the squawk form
15 information for the plane. For the Beavers it's got a check list
16 in it and take that out to the plane and put that in the door
17 pocket of the plane, begin the pre-flight process, complete that,
18 so pre-flight's done. Obviously, passengers are showing up.
19 Baggage is weighed, passengers are checked in, baggage is loaded
20 in the aircraft, generally speaking, the majority of the time the
21 baggage is loaded in the planes on the ramp here. Minority of the
22 time, the plane's in the water baggage carts or bags are brought
23 down and loaded up in the airplane on the water. And then the
24 planes are launched. Meaning Beavers with the float truck, Otter
25 on the trailer, the planes are launched, the pilots -- everybody

1 works as a team. We help each other get all the planes launched.
2 Some of them with the dock here, move them, start them up, move
3 them over to the other dock. Sometimes just move them on to the
4 dock depending on the number of planes because the seaplane
5 facility here belongs to city of Renton and it's a public
6 facility, it's not ours. So, we do have to share it with others
7 and do not want to take up the entire dock or hinder it if
8 possible. I'll allow other operators -- private -- scenic
9 operator to get his planes in and out as well.

10 And at that point, passengers are brought down to the planes,
11 obviously loaded, pilot goes through and gives them a passenger
12 briefing, and they depart.

13 Q. Okay. So, let's talk a moment about passengers. When they
14 come in do you guys for your weight and balance -- just for the
15 record is it actual weights, is it estimated weights, standard
16 weights for --

17 A. It's our OpsSpecs, asked weights plus ten pounds.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So, that's what's on the manifest. Baggage weights are
20 actual and when the bag is on the scale write it down on the
21 manifest.

22 Q. Okay. So, let's say I'm a passenger for a moment. Do you
23 ask me when I book the flight?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Do you ask me when you fuel up how fat I am? I'm sure you

1 ask nicely, but.

2 A. It's generally in the booking process.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yeah. I mean, it is, that's the practice. Sometimes weights
5 are unknown, and they're submitted later.

6 Q. Okay. So, let's say I book a flight and you ask me my weight
7 and I say 150 pounds. Yeah. I know you can look at me and say
8 yeah, that's definitely not his weight. Could you guys -- can you
9 -- does your OpsSpecs allow you to adjust to him or do you have to
10 say well oh, he's pretty hefty --

11 A. They don't.

12 Q. They don't allow you to do it --

13 A. There's nothing in our OpsSpecs that says you're going to ask
14 a passenger's weight and make an adjustment on what you think
15 their weight is.

16 Q. So, if I put 150 for my weight on your manifest it would show
17 up 160 then?

18 A. No, it's basically shows it on the manifest and they
19 calculate your weight and balance you're adding the ten-pound
20 factor.

21 Q. So, the pilot adds that?

22 A. The pilot adds the ten-pound factor.

23 Q. So --

24 A. So, if you have five passengers on the plane, you're
25 obviously going to complete weight balance and you're going to add

1 50 pounds to the total weight and you're going to add ten pounds
2 per station completing your weight and balance calculations.

3 Q. So, in my example, I put 150 pounds down. That's what I told
4 you guys my weight was, which is totally way under. But that's
5 what the pilot would use as my weight then, is 150 pounds and he
6 would add up to ten pounds for me with everybody else?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. Okay. I just wanted to make sure I had that in my head.

9 A. Yes, and you know, quite the opposite -- we get submitted
10 weights that are a lot higher, of course, because people have
11 concerns because people are like, oh I don't want the plane to go
12 down because of our weight. That point, you know, you can do your
13 weight and balance and I suppose you could make an adjustment.

14 But there's no -- there's nothing specified in OpsSpecs or
15 anything as a subject in our operations manual that matches our
16 OpsSpecs. So, obviously, OpsSpecs are what we have to go by.

17 Q. How -- challenging is so the wrong word but I don't know a
18 better one yet -- how challenging is it to -- for the weight and
19 balance on the Otter? Is it very particular, you know, challenge
20 to keep it within the range?

21 A. Only is when you're very light.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. When you're very light. Because in this particular
24 conversion, as we discussed in the original meeting, it has a 50-
25 gallon motive fuel tank that is forward of the firewall. That was

1 a design subsequent of the original turbine Otter which was a
2 Bazar conversion, and you lacked a radial engine, you put on a
3 lighter turbine engine, a lighter turbine engine even with an
4 engine mount that put it forward was not ample. The other
5 conversions used lead weights. Some of them up in the front of
6 the engine mount to create weight to help with the center of
7 gravity. This conversion was designed with this tank to provide
8 additional fuel, but most importantly, to help with weight balance
9 or shortcomings of the other conversion.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So, being that if it was -- if I was the pilot in command and
12 you were the three passengers and you -- I'm a pilot, I would like
13 to sit in the front seat, and you're like oh wow, we're both
14 pilots, too. Gosh darn, I want to sit up front there, too. Well,
15 you can't. Well, I just want to sit at the bulkhead, and you
16 know, in an Otter -- it has a bulkhead, I want to sit and look up
17 there and see what's happening in the cockpit. A lot of times we
18 can't do that, or pretty much most of the time -- so, the plane
19 would be too forward CG. Not as much to do with the flight
20 characteristics of being at the forward limit as much as on the
21 water on the floats the bows of the floats actually begin to
22 submerge a little bit. So, when we're light and you're going
23 somewhere and you've dropped off all your passengers and you're
24 picking up a couple here, and picking up a couple more there, and
25 picking up three here and another three there, okay, you've got to

1 sit in the back. Once we get further -- man, I want to sit in the
2 copilot's seat. Okay, we'll make the next stop you can go in the
3 copilot's seat, we get a couple of people in the back, oh man, we
4 really want to sit up front, the next stop you can jump up and
5 grab those seats so we can keep the weight balanced to not be at
6 the forward limits or beyond it, but to keep it centered or so
7 some degree center of -- not forward, but aft.

8 Q. And thank you helps me, my head -- kind of -- now I
9 understand so thank you for walking me through that.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do pilots take flight bags with them? I know they have that
12 little -- the portfolio that you sent with them, or the folder.

13 A. The padfolio, everybody's different, everybody's different.
14 Depending on where I go, if I go to Canada, I have those very
15 small backpacks. Jason has a small backpack. We fly places the
16 weather's like this here. The water's poor up in Canada you might
17 be spending the night, so you've got a little overnight bag. Put
18 your toothbrush, a little extra jacket, a pair of pants, get some
19 shirts on, a pair of shoes because a lot of times we just wear our
20 flip flops or sandals, so we have a little bag when you fly to the
21 San Juans, I don't pack my bag with me. If I'm not going to make
22 it there, where I go, I'm going to be here. We aren't spanning a
23 distance more than halfway to Alaska, so obviously, there's a lot
24 of weather changes when you're distant from home, the daylight
25 factors, there's a possibility you could be spending the night,

1 which I've had a couple of those this season.

2 Q. Okay. So, let's talk about the day of the accident. I know
3 we already talked about that Jason had asked for more fuel, got
4 more fuel and you explained that. What was his route that day,
5 what was his flight scheduled to be?

6 A. Well, he just had a round trip to the San Juans, so his first
7 leg departed it went to Fisherman's Bay and Lopez, dropped off
8 some passengers, went to Friday Harbor dropped off some
9 passengers, went to Roche Harbor, dropped off some passengers.
10 Schedule-wise there's a little break in between flights on that
11 particular schedule. We don't always have back-to-back scheduled
12 flights where they get there and simultaneously pick up and leave.
13 On that particular one there was a gap in time, we do, do tours
14 from the San Juan Islands, so in the schedule is designed to have
15 a gap. He goes up there, takes passengers up, people are in the
16 San Juans say hey I'm here, I took the ferry, I would like to take
17 a flight tour. There was no tour on that day, however, the
18 schedule still had the gap in time in it to be the same as it is
19 throughout the season. Some days there's tours, some days there's
20 not tours. So, a little gap of time, so he ended up in Roche
21 Harbor. Got, loaded with his passengers, went to Friday Harbor
22 and loaded his other passengers and just continued back to Renton.
23 Q. So, after he left Friday Harbor, he was coming straight back
24 to Renton or was he supposed to go to Fisherman's Bay?

25 A. No, no, no, it's just basically just an on-demand stop. So,

1 we -- if -- everything is demand driven on the route to San Juan
2 Island. Might be all Roche Harbor people, go to Roche if it's all
3 Roche Harbor people back he would go all Roche. It could be all
4 Friday Harbor people up; all Friday Harbor people back. It could
5 be some of the Friday, some of the Roche, some of the Friday some
6 back. Sometimes the plane goes to Roche, drops off, picks up a
7 couple people, goes to Friday, drops off, picks up a couple people
8 and flies back. So, there's no hard and set regimen to the route.
9 It's demand driven.

10 Q. Okay. So, on the day of the event, I know he had more fuel
11 and everything. Did the flight leave on time? Did it leave late?

12 A. It left slightly late.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Because of the fuel delay.

15 Q. Okay. I just want to make sure I have it right. You have --
16 during your stops you have time there, sometimes.

17 A. Sometimes, and sometimes not. It's -- sometimes it's a quick
18 turn.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. You get there you're basically at check-in time to unload
21 your passengers, reload your passengers, brief your passengers,
22 take off, go back or go to your next stop. Two primary stops,
23 Roche Harbor and Friday Harbor, 95 percent of the business.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. On the scheduled flights to San Juans.

1 Q. Just so I have a good understanding, when you land in Friday
2 Harbor, for instance, just to pick up, how long on that day was
3 the lay over time between flights?

4 A. A lot of time --

5 Q. Twenty minutes?

6 A. The layover -- I can't say exactly how long he was there. I
7 can assume how long he was there.

8 Q. Let me rephrase --

9 A. Just enough time to drop off his passengers and go to Roche
10 Harbor and drop off his passengers because that was his kind of
11 little break point. The span in between the schedule from there,
12 the passengers showed up. I don't know how long he was there. I
13 do not know exactly when he landed there. I saw in flight
14 tracking that he flew there and that he had landed there.

15 Q. Just for -- just to help me understand, schedule -- is that
16 the right word to say? How long is a typical schedule. I know
17 you don't know how long he was there or not, but how long, give me
18 an idea.

19 A. Technically the schedule on that particular flight if you
20 depart at 12:30 the schedule is you arrive within 50 minutes of
21 your destination. Being there's two points it's an estimated
22 time. So, everybody hey we'll get there, the plane's going to
23 pick you up, it might be there a little bit early, it might be
24 there a little bit later, we'll load you and go. So, it's not
25 such as the airlines, we have a gate and 1:36 is when we're

1 leaving and we're boarding 30 minutes before, and you weren't here
2 we're closing the doors. It's different all the way around.

3 Q. Okay. More like, forgive me, and don't let me put words in
4 your mouth either, but more of a laid-back schedule? Would that
5 be --

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. You're basically, you're scheduled time departing is what's
9 on time. Generally, your arrival time is what's on time, your
10 pickup time at intermediate stops can vary.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. You know, we tell people it can vary by 20 minutes.

13 Q. Okay. For that trip that day, what was his scheduled --

14 A. His scheduled return time was 2:30.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, if he'd left on time at 1:30 -- or, 12:30 he would have
17 been at Roche Harbor at 1:30. But he left late, he had to stop at
18 Fisherman's Bay which took a few minutes. You know, in the world
19 of float planes we land, taxi a lot of times, two to four minutes.
20 Taxi in, go up to the dock, unload the passengers, untie it, taxi
21 out, depart, go to Friday Harbor, land, taxi into the dock, tie
22 down, unload. Depending on the day and the back-to-back, reload,
23 go to the next stop and he went to Fisherman's Bay, went to Friday
24 Harbor, and then he went to Roche Harbor.

25 Q. Okay, perfect. I think I have it in my head now, so I

1 appreciate that. I know you said, you know, in the world of
2 seaplanes you may not -- you may land at one spot and not go back
3 there ever again. You might go back a couple times in a year, it
4 all varies. Right? Do you have any kind of like a risk
5 assessment that you do when you go to these lakes to say, okay,
6 this one is a higher risk because whatever. Do you have any way
7 of assessing that, or is it --

8 A. No formal paper way of assessing anything of the such.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Just using good judgement. But we don't go to small lakes.
11 We rarely go to any small lakes wherever. I mean 99 percent of
12 the time we're in salt water.

13 Q. Oh, okay.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. All right. Just --

16 A. There is one particular lake up here called Lake Isabelle,
17 it's a mountain lake, it's in the Cascades, it's in the edge of
18 the wilderness. It's a smaller lake, it takes more skill, and
19 we're going to figure out who we're going to send there that's
20 obviously not going to be a newbie.

21 Q. Okay. All right. And you bring up most of your flying is
22 landing in salt water. How do these planes handle salt water? Do
23 you guys have some kind of saltwater preventive, you know,
24 rusting, corrosion, maintenance?

25 A. Absolutely, every plane is washed every night with salt away

1 and soap and hosed down. So, in order to preserve your asset, you
2 have to maintain it and it's just not just going to the
3 maintenance shop every night, they're washed with salt away and a
4 brush, primarily where the salt water is affected. It's not like
5 your -- you wouldn't wash your car every day, we're washing the
6 aircraft for the purpose to remove the salt water, so wherever the
7 saltwater sprays.

8 Q. Okay. Just, when I hear salt water I always, you know, as a
9 pilot it gets me, oh, thank you for that.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Do you know off the top of your head how many scheduled
12 flights you guys have, scheduled routes that you guys have on
13 your --

14 A. Scheduled -- well, we have a -- our primary scheduled route
15 is to San Juan Island. Our schedule that is -- what's difficult
16 in the world of the FAA and the regulatory aspect of it is that we
17 fly to many locations that are not airports that do not have ICAO
18 codes. So, they're demand driven along a route which would be
19 similar to riding in public transit. You're in a bus, you're
20 sitting in a seat, it runs along the line, you decide you're
21 getting off up there, you hit the dinger, obviously we know where
22 you're going but the locations along the route are demand driven
23 so it's not anything that's remotely close to an airline even like
24 Southwest or the -- take you to L.A. via Salt Lake City,
25 Sacramento, and then here, quasi-similar, but most airlines going

1 from Seattle to San Francisco plane departs, takes everybody,
2 loads them up, they land and disperse from the plane.

3 Q. Okay. Okay. Talk a little bit about when you get to Friday
4 Harbor or you get to any of these scheduled places you guys go.
5 Do you have help there? Do the pilots have help there to help
6 unload passengers or the bags?

7 A. No.

8 Q. They do it all?

9 A. The pilot does it all.

10 Q. Okay, and it -- do you guys ever take on fuel at any of those
11 places?

12 A. No, there's no fuel available. All fuel, you're -- and this
13 is specific to the San Juans, all fuel is taken on here.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. As I mentioned, in Canada we take fuel on at two locations
16 for the Otter because they're the only two locations that have jet
17 fuel.

18 Q. All right. Let's talk a little bit about Jason. What -- do
19 you remember when he got hired on here?

20 A. His pilot records show I believe it was 2012 or 2013.

21 Q. Okay, and he started in the Beaver?

22 A. In the Beaver. We didn't even have the Otter.

23 Q. When did you get the Otter?

24 A. The Otter I believe was 2016.

25 Q. Okay. Always remember with us if you don't know, I don't

1 know is a great answer, too.

2 A. Yes. I can't say for certain.

3 Q. Ballpark 2016 then is what you're --

4 A. Roughly, yes.

5 Q. Okay, and I know he flew the Otter. What allowed -- not
6 allow, why did you choose to allow him, you know, for him to fly
7 the Otter with you. Was there some rationale behind that?

8 A. Excellent pilot. Not that I don't have excellent pilots.
9 Obviously, he wanted to fly the Otter. He was available to fly
10 the Otter and he was a very capable pilot and that's an
11 understatement of his skills and abilities.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I mean you guys -- there's publicly disseminated information
14 in Trip Advisor; things like there's reviews on Jason's skills --
15 talk to all kinds of people that fly with him and they can attest
16 to --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- the skills that he has.

19 Q. Figured there was probably some rationale. So, I just -- I
20 always like to know what it is.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Because it helps me understand his abilities, so.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Great.

25 A. I will say that the most capable pilot that I've ever

1 employed.

2 Q. Okay. That's a good way to sum it up then. Thank you. And
3 you know, you said earlier you have -- forgive me, seven to nine
4 pilots?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Did that include Jason as well?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, and if I came to you today to apply for a job here just
9 grins and giggles, what would be your minimum requirements for me
10 to come on as a pilot. Or is there --

11 A. Well, there's FAA commercial -- but that's the baseline
12 minimum.

13 Q. Do you guys go above the baseline? I know that's the
14 minimum.

15 A. I can, and I can go up the baseline.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. In terms of my hiring you can ask anybody. You can come
18 here, I'm Shawn, I've 10,000 hours, or I've got 500 hours and I
19 really want to fly floats. Live, eat, and breathe your business.
20 I recruit people generally speaking if they're lower time then it
21 has to do with maybe they worked here building up their hours and
22 you've gauged them as an employee, them as a person in general and
23 their skills, they could be the best employee in the world, go get
24 them in a plane for an evaluation flight and they're terrible,
25 then they go, they could have all the intentions in the world, be

1 the world's greatest guy, it has to come down to their natural
2 abilities, their personality, and their ability to learn.

3 Q. Okay. So, let's say I came here, again, double -- like a job
4 type thing. Do you ever take me out on a flight to make sure --

5 A. Absolutely. That's first and foremost that's what we do.
6 You can send me your resume, let's get in the airplane, I'll know
7 in the first ten minutes whether you have the opportunity to go to
8 the next level or not.

9 Q. Okay. I assumed as such.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Assuming doesn't do me any good, so I appreciate that. So,
12 let's go now to start and talk a little bit about the training.

13 Are you doing okay right now? Do you need a break or are you
14 doing okay?

15 A. No, no, I'm good.

16 Q. Let's talk about training because I know you do all the
17 training. I mean you have many hats here. I get that.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Is the training done -- I assume you have ground school, but
20 do you do training in the airplane as well?

21 A. Absolutely. It's a requirement of the training program.

22 Q. So, typically how recurrent, or we'll talk recurrent because
23 that's what you and Jason would be doing in the Otter. On a
24 recurrent, how many hours do you actually go fly as part of --

25 A. We do a recurrent check ride in lieu of flight training.

1 Q. Okay. And is that with FAA or is that with --

2 A. That's a regulatory requirement. You can do a check ride in
3 lieu of recurrent flight training. Generally speaking, as a
4 practice if it was somebody's first year of flying here, if
5 they've shown up in the spring and haven't flown for six, seven,
6 eight months, floats, we're going to go out and fly around and
7 conduct some recurrent training to see if we're ready for a check
8 ride. Generally, after people have flown here a couple -- two,
9 three years, obviously, me as a check pilot as a company
10 instructor has a baseline of who this pilot is, what their
11 abilities are, and regardless if they can't do a recurring check
12 ride after two seasons without flight training then they're not
13 employed here.

14 Q. Okay. Have you ever had anybody get to that point when they
15 kind of have to go seek employment elsewhere because of --

16 A. Absolutely.

17 Q. Okay. I kind of assumed. I mean, we're all human, but we
18 all have different abilities.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. I've -- I appreciate it.

21 A. Many times, even late in the training game.

22 Q. Okay. Do you go out -- do you do stalls when you -- or --

23 A. Of course.

24 Q. How's this airplane, how does the Otter handle in stalls?

25 A. It's a very docile aircraft.

1 Q. Okay, and recovery is easy, speeds I assume are really slow,
2 or are they?

3 A. Yeah, the plane flies slow.

4 Q. Okay, all right. How does it handle turbulence?

5 A. It handles turbulence fine. It's a big aircraft for a small
6 aircraft. It's very stable, still very docile. It's obviously a
7 bigger plane, a little more power for control inputs relative to
8 the Beaver but it handles turbulence just fine.

9 Q. Okay. If you encounter turbulence, do you guys have any
10 procedures if you encounter turbulence. Like, slow the airplane
11 down to X speed or --

12 A. Oh, absolutely. The aircraft has a Vmo max operating speed
13 with the red line and it's easy to exceed that so naturally
14 turbulence is going to be encountered. Sometimes you can see it
15 on the water, as a seasoned pilot you know, you see it on the
16 water, you know the weather phenomena is happening such as Jason.
17 You're going to slow the airplane down to go through the
18 turbulence because a lot of times you're -- there's some sort of
19 tailwind that's going to turn into some sort of headwind.

20 Q. Okay, and just for clarification for the record, you said,
21 like Jason, did he report turbulence the day of the accident?

22 A. No, no.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. But he was trained by me. He knew and we operated the plane
25 almost identically.

1 Q. All right. Have you ever experienced any, I'm going to call
2 it flutter, I don't know what other people would call it. Like
3 you're feeling like you're shimmying or shaking or anything in
4 that manner?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Been pretty easy and steady?

7 A. No, nothing to do -- obviously, we have an understanding of
8 the Otter, we've been trained, we've reviewed, you know, other
9 incident and accident data. We have an understanding of what you
10 would -- say could be a point of maintenance control issue and
11 obviously, we focused on these things in pre-flight and
12 operationally, you know, how we operate the airplane.

13 Q. Okay. All right. I know if you're at Vmo, what speed are
14 you going to -- what speed is that that you slow to if you see
15 turbulence, potentially?

16 A. Obviously it's subjective to what you expect to encounter.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I mean you're going to keep it below that speed regardless.
19 Sometimes you're going to power back a little bit. Sometimes
20 you're going to power back a lot, because a seaplane pilot flying
21 over the water, the water gives you lots of tell-tale signs and
22 makes you look like a hero to see the wind and the waves going
23 this way, I see a calm spot, I see some pause, and I can see waves
24 and streaks coming the other way, I know I'm going to encounter
25 turbulence like that. We'll slow it down, all the sudden it's

1 going to be an exceeding airspeed, generally speaking, if it's not
2 on a low ceiling day or no ceiling issue, I'm going to let the
3 plane climb instead of trying to hold it steady and hope it slows
4 down, I'm just going to introduce a climb to keep the airspeed
5 down.

6 Q. Okay. Okay, and just for the record, what is the Vmo speed
7 for the airplane? It's not a check-ride, sorry.

8 A. No, I know. It's a redline it should be, I believe it's 116
9 knots.

10 Q. 116?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay, 1-1-6. All right.

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Just wanted to make sure so we --

15 A. I can't say for certain, I've studied in ground school it's
16 like on the placard, the airspeed, we don't always put those to
17 memory.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Because we look at the redline.

20 Q. All right. SMS. Safety Management System. Do you guys have
21 any of that here?

22 A. No safety management formal program.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. We do safety management naturally, but we do it in an
25 informal level.

1 Q. You know my next questions probably, how so?

2 A. How so? I mean everybody's mitigating risk all the time.
3 Are we flying, is it the weather, is it this, is it that? You
4 know, different veteran 18-year pilot, new pilot hired this
5 season, all these things, it's all going on in my mind
6 operationally all the time. And then even there, okay, we have
7 three planes going up to Canada. We have two guys that are -- a
8 lot of hours and background with the company in flying these
9 routes and some of them without, you know, we regulate to the
10 lowest common denominator. That's always been how we do things.
11 We're flying and -- you're a pilot, you've flown with me for ten
12 years and this is the your first year we're flying whether it's
13 marginal, Matt says, I don't like this, I'm tapping out, we all
14 turn around, we all divert to where we're going to go, or return,
15 on many different levels, obviously, safety for Matt --
16 operationally -- if you and I make it there then maybe Matt is the
17 inexperienced guy or Matt's the hero and he's safe and we're
18 unsafe.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. All right, so that helps out.

22 A. So, there's other operational factors, safety is always
23 first, but, you know, you and I might go, hey man, it's really --
24 this is a piece of cake. It's all safe and legal. Matt doesn't
25 like it, okay, we're going to go, and we're going to take another

1 route. Maybe we're just going to turn around and come back.
2 Maybe we're going to divert somewhere else and wait for the
3 weather to change.

4 Q. Okay. That -- at least I know how you guys do it, so that
5 way I guess that helps me there. I know you've got to be tired of
6 looking at me and listening to me ask questions. So, I'm going to
7 let Matt ask some more.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. If he has any. Thank you, though.

10 MR. RIGSBY: I've got a few.

11 MR. CARLSON: Okay.

12 MR. ETCHER: Take it away, thanks Matt.

13 MR. RIGSBY: Okay.

14 BY MR. RIGSBY:

15 Q. Okay. Sorry, I've gone through and checked things they've
16 asked and I, you know, same questions that -- I'm going to start
17 with my -- with your interaction with the FAA.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Is it generally positive?

20 A. Generally positive.

21 Q. Okay. Any issues with the FAA? Any with the district
22 office?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I mean obviously, I've been in the business and doing this

1 for 28 years. I overall have an excellent relationship with them.
2 I believe it's the same, we had our disagreements.

3 Q. Yes. How often does -- have you had a POI come out and do an
4 evaluation or fly with you or your pilots?

5 A. Well, this year my principal operations inspector conducted
6 my recurrent check-ride in the month of May, which was my early
7 grace month.

8 Q. What did that consist of?

9 A. That consisted of a normal 135 check-ride and oral
10 examination, followed by a 293B, which is the flight, we did it in
11 a Beaver. It's a single engine seaplane. The Otter was a written
12 test for, I believe, for the Otter in the systems is a 293A check,
13 to alternate between different equipment under the same
14 classification.

15 Q. Okay. Had he ever flown with Jason?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. He was a new POI, so the first time I met him was his visit
19 here this year.

20 Q. How about the former POI, I believe it was Robert Schafer.

21 A. He was around very minimally. Prior to that was Curtis
22 Johnson and he was my primary inspector for I'd -- I can't say
23 exactly, but five plus years, if not more.

24 Q. When you fly to bases are those --

25 A. Well, this is the only base.

1 Q. Or, sorry, when you fly to new destinations, does the POI
2 have to go with you to those destinations and approve them or do
3 anything evaluation?

4 A. No, it's -- that was a subject of a request this year was on
5 scheduled routes you have scheduled destinations and a request was
6 made this summer for West Isle to add these destinations to an
7 ops-spec.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Many of the destinations are not recognized because they lack
10 ICAO codes and things like that.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So, a few of them were added, and the rest of them were
13 deemed that you couldn't have them.

14 Q. You could not have them?

15 A. You could not add them into a document because they're not
16 recognized.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. A private facility, a private marina that has a seaplane dock
19 that is not -- there is no seaplane identifier or ICAO code could
20 not be added to a C-70 OpsSpecs but I don't know if it's relevant
21 to this --

22 Q. No, I'm just curious more about if they interact with you and
23 if they have to -- if they --

24 A. Well, it was -- this particular exercise was involved because
25 the principal operations inspector had to go to somebody else

1 within the FAA and then they wanted these environmental
2 assessments and things of that nature, and it's like, well they
3 have to have it. And it's like, well, it's in a foreign country
4 and there was a lot of back and forth because we weren't sure
5 whether we actually needed them on our OpsSpecs and I basically --
6 and he's like, well I don't know, I don't think you do, and I go,
7 well it's always been a question. The paperwork is more for you
8 than it is for me. I want the question to go away. So, I'd like
9 to add these, and we had a correspondence trail that he added some
10 locations to OpsSpecs. The question has been answered to best
11 agreeing document.

12 Q. Okay, and these are for your scheduled flights --

13 A. For this, yeah, scheduled route or line.

14 Q. Okay, yeah. Do your pilots, when they come here, do they
15 already have their seaplane rating?

16 A. Yes. Commercial seaplane rating.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Commercial. Correct.

19 Q. When you have these new pilots, after you check them out, do
20 yourself or do you put another senior pilot like Jason with them
21 to kind of go out with them on the first few flights?

22 A. There obviously is a formal regulatory requirement and then
23 there's an above and beyond requirement. So, I do both. I
24 conduct the IOE, complete it within the minimum hours or hours
25 beyond, whatever I'm comfortable with and then at some point I

1 make a determination based on their skill, their backgrounds which
2 vary, could be hire a pilot that flew in Alaska for 15 years, he
3 knows how to fly, you complete your IOE with him, along the
4 schedule line which generally consists of two destinations, Roche
5 Harbor and Friday Harbor, repetitiveness is enough with their
6 background we kept amongst other people with less experience. We
7 do more, and we do it in somewhat of an informal fashion, so it's
8 not a regulatory requirement for me personally, it's above and
9 beyond.

10 I have a retired pilot that flew for me for years that was in
11 a management position and I have retained him this year to fly
12 around with a couple new pilots after their IOE for two to three
13 days up to five or six days, until everybody was -- until he was
14 comfortable with his abilities to -- always the same question,
15 should you poll people, or ask people, okay, would you let
16 Delgeena and Cameron fly the plane with him? Yes. Or her.

17 Q. Okay. How are the pilot's compensated?

18 A. Pilots are compensated generally on a day pay rate.
19 Sometimes it varies, there's no formal -- I don't pay pilots by
20 the hour. Their pay is just commensurate with their day at work.

21 Q. Okay. If for whatever reason, if a pilot gets to Friday
22 Harbor, gets socked in with weather, does he have the ability to
23 cancel the flight that morning if he's uncomfortable?

24 A. Yes. The only time that's happened in the past ten years was
25 me this year.

1 Q. Okay. And obviously --

2 A. I get people on the ferry. I help them out. I spend the
3 night. I re-evaluate -- can leave, so.

4 Q. And your other pilots other than you have that ability to --
5 a company credit card or whatever to spend the night somewhere?

6 A. Yeah, I mean we facilitate that. I get charters sometimes
7 where someone wants to charter the plane, so there's a lack of
8 daylight. Hey, if you want to charter the plane if you want to go
9 some distant place that we can't make it back by dark, we're going
10 to charge an XY dollars and I'm going to go book a hotel for the
11 pilot. Make sure they have a hotel available first if the pilot's
12 going to spend the night, and go, and/or if there's weather
13 challenges and they don't make it to their destination, and
14 they're stuck somewhere then obviously we do that. Some pilots
15 just put it on their credit card give me the receipts when they
16 get back and we compensate them. Sometimes we do it here for
17 them.

18 Q. Okay. Do they -- are your aircraft under a daily inspection
19 program?

20 A. Pilot pre-flight inspection program. But no, they're on 100-
21 hour annual maintenance program.

22 Q. When they go to these -- like Friday Harbor, Roche, do they
23 shut down? I mean is the aircraft completely shut down?

24 A. Yes. Oh, totally.

25 Q. Okay. Do any of your pilots use iPads? Like for current

1 flight advisories for --

2 A. Some do iPads ForeFlight, Fore-Flight on their phone, Fore-
3 Flight on their iPad, whatever mediums they prefer to use.

4 Q. Okay. Do they have the ability -- I mean as they're
5 preparing for a flight do you have weather capability for them to
6 pull up and check, or do you kind of go in and assess that for
7 the day and based on --

8 A. I do a lot of assessment myself.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. We don't -- during the season I'm here most of the time. If
11 I'm away it's generally, Jason's here, someone's watching the
12 weather.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And we're making assessments on what we're doing.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And holding flights the day prior to the accident there was
17 weather in the morning and the flights were held and delayed.

18 Q. Sure, and I wasn't told weather patterns up here in the
19 summer -- it -- is it pretty well VFR 90 percent of the time?

20 A. Yeah, I mean -- well, it depends, subjectively on what route
21 you're talking about.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We talked about it could be sunny and 85 here all day, not a
24 cloud in the sky, you can fly up north to Vancouver Island 60
25 miles to one of the lodges that we go to and it could be raining

1 sideways with 800 foot ceiling and light rain and blowing 15 to 22
2 knots.

3 Q. Do you have cameras out at some of these, like web cameras
4 that --

5 A. Yes, there's a number of web cameras that we use throughout
6 the coast.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Because we span long distances, so we use -- depending on
9 where we go we use a number of different cameras because there
10 aren't the remote, you know, on Vancouver Island there's Toria,
11 Nanaimo, Comox, Camel River, Port Hardy and Tifino. That's the
12 only weather the whole west coast of Vancouver Island only has one
13 automated weather station and --

14 Q. Are there any FAA weather cameras out in this area?

15 A. Well, you're in Canada so there's no FAA cameras.

16 Q. Oh, okay. But, not like Alaska where the FAA sponsors the
17 cameras --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- at certain --

20 A. No, here in the state of Washington, even we do use some of
21 those there are Wash-dot Washington state department of
22 transportation cameras at airports. We don't go to these airports
23 but some of these cameras are close to where we do go and it gives
24 us different perspectives, so you look at the camera here, look at
25 one there, and you look here.

- 1 Q. Can the passengers talk to the pilots?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. We -- in all of our aircraft we all have headsets and
5 intercom.
- 6 Q. Okay. Do passengers put pressure on pilots, does that occur,
7 has that ever been reported to you? As far as to maybe take a
8 flight --
- 9 A. Not just reported, experienced.
- 10 Q. Experienced, okay.
- 11 A. But really, from when I started this, doing this 28 years ago
12 to now, it's almost the opposite.
- 13 Q. Okay.
- 14 A. Oh, okay, we're going to go, are you sure it's, okay? Yes.
- 15 Q. Okay. When they book a flight and get their weights do you
16 tell -- do they have a baggage limit?
- 17 A. Yes. It's specified as a 30-pound baggage weight
18 restriction. Not to say that it's always that way, but we can
19 accommodate more, but it's a baseline to start with.
- 20 Q. Okay. And you say they weigh each bag that --
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. So, if they get to the point where they're pushing the
23 baggage, how would a pilot handle that? Would he --
- 24 A. Well, generally speaking, the traffic to the San Juan islands
25 is 90 percent from here.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So, we do encounter people that come to Seattle, they're
3 going to head to national, national parks, whatever the case may
4 be, I'm going on an Alaskan cruise, I want to go to the San Juan
5 Islands for two nights, we store bags here.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. They will have their luggage, check out of the hotel, have
8 extra bags, store their bags here. We have people that go up to
9 fishing lodges where we restrict the bags more, we enforce them
10 more because we're traveling further distance and we have -- we're
11 carrying more fuel because while we're bringing their fish back
12 which is an offset weight to the fuel, so we enforce it when -- we
13 might have a bag and we might have a kitchen garbage bag with a
14 Sharpie with some of their belongings in there because their
15 weight far exceeds what we're asking. So, we get their weight
16 down and --

17 Q. Okay. You mentioned that you have three mechanics, is the
18 DOM one of those?

19 A. Oh, of course.

20 Q. Okay, good.

21 A. Yeah, he's the --

22 Q. So, he's one of the three?

23 A. He's an active mechanic, yes.

24 Q. Okay. I believe the other day we talked about the ADS-B.
25 You have ADS-B in and out?

- 1 A. In and out, yes.
- 2 Q. So, that's a visual that depiction of traffic in the area?
- 3 A. Audio and depiction.
- 4 Q. Audio and depiction.
- 5 A. 796 Bluetooth is connected to the 345 which depicts the
6 traffic even with the setup we have it set with N numbers on the
7 display so you can see which planes they are.
- 8 Q. Are you required -- unless your flights are over water -- are
9 you required to have a CFIT training program?
- 10 A. No.
- 11 Q. Is there any -- I can't think of a better word -- like a
12 forum or anything that -- where you guys communicate with the
13 other operators in the area? Like a --
- 14 A. Like Kenmore Air.
- 15 Q. Yeah, that --
- 16 A. Kenmore Air has a company frequency --
- 17 Q. Okay.
- 18 A. We have a company frequency. On occasion we communicate
19 between company frequencies and all the sudden you see like you
20 said, on ADS-B, you see a Kenmore plane in your intermediate
21 route, you aren't per se where you'd be monitoring or announcing
22 on a common traffic advisory frequency you simply get on there and
23 go, hey, 8QA -- yeah this is so and so, yeah, what's up?
- 24 Q. What about safety issues or something you may find
25 maintenance-wise? Do you guys' kind of communicate, hey, we found

1 this with our aircraft, you might want to pay attention to -- and
2 vice versa?

3 A. Oh, to Kenmore we certainly have in the past.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Yeah, what things there was a problem with the 985s a number
6 of years ago, and Todd Banks with Kenmore called me and asked me
7 and it just depends on where they were getting their parts for
8 their engines. Ours weren't subject to the issues that they were
9 having.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. But yes, we communicate for sure.

12 Q. When you guys do these -- the freshwater wash at the end of
13 the day, do they use a scissor lift to get up on the tail?

14 A. No, the tail is generally out -- it's not like a Beaver where
15 a Beaver the tail is covered in salt.

16 Q. Oh, okay.

17 A. The Otter is not coated in salt, so it does get a saltwater
18 wash, or a rinse down, but it doesn't get a saltwater wash all the
19 time. It's rinsed off, and you know, there's certainly some days
20 when the planes are late and the weather that we get back at the
21 end of the day and we go, all right -- there's not enough time in
22 the day to wash all the planes. We're going to hose the planes
23 down and get the salt off.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. But in terms of corrosion on the tail, plane is a plane, it's

1 like at least about it we washed it, there's no corrosion on the
2 plane, on the tail plane, but we have addressed corrosion on the
3 actual belly and fuselage where there's salt -- and you know, it's
4 very typical but, those spots are addressed and the surface
5 corrosion is removed and it's drenched with alodine and primed and
6 touch-up painted to catch it before it ends up becoming -- you
7 know, it eats through the skin and affects the integrity of the
8 skin should --

9 Q. Okay. I think that's it.

10 MR. VANDERKAMP: Okay. If you have questions we can come
11 back to it. We can go another round and have -- do you need a
12 break?

13 MR. CARLSON: I was thinking I was going to go the bathroom
14 really fast. I don't need a long break, but --

15 MR. VANDERKAMP: Okay, let's go ahead and stop here then, end
16 the recording at 11:57 a.m.

17 (Off the record at 11:57 a.m.)

18 (On the record at 11:59 a.m.)

19 MR. VANDERKAMP: We're back on. It's 11:59.

20 BY MR. VANDERKAMP:

21 Q. Just a few more questions.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Won't be too long. Do passengers ever move in flight? Do
24 they get up and change seats?

25 A. No. I mean, it's --

1 (Crosstalk)

2 A. Yeah. They're instructed to stay in the seat. I mean, they
3 can never completely attest when you fly the Otter there's a
4 bulkhead. So pretty much you're seated with the passengers behind
5 you, you would feel it if they moved.

6 Q. All right. On the, the day of the accident, you said in the
7 first roundtrip there was kind of a scheduled built-in delay at
8 Roche Harbor.

9 A. No. That was not the first flight of the day. Jason was
10 completing his second roundtrip. It was on his second roundtrip
11 that Jason was on.

12 Q. Right. On the first roundtrip there was a scheduled delay --

13 A. No.

14 Q. -- from Roche Harbor.

15 A. There was no scheduled delay.

16 Q. The second one had a scheduled delay?

17 A. The one, second one has a scheduled delay --

18 Q. For the --

19 (Crosstalk)

20 A. -- the 9:30 flight --

21 Q. For the --

22 A. -- there was a 9:30 flight to the San Juan Islands; a 10:30
23 flight return.

24 Q. Okay. I misunderstood.

25 A. Going up at 12:30; coming back at 2:30.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So that leaves --

3 Q. A little gap (indiscernible).

4 A. -- yeah, about an hour gap.

5 Q. Did that hour gap put him back on schedule or was he still
6 behind when you left?

7 A. He was slightly, but the schedule is designed more for
8 Beaver. Because it takes a Beaver like 50 minutes to get to Roche
9 Harbor. For an Otter it's maybe 40 minutes. Otter -- Beaver
10 cruises at 95 knots. Otter is closer to 115 knots. So --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- it's faster. So that plane can do the schedule. Beaver
13 could go to Friday Harbor and back; and the Otter could go --
14 Friday Harbor to Roche, to Friday and back, and they get back at
15 the same time because, obviously, the speed.

16 Q. Do the pilots ever feel a need to hurry if they're behind on
17 the schedule?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Do they push the speed up at all or --

20 A. There is no way to push the speed up. No. They're trained
21 to prepare to leave here on time; to leave here ahead of time.
22 There's a lot of training that's done of hey, you're a pilot,
23 there's only so much you can do. Can't introduce risk into what
24 you do flying in terms of rushing. How do you prepare yourself to
25 leave on time? And, regardless, you can ask any of the pilots.

1 We have discussions, okay, you're here. There are certain things
2 that cause delay, okay. Have to back-taxi lot of times here on
3 the northwest wind day. Here's the lake and the dock. You can
4 start up the plane. The wind's blowing in your face. You listen
5 to the ATIS. You do for your takeoff check, and you're airborne.
6 If the wind is out of the south, you have to take off into the
7 wind. That means you have to back-taxi. It's not like a wheel
8 plane that you can go taxi down the taxiway at 25 miles an hour to
9 pick up speed. You still have to taxi at 5 to 6 knots. You might
10 have to taxi three-quarters of a mile or more to take off into the
11 wind. So those types of things take time. That's why I train
12 people, hey, right, you back-taxi in. You think you got enough
13 room to take off? Yeah, well, sure. I think it's tight. So why
14 don't you go back a couple more minutes. If you're 20 minutes
15 late, why not be 22 minutes late. You're already late already.
16 So there's a lot of training, and it's built into schedules being
17 late for safety decisions reviewing how you're conducting
18 yourself, and the safety of the operations relative to the
19 schedule. Don't matter at this point. If you're 20 minutes late,
20 you need to be 25 minutes late, it's just -- is what it is.

21 Q. Okay. Are there any known issues with the Otter, things
22 failing that you know -- not necessarily your plane but other
23 planes that you're aware of?

24 A. No. I know that the tail feathers relative to a Beaver
25 require more maintenance, require more looks, looking at things,

1 double-checking the integrity -- in a Beaver, you can fly the
2 thing all year, years and years and seasons, seasons -- there
3 aren't wear points that create any sort of play, anything like
4 that that the Otter does, the tail plane. It's a completely
5 different tail plane, obviously, the stabilator it pivots.
6 There's a jack screw but it pivot points in the front, goes up and
7 down.

8 Q. Is that -- are those kind of wear points are they any kind of
9 scheduled maintenance, scheduled inspection?

10 A. Well, I mean, they're inspected every 100 hour regardless, or
11 annual, and --

12 Q. But no additional --

13 A. -- but they're always, yeah, they're always addressed, and
14 back to the pre-flight portion. We go touch, feel.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And the person that I purchased the airplane from, of course,
17 I used a lot of insight from him owning another Otter, owning this
18 Otter. When we first got the plane Stelairis, the owner of the
19 STC, communicated a lot with them in terms of learning, and
20 actually had one of the representatives come down, did our first
21 annual of operating the plane, and had them come down, check
22 things out, teach us with the new piece of equipment.

23 Q. Okay. But between my questions and their questions, I think
24 I'm out of questions.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. At least I am. I might have one more, but I'll give each of
2 these guys a chance to ask a couple more.

3 MR. VANDERKAMP: Shawn.

4 MR. ETCHER: Sure. I got just a few more.

5 BY MR. ETCHER:

6 Q. And, again, I know it's taken a lot of your day today but --

7 A. No.

8 Q. -- I appreciate -- you've given me a ton of insight into your
9 operation. So it's -- kind of feel like -- I know I couldn't fly
10 for you yet because I don't have a seaplane rating yet, but I feel
11 like I kind of have a great appreciation of what you guys do. How
12 do you guys check your weather? I know you mentioned the cameras.
13 Is there any formal weather system you guys use or --

14 A. Well, everybody uses a little bit different weathers; there's
15 Fore-Flight, I use SkyVector primarily. Like I said, I use
16 weather cameras because it's a known phenomenon in the Puget
17 Sound, and you can look it up, the Puget Sound Convergence Zone,
18 and what happens is, is you've got 4 or 5 thousand foot ceiling at
19 20 miles of visibility here. San Juan Island you've got 20 miles
20 of visibility. Even at Everett Paine Field you've got 8, 10 miles
21 of visibility. Plenty of VFR ceiling. And somewhere between
22 Everett or even at the Mutiny Bay area there is what they call a
23 Convergence Zone. The winds converge, and it actually causes the
24 clouds to precipitate creating drizzle. And the drizzle reduces
25 the visibility to IFR.

1 So, if you went and got a traditional weather briefing,
2 and you decided to call Leidos Flight Service or you looked at
3 your ForeFlight you would assume that in this geographic area
4 between -- you guys you're pilots you know weather, oh, I see
5 green dots. I see blue dots. I see red dots. I see pink dots.
6 You go, oh, well, they're all blue, pink, red because Paine Field
7 is 6 or 7 hundred feet. So, if the ceiling is 1200 feet here,
8 it's a level ceiling on a stable day, what would the ceiling be at
9 Paine Field, 5 or 6 or 7 hundred feet. So, it would be a red dot.
10 But then your next basis is visibility. Oh, is Paine 600 and 2
11 miles of visibility and drizzle, or is it 700 feet and 10 miles of
12 visibility? Different than here, could be 1100 feet, and a mile
13 and a half or two miles and drizzle such as it was on Saturday the
14 day before the accident. The drizzle had to work its way through
15 the Convergence Zone. Actually, it worked its way south. It's
16 normally up there. It was further down from where you get a
17 vantage point. There's a web camera I use the Port of Edmonds
18 Marina; have a web camera that looks out at the south end of
19 Whidbey Island towards the accident scene. I can take a look at
20 that camera and see what the visibility is. Obviously, if I can't
21 see Whidbey Island -- I can't remember how many miles it is,
22 whether it's 4, or 3, 4, 5 miles, but I mean you can't see it --
23 you can just see that -- oh, oh, no one's going anywhere.
24 However, doing this for as many years as I've had, and with as
25 much experience as I've had with it, I can wake up in my bed, and

1 lift the curtain, look at my phone, and go we aren't leaving 'till
2 10:30 or 11 or 10 o'clock at the soonest.

3 But back to your question in terms of weather briefings, we
4 use different mediums.

5 Q. Okay. Do you by chance know what Jason typically used?

6 A. We share all the same stuff. So, he has ForeFlight. I don't
7 have ForeFlight. There are satellite views that he gets
8 sometimes, oh, there's a marine layer that's built in, but it's
9 clear to the east, and here's where the holes are, cool. He was
10 the first one to have ForeFlight and find that, and it was like a
11 game changer because we would go out and leave to the east, and a
12 lot of times a marine layer falls in over the Sound. Little bit
13 of influence offshore winds from, from the Cascades, and it keeps
14 the fog captive over the Sound. You go up and fly along the edge
15 of the fog over the land up the I-5 corridor by the San Juan's or
16 Canada, and then sometimes you have the ability to get up there.
17 And you'd have to figure out whether they can do it or whether the
18 clouds embedded themselves into the Cascades, or -- going to be
19 way up in the mountains if I do that. We aren't going anywhere.
20 Look at that, and go, oh, cool, here's where it is. We're going
21 or not going instead of having someone go a look and assess.

22 Q. Okay. For the record, do you guys do flight following with
23 each other? You know, is there a process here for flight
24 following?

25 A. We do company flight following, and we do FAA or Nav Canada

1 flight plans for transborder flights since they are required. But
2 company flight following is, is the majority.

3 Q. Okay. And who typically monitors the flight --

4 A. Michelle, myself, whoever is behind the desk following the
5 planes, watching what they're doing, keeping track of time,
6 obtaining ETAs, things of that nature.

7 Q. Okay. Who happened to be flight following on Sunday, the day
8 of the event?

9 A. Me.

10 Q. You were. Was there anything that -- you run a business. So
11 I'm sure you're not just stuck at your desk all the time --

12 A. No.

13 Q. -- watching them on the screen, correct; or are you?

14 A. No. I'm out doing other things. I can get that same
15 information on my telephone.

16 Q. Okay. So, the day of the accident you were flight following.
17 was everything -- how would you classify that day for flight
18 following?

19 A. Beautiful weather day. No weather factors on my mind. As
20 well as risk assessment, I have a senior pilot, no weather issues.
21 Not that that creates any complacency, but it will either move me
22 to stay in front of my computer and communicate. Sometimes when
23 the weather is bad, I am looking at my camera (indiscernible)
24 looks good, go east here, or do this, do that. I'm a coach.
25 Jason assists me in coaching. He understands, okay, we're

1 leaving. We're going to go this way. We have company frequency,
2 multiple planes. We communicate on our frequency of where we're
3 going, what we're doing. How does it look this way? Follow me.
4 The ceilings are good here.

5 Q. So, your company frequency from here how far out
6 approximately does it --

7 A. I don't listen to the company frequency. It's plane-to-plane

8 Q. Oh.

9 A. So, we are not communicating over the radio to the base.
10 We're texting.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Or I think we had discussed before when we're in Canada if we
13 don't have the ability to text via cell phone coverage, we use the
14 inReaches to communicate back and forth, but I mean pretty much
15 get cell phone signal most everywhere up there. So, we don't use
16 it such as we did in the past. It's more of a tracking device.

17 Q. Okay. And you get good cell service? Good it's my word.
18 You get cell service in flight --

19 A. Absolutely. We fly at low altitudes or where cell service is
20 within the city itself. The more sparsely populated the areas
21 are, the cell phone signal is better. It's more consistent.

22 Q. So, the day of the accident you were flight following. Did
23 you have to send any message or try and communicate with Jason at
24 all?

25 A. I did send a message that I shared with you on the screen

1 shot which was on his return flight when I noticed that my
2 tracking said he landed at Port Townsend which, obviously, was
3 strange, and cued me to what's going on? It's beautiful whether
4 why, why are you there? And a lack of communication.

5 Q. Was Jason really good at communicating then with you?

6 A. Excellent. So, if there was any sort of issue or anything he
7 was running behind or whatnot, he would always communicate. He
8 would get, I don't know, not mad, but he would scold others for
9 not communicating because he's a good communicator. And he would
10 say communicate, communicate, communicate.

11 Q. Just for the record, the day of the accident did Jason
12 communicate with you at all on -- via text on that --

13 A. No. Everything was going according to schedule. I was
14 following him on FlightRadar 24, looking briefly, oh, he's here,
15 oh, he went in there, oh, he took off, and he landed here. I did
16 not watch him continuously throughout the route but looked
17 periodically. It was -- I was doing something and came back and,
18 obviously, no time mental time clock, okay, let's -- he's going to
19 be back here in 15 to 20 minutes. Let's be prepared for his
20 arrival.

21 Q. All right.

22 A. I'm flight following another aircraft that we had on the
23 charter that was coming from somewhere else. So, I was watching
24 them both of them, but I was most focused on him. He was flying
25 over the Cascades, and I was most concerned in a bad way but

1 watching him. The weather was changing a little bit, and it was
2 still plenty high, but I was, obviously, following him. I was
3 looking at where he was -- camera -- the ceilings are still well
4 above the high peaks. So, it should be good, but I was prepared
5 to communicate with him. And, oh, it's cloudy there. If you go
6 30 miles down it's still almost clear, but it was not even an
7 issue.

8 Q. Okay. You must have saw my next question because I was going
9 to ask did you have any other aircraft up at the time? So, you
10 just had one other aircraft up at the time of the --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay. All right. Somebody had asked about passengers
13 communicating with the pilot in flight, and you said they have an
14 intercom, headsets, and all that. Is it a hot mic all the time?

15 A. Hot mic all the time.

16 Q. All right. And in the ADSB you said -- forgive me -- I don't
17 remember who asked the question, but you said you have a program
18 so it pulls up the aircraft number.

19 A. Well, it's not a program. It's a setting within the GPS that
20 you can have the aircraft registration N-number if it does, you
21 know, some people have their GPO set so it just says VFR whatnot,
22 but it -- no, we have it. We use it because then you can see your
23 company, airplanes traveling with you, you know, who is around
24 you. You can zoom out within the proximity that the ADSB will be
25 able to pick up either from the ground station or from plane-to-

1 plane, and see what's happening even with our competitors. Our
2 schedules opposed, but sometimes we're close I can look and say,
3 oh, well, there's two Kenmore Otters going to Roche Harbor. I
4 need to fly to Roche Harbor and Friday Harbor. Likely they will
5 be on the dock, and I will be waiting, therefore, I'll go to
6 Friday Harbor first, and by the time I do what I'm doing they'll
7 have left, and I'll have space to dock. So, we, obviously, use it
8 not only for traffic but for operational tool. We can determine
9 what ground speeds are. You can go tap on them and go, wow, we're
10 about 4500 feet, and they're going 105 knots, and I'm in a Beaver
11 down here at 1100 feet, I'm doing 82 knots. I think I'll climb
12 up, and get out of the headwind.

13 Q. Thanks. The last set of questions I have might be a little
14 tough. So, if you need a break, it's okay. But we always like to
15 look at the pilot's history prior to the accident. We usually
16 like to go back at least 72 hours give or take. Just helps us
17 understand what he, what his day was like days leading up to it.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Can you recall when his last day off was or when he showed up
20 here for to start --

21 A. His -- he had Tuesday through Thursday off.

22 Q. So, he showed up -- so he starts Thursday or --

23 A. No. Started Friday.

24 Q. Okay. So, we'll work back from the day of the event. You
25 already kind of said he had a flight up earlier that day, 10:30

1 flight, 10 o'clock?

2 A. 9:30 or maybe it was 10. No. It was still 9:30 because our
3 schedule changed after Labor Day.

4 Q. Okay. So, he had a flight at 9:30. Where does he stay when
5 he's -- I know you said his family lives three hours away. So --

6 A. He stays here. I stay in an RV, and he stays in an RV.

7 Q. Okay. So, he's right here on the property?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Do you recall what time he got there that day or what time
10 you saw him?

11 A. He was up at normal time. He went and took a shower, and
12 came in, and went in and signed his release in the book, and took
13 it out to the plane, and began the preflight.

14 Q. What's normal time?

15 A. Well, we technically -- if your flight's at 9:30, your show
16 time is 8:30.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So that's basically the company policy.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Our unwritten policy is show time is one hour prior to your
21 departure time.

22 Q. All right. So that when -- you saw him, he was doing his
23 normal activity you said. And it's always from your perception
24 because you said you've been friends with him for a long time, how
25 was his mood, normal?

1 A. Yeah. No, it was, it was normal.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah, He went, he went to a Huskey's game the night before.

4 I saw him, and he got some tickets from a regular customer. So,

5 hey, Mike, gave me his tickets to the Huskey game. I'm going to

6 the Huskey game tonight. So he went to the Huskey game, and

7 another pilot that flies for us was here with me that evening, and

8 made some dinner, and barbecued up some salmon, and hung out, and

9 he went home, and I went to bed, and got up in the morning, and

10 opened up a -- did my thing, my shower, made my coffee, and came

11 to the office, and opened things up, and do all the things, you

12 know, a small business, from making sure the bathrooms are clean,

13 and running the vacuum quick after last night's passengers, things

14 like that, getting set up, getting carts out; all the small

15 operational things that we do. I just get to business, you know,

16 being here onsite, just lack of commute time generally speaking.

17 Get back from a long day at 8:30, and can still be in bed at 10,

18 and awake at 6 in the morning or 7. I'm usually up earlier.

19 Jason's the pilot. He doesn't have to show up in here and assist

20 me with those duties. So, in terms of sleep, light duty things in

21 nature, you know, it's operational factor. It doesn't exist like

22 the airlines, or oh, I know you got this 6 p.m. charter that's

23 going to go 'till 2 in the morning, and then you have part of the

24 day off, and then you do this, and -- sleeping algorithms

25 interrupted your -- even if you have a long day here, and your

1 duty period off, and your time to sleep, it's occurring at the
2 same time, and you can get a lot of sleep or adequate rest.

3 Q. Okay. Do you -- I know you -- you're not monitoring what
4 he's doing, but do you happen to remember what time he came back
5 from the Huskey game? Just ballpark.

6 A. I don't.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I was tired; went to bed.

9 Q. So the --

10 A. After a long season we've been more so going to hit the bunk
11 early because we've got a big busy weekend. So we go to bed, and
12 we get up, and start working.

13 Q. Okay. So, let's go back to Saturday then. On that day what
14 was his, what was his schedule, Jason's schedule? Do you --

15 A. He did his three roundtrips to the San Juan.

16 Q. Okay. So, he had the same schedule?

17 A. He did the same route, yeah. So, he 8:30 showed, 9:30 go.
18 Got back at 7 o'clock. I mean, his duty records will reflect it.
19 I guess the last piece of information I'll give you, but that will
20 reflect it. Usually doing the San Juan's it's sometimes between
21 7:15, 7:30 p.m. is when he's done, and his show time was at 8:30.

22 Q. Okay. But and please correct me, maybe I misheard it. The
23 day before you guys cancelled some flights, right, because --

24 A. No. We didn't. We didn't cancel flights. We just delayed
25 the morning flight approximately an hour.

1 Q. Oh, just the morning flight?

2 A. Yes. And it was delayed. Our schedule I designed it for
3 these types of weather phenomena as well as second flight. We had
4 time to delay the first flight, make a roundtrip, not have to
5 cancel it, and do the second flight. Might be just a little bit
6 late, but in the scheme of things going to the San Juan's, and it
7 has a break in between the return flight, it allows an excellent
8 safety margin to get behind -- generally speaking people going to
9 the San Juan's are not connecting to another flight. So, if they
10 have to leave 20, 30 minutes late, so be it. They make it to
11 their destination. It allows us a little cushion of time.
12 Occasionally interferes with the tours if somehow we run behind,
13 hey, we've got to cancel your tour today because we left late, and
14 there's not enough time to do your tour. If you guys around
15 tomorrow we'll get you fit in around tomorrow or else we'll cancel
16 you, and give you a refund.

17 Q. Okay. And so Saturday, I assume, kind of started the day
18 normally?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. What you can recall. It's okay. I know you --

21 A. Yeah. We were, we were together on Friday night he was here
22 having dinner, normal thing. Had our dinner, and went out, and
23 BS'd and talked about our upcoming trip that we were supposed to
24 be leaving on Monday, and come to plan for next week, and him
25 going home for a couple days, and being with the family, and

1 coming back on Thursday to take his check ride. Because he wasn't
2 scheduled to fly that day, but just come back, we'll get your
3 recurrent check ride done, and we'll start getting our jet ski
4 trip plans together, getting some things done, giving him this
5 itemized list of a few things to get, and get ready for leaving
6 Monday.

7 Q. Okay. And then so Friday you guys hung out a little bit. Do
8 you remember what time you hit the bunk compared to him or?

9 A. No. We're both the same. You know, we all kind of hang out,
10 and we're, like, all right, time to hit the bed, and his door
11 closes, my door closes, and I -- it's like anything. I don't know
12 what people do at night.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. He could have been sleeping, looking at the Internet,
15 texting, something like that. I have no idea. But it's not like
16 he shows up here and he didn't sleep.

17 Q. He didn't show up either day with that I didn't sleep --

18 A. No. He never does. I mean that's somewhat the beauty of
19 being here. If it's a long day, you can turn in and go to bed and
20 get more sleep than a lot of people get.

21 Q. And then Friday morning he -- did he drive in from his home
22 Friday morning or did he come in Thursday night?

23 A. I believe he did, but I can't remember.

24 Q. You believe he came in Friday morning?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And it's okay. It's okay. If you don't remember
2 that's fine.

3 A. No. I can't, I can't confirm it, but I believe that was the
4 case.

5 Q. Okay. All right. I think you have answered every question I
6 have. So, I appreciate it. Thank you so much.

7 A. You bet.

8 MR. VANDERKAMP: Thanks, Shawn.

9 Matt --

10 MR. RIGSBY: Just a couple.

11 BY MR. RIGSBY:

12 Q. Kind of following on with Shawn's weather questions. What
13 are your weather minimums?

14 A. Well, obviously, they're FAA weather minimums.

15 Q. Okay. So --

16 A. 500, 500 and 2 in controlled airspace, one mile, in special
17 VFR. I mean, you'd have to have -- all these things are
18 interpolated. There're places you go that there might be a hunk
19 of fog here, and it's blue sky, and it says it's a mile, but it's
20 really two miles, and we're leaving because it's not really
21 actually that type of weather phenomena here. It's reported up
22 the weather station -- the airport.

23 Q. I just didn't know if you had anything above the minimum, or
24 if that was --

25 A. Yeah. Whatever regulated requirements are.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Whatever those are.

3 Q. Operational control. Who has that 119 authority?

4 A. I'm an operational control person. Our manual, anybody else
5 that's -- the pilot can be designated as the operational control,
6 but they can't be operational control of their own flight.

7 Q. So, when you fly, excuse me, who does operational control?

8 A. Michelle.

9 Q. Michelle. Okay. Do you for both the Otter -- sorry, sorry.
10 For the Otter and the Beaver, are there -- is there a formal
11 checklist that you guys have developed?

12 A. Well, there's a checklist for the Beaver, and the Otter's
13 checklist comes from the manufacturer.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So, we have a checklist that's been accepted --

16 Q. Right.

17 A. -- is the same checklist from beginning of time that I didn't
18 even develop here.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. That was put together by a chief pilot before my tenure that
21 we use. And then the Otter the checklist is what's provided with
22 STC from Stelairis.

23 Q. Okay. And the same with preflight? Is it just use the
24 published book or --

25 A. Yes. It just, you know, it's a very general preflight

1 procedure, as you can imagine. And that's the thing even with the
2 Otter is that -- you use the original POH only for a couple
3 systems, and the rest of it does not exist. And then there's a
4 supplemental flight manual or approved flight manual that belongs
5 with the conversion; explains all the systems, the performance,
6 everything.

7 MR. RIGSBY: Okay. That's it for me. Thanks, Shawn.

8 MR. VANDERKAMP: Okay. Thanks.

9 MR. CARLSON: Shane actually. He's Shawn.

10 MR. ORNSTEIN: Shane. Sorry.

11 MR. CARLSON: No problem.

12 BY MR. VANDERKAMP:

13 Q. Who is responsible for doing the freshwater wash-down,
14 pilots, the mechanics --

15 A. No.

16 Q. -- somebody else?

17 A. Just line service kids.

18 Q. Line service. Okay. Thanks. I think we've asked you all
19 the questions we can come up with.

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. Usually Shawn has a zillion of them (indiscernible). What
22 didn't we ask you that you want to tell us that we should have
23 asked?

24 A. I don't, I don't have any. I think you guys had a more than
25 well-rounded list of questions. I mean, I can't think of anything

1 else.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Obviously, you asked questions probably outside the scope of
4 what was involved with the accident. So --

5 Q. We did.

6 A. So, you kind of -- yeah, and that's what you have to do, but
7 I mean I can't really think of anything else that we haven't
8 discussed, especially what was more directly related to --

9 Q. Right.

10 A. -- the time of his flight operational.

11 MR. VANDERKAMP: Okay. We appreciate your time today.
12 You've certainly done a lot to educate us on float planes, and
13 your operation, and we certainly appreciate your time.

14 MR. CARLSON: You bet. Thank you.

15 MR. VANDERKAMP: Okay. It's 12:33. We're going to turn off
16 the recorder.

17 (Whereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

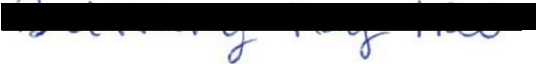
IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL CRASH AND SINKING OF DE HAVILLAND
DHC-3 IN MUTINY BAY, NEAR FREELAND,
WASHINGTON ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2022
Interview of Shane Carlson

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA22MA193

PLACE: Anacortes, Washington

DATE: September 8, 2022

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Brittany Hay
Transcriber