

DCA22FA132

OPERATIONAL FACTORS/HUMAN PERFORMANCE

Group Chair's Factual Report - Attachment 5
RED Air Personnel Interview Transcript and Summary
March 1, 2023

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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MD-82 GEAR COLLAPSE & RUNWAY *

EXCURSION ACCIDENT IN MIAMI, * Accident No.: DCA22FA132

FLORIDA ON JUNE 21, 2022 *

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Interview of: HECTOR GOMEZ MORALES, President/CEO
RED Air

MIA Executive Tower

Thursday,
June 23, 3033

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 DR. WILSON: Thank you for coming today, I am Katherine
3 Wilson, I am a Human Performance Investigator with the NTSB and
4 with me -- we are considered the Operations and Human Performance
5 Group, so we're looking right now mostly at the pilot side of
6 things but also just trying to understand the overall
7 organizational structure and oversight and those type of things as
8 well. So I'll have everybody go around and introduce themselves.

9 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Thank you.

10 MR. MITCHELL: Good afternoon, sir, Mitch Mitchell with the
11 Federal Aviation Administration with AVP-100. Very similar into
12 the NTSB in our role here, we're not looking at enforcement or any
13 of that, we're just interested in the safety portion of the
14 investigation.

15 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Okay, sir.

16 MR. ABRAMS: Hector, I'm Warren Abrams, I'm the Ops Group
17 Chairman of this investigation with the NTSB and I thank you for
18 talking to us today, we do appreciate it.

19 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Thank you.

20 MR. GOODWILL: Good afternoon, Sam Goodwill, I'm a Safety
21 Pilot from Boeing.

22 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: (Indiscernible.)

23 MR. VANDERKAMP: Jim Vanderkamp with the NTSB, excuse me, I
24 work in the Ops Group Performance.

25 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: My pleasure.

1 MR. VANDERKAMP: Nice to meet you.

2 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Do I have to record my name on there?

3 DR. WILSON: I will ask you in just one minute.

4 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Okay, sorry.

5 DR. WILSON: And so as Mitch alluded to, you know, if you're
6 not too familiar with the NTSB, we're here strictly from the
7 safety side. We want to understand what happened and try to
8 prevent something like this from happening again.

9 And so the folks that we're talking to, like yourself, like
10 the flight crew, you've got the technical expertise, the
11 organizational expertise that's going to be able to help us, you
12 know, get a handle on what happened and, you know, make
13 recommendations as needed to, like I said, prevent this from
14 happening again.

15 We are going to record the interview which means that a
16 transcript will be typed up after this by a court reporter and
17 then it will become eventually a part of our public docket. Are
18 you okay for recording?

19 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Yes, ma'am, I'm okay.

20 DR. WILSON: Okay. And you are entitled to have somebody sit
21 with you in this interview if you wanted. I really see it more as
22 a conversation. It's optional to you but is there anybody that
23 you want to have here with you?

24 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: I don't think that for the moment I will
25 need anybody here with me.

1 DR. WILSON: Okay, all right. And so if you don't have any
2 questions for us we'll go ahead and get started.

3 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Okay, perfect.

4 DR. WILSON: All right.

5 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Well, I have one.

6 DR. WILSON: Sure.

7 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: I have my laptop here, am I allowed to
8 have it just in case there's any information that you need and I
9 have it here?

10 DR. WILSON: Absolutely.

11 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Okay, perfect, then I'll get it out.
12 Thank you.

13 INTERVIEW OF HECTOR GOMEZ MORALES

14 BY DR. WILSON:

15 Q. Okay. So if you could please state for us your full name?

16 A. My full name is Hector Andres Gomez Morales.

17 Q. And if you could spell your last name for us, please?

18 A. Gomez is G-O-M-E-Z and Morales is M-O-R-A-L-E-S.

19 Q. Thank you. And what is your title, position and what company
20 do you work for?

21 A. I work for RED Air and my position is President/CEO of the
22 company.

23 Q. Okay. So give me a little bit of a background of how you
24 came to be the CEO of RED Air?

25 A. I am an attorney in the Dominican Republic, I specialize in

1 aviation law and I was a counselor for probably eight years, 10
2 years to the company, to the original, how do you say, founder of
3 the company, is that correct, yeah, which is a ground handling
4 company in the Dominican Republic that is called Servair, and I
5 used to be their counsel, their attorney for around eight years.

6 And I was offered this position in 2000 -- I was offered the
7 position in October 2019 and finally accepted it or began working
8 as a CEO of the company in February 2020.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So that's how I got here to this position.

11 Q. Okay. And how many employees does RED Air have?

12 A. RED Air currently has -- that's one of the informations that
13 I have here because, well, us -- this company comes and goes, the
14 company keeps growing. Every week we have been hiring. So
15 currently it's around -- the last number is 106 employees.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Direct employees. Of course, there's somewhere that we have
18 contractors or employees of companies that give us service that we
19 consider part of the family.

20 Q. Right. So you're a relatively small company but also, you
21 know, 106 employees is a lot. What is your sort of involvement in
22 like the day-to-day business that happens, the operations?

23 A. Well, I as a CEO, I basically coordinate and I'm in charge of
24 coordinating all of the other areas of the company making, making
25 commercial decisions, financial decisions, legal decisions too,

1 especially for -- because of my, my legal expertise as an aviation
2 specialized attorney, and going through the, through the day-to-
3 day of the company, just taking care of the things that go on, and
4 making sure that everything is going on how it should and
5 supervising basically all of the departments of the company.

6 Q. Do you have like an organizational chart of RED Air that you
7 could share --

8 A. Of course.

9 Q. -- even something that you could pull up? I'm just sort of
10 interested in like what the structure is like or maybe it's
11 something you can just walk us through like, you know --

12 A. Yeah, I can.

13 Q. -- what departments there are?

14 A. Yeah, sure, absolutely. I do have that. I'll pull it up
15 here. Let's see if I -- so many documents, I'm so sorry I can't
16 find it. Okay. All right. So this is -- how should I --

17 Q. Oh, that's okay. Don't worry about it. I'm just kidding.

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. We'll share in a minute.

20 A. All right, okay. So basically, basically this is how our
21 company is structured; this is junta de directoras, borough of
22 directors in English.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And borough of directors three percent, the shareholders.

25 Presidency, President/CEO, that's me. And then the departments

1 that depend directly from President, from CEO, but do not depend
2 from other operational departments, right.

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. As administration, human resources. This is IT technology,
5 they depend from -- they depend directly or respond directly to
6 CEO.

7 Q. Uh-huh.

8 A. And work with all of the other departments but do not depend
9 directly.

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. And then you've got all -- the operations department --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- maintenance department, quality control department and
14 commercial department, us, and then you go from there, operations
15 department --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- management, chief pilots, dispatch, dispatch --

18 Q. Dispatch, uh-huh.

19 A. -- instruction crew, crew chief and this is a technical chief
20 that we have here, so that's the operation department.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And, well, then you go to maintenance --

23 Q. Right.

24 A. -- have storage, supervision, that's basically like the basic
25 structure.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. CEO, board of shareholders, board of directors, CEO and then
3 from there it goes to the general departments --

4 Q. Right.

5 A. -- operations, maintenance and so on.

6 Q. Yeah. Quality control.

7 A. I think it's -- yeah, quality control. I think it's a pretty
8 easy and basic structure since we're not a big carrier, so it's a
9 very simple structure that you could very simply understand. It's
10 not --

11 Q. How often are you in contact with say the director of
12 operations?

13 A. Every day.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. At least four or five times.

16 Q. What, what types of things, what is your interaction with --

17 A. About a day, about the day-to-day operation, how's it going,
18 how's the flights, how are the flights going, do you have any
19 reports from, from anybody, in the company or in your departments,
20 how are things at the airport?

21 Of course, our operation director is based at the airport;
22 I'm based in the city. We have, we have an office in the city
23 which is basically, which is more of an administrative office and
24 commercial office and our office of operations departments are all
25 based in the, in the airport.

1 So I talk to him every single day, how's it going and if he
2 knew, yes, everything okay, or, no, we have this situation, we're
3 going to do this, we're going to do that. So touch bases with him
4 at least three to four times. Plane landed, plane took off, fine,
5 everything is safe. I can do that because we're a small carrier.

6 Q. Sure, that makes sense.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Let me backup just a minute. Laser Airlines, Laser Aviation,
9 what is the Venezuelan company?

10 A. Yeah, yeah, it's a Venezuelan company.

11 Q. Laser?

12 A. Laser, Laser, yes, it is Laser.

13 Q. I'm just making sure that I was saying that correctly. What
14 is their connection with RED Air?

15 A. Laser is and it's written in our manuals, is a mother company
16 you'd say?

17 Q. Like a parent company?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Parent company.

19 A. Parent company, yeah. It's a parent company and the
20 shareholders of Laser are half participation in the shareholder
21 structures of RED Air, but most of RED Air, 51 percent to be
22 precise, of RED Air is owned by Dominican local investors.

23 So that's basically the structure. It's also a very simple
24 shareholder structure, 51 percent in a company that is owned by
25 Dominican businessmen and the other 49 percent which is owned by

1 the owners of Laser.

2 Q. And Laser conducts the pilot training or just the simulator
3 training? What is their role in the training of RED Air pilots?

4 A. No, well, our pilots train here in a Delta simulator up there
5 in Atlanta, Georgia, and now our trainers -- well, when we were
6 certifying the company, since we did not, we did not have an
7 authorized instructor by government agency, Laser provided those
8 instructor at the beginning to certify our instructors.

9 But now our instructors are the ones that hold on the
10 training of current pilots or the pilots that we are in the
11 process of hiring but simulator -- there is training here in the
12 USA Delta simulator.

13 Q. Is that still at Delta, is that what you just said?

14 A. Yes, ma'am.

15 Q. Yes. And it is RED Air instructors?

16 A. Yes, it's RED Air, it's RED Air instructor but, it's RED Air
17 instructor but since we have -- are sometimes short in personnel
18 and pilots because our operation -- sometimes the simulators,
19 okay, and that way you can, you can, you can corroborate.

20 The, scheduling the simulators it sometimes is really
21 difficult and in our country, different than in other countries,
22 the recurrent happen every six months. So every six months our
23 pilots have to go to simulators and training. And sometimes the
24 program of the simulators and/or flights get too tight and our
25 instructors are also pilots in the operations.

1 So sometimes this -- I'm not sure if it's happened every
2 single time but sometimes we have to ask for an additional
3 instructor because it would take one of our instructors of the
4 operations, then we'd be short in pilots or ADAC or a government
5 agency allows -- has allowed, because we've only been to what,
6 three or four simulators, the first one, recurrent and the second
7 recurrent that is happening right now as we speak in these two
8 months.

9 So, yeah, the ADAC as an exception allows that a Laser
10 instructor holds on those simulator sessions or some of the
11 simulator sessions because, as I was saying, we take a pilot out
12 of operations then we might have to deal with some flight
13 cancellations and that's something that we didn't want to happen.

14 Q. So that's the simulator part of training?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. What about ground school, do you have ground school
17 instructors that do, you know, initial --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- kind of training before they go to the simulator?

20 A. Yes, we do and I'm just going in my head to see if -- well,
21 yes, when we were certifying the company the same thing happened.
22 Of course, we had, we had instructor from Laser, have some
23 courses, courses is available.

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. Yeah, okay. And now that we had -- because we had a second

1 generation of -- I call it generation like of crew members that
2 were hired recently and they were all trained. Yeah. And we also
3 had, we also had help from Laser in their training. Yes, yes.

4 Q. And so going back to the structure of the organization, I'm
5 trying to think of who might be helpful to share information with
6 us? Is there -- so there's a director of operations?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And chief pilot?

9 A. Yes. Francisco Frias Garcia is the director for operations,
10 Franco de Vita is the chief pilot, chief pilot, Carlos Larrus is
11 the chief instructor over there.

12 Q. Is that like a director of training or is there a director of
13 training above the chief instructor?

14 A. Yeah, no, no, the chief, the chief in Spanish is jefe, jefe,
15 yeah, so is the chief of instruction. He's in charge of planning
16 all the -- everything that has to do with pilot training, planning
17 it, like the schedule when the pilots have to go to simulator and
18 that. That's what, that's what he does.

19 And the chief pilot is in charge of the pilots in operation,
20 so this is operation and this other guy is planning.

21 Q. Great. And is everybody based -- are all of your pilots
22 based in the Dominican Republic?

23 A. Yes, ma'am, they are all based in the Dominican Republic.

24 Q. Okay. What other cities do you fly to, is it just between
25 Santo Domingo and Miami or are you flying to other locations?

1 A. As a scheduled carrier, regular carrier?

2 Q. Uh-huh.

3 A. We only fly to Miami but we have charter operations every now
4 and then on demand and that depends on the demand.

5 Q. Okay. Does RED Air have an SMS Program?

6 A. Yes, ma'am, we have an SMS Program.

7 Q. What department does that fall under?

8 A. Well, now that's SMS is an independent department that
9 responds directly to CEO, to the President. It's always us, SMS
10 Program has to be -- or at least that's our vision of that
11 department it has to be an absolute department with no dependent I
12 would guess connection to any other department of the company, has
13 to be totally independent and respond only to the CEO and Board of
14 Director to whom I respond at the same time.

15 But that's the person that -- for the planning, for the
16 planning of her, of her, because it's a her, her name is Roeta
17 Silva. The planning of her department has to be totally
18 independent, independent, and we take that very serious.

19 Q. When did you all start actual flight, scheduled flight
20 operations?

21 A. November 1st, 2020.

22 Q. And --

23 A. 2021, sorry, 2021. Sorry, last year.

24 Q. I don't want to put words in your mouth but I assume that you
25 are also in contact with Roberta on a regular basis?

1 A. Yeah, talk to her like three times a (indiscernible).

2 Q. What, since November 1st what kind of issues is she seeing
3 that she's reporting to you concerns that have needed to be
4 addressed?

5 A. Well, there's been -- we had two events where she held up a
6 meeting that it was one, a plane that had took off and had to -- I
7 don't -- sometimes I get lost in translation, I apologize for
8 that, but had to return to the airport because of, of -- it was
9 that the central fuel tank was not consuming from there, so as a
10 basic and routine procedure, you return and went back to -- that
11 was, and goes back to airport. That was one event. And, of
12 course, she holds up, she has to hold up an SMS meeting.

13 And another one that when I was going to go to the run -- to
14 the runway and that was actually here in Miami and he powered up
15 the engines, one of the engines was not sending enough power so
16 again that's not normal and standard procedure.

17 He called off the operation because of that and returned to
18 the gate and that was another; that was another situation. On a
19 regular basis, I will say this is probably the two main events
20 that we have had and that needed, needed the intervention of a
21 meeting.

22 But other than that, she's always -- what she reports is
23 things related to day-to-day human resources safety. She's very,
24 she's very zealous with evacuation signs, if she sees that
25 something is wrong or this should not be here, it should be here,

1 those are the basic combination. But not everything is an event
2 so not everything needs a meeting, just a follow-up.

3 Q. Great. Do you interact with the --

4 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: I'm sorry; can I have some water please?

5 DR. WILSON: Yes, unfortunately my bottles are gone but there
6 is a machine there with a cup and they make it so you can't put it
7 down. They're pointy cups.

8 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: That's okay.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hector, that's the best we can do
10 here.

11 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: No, that's, that's good enough. No, that
12 will work. Thank you. Katherine, sorry for interrupting you.

13 DR. WILSON: That's okay. No, I appreciate the information
14 and I'm sort of jumping around as I'm trying to, you know, get a
15 feel for, you know, how the operation works.

16 BY DR. WILSON:

17 Q. Maintenance, how is that -- what maintenance does RED Air do,
18 what maintenance does RED Air contract out?

19 A. Okay. We have --

20 Q. Would you be able to answer that?

21 A. Yeah, I'm able to answer the general information of that.
22 Maybe too technical information I might not be able to answer.
23 But basically we have -- RED Air has a maintenance department, in-
24 house department, okay, and most of the work that is done on a
25 regular basis, on regular day-to-day are done inside of it.

1 We have, we hired and have in our authority authorizers here
2 in the United States, Extreme Aviation as a subcontractor in the,
3 in the day-to-day operations, it's called -- in Spanish it's
4 asistencia linea, it's like a regular, an A service like, yeah,
5 that would be.

6 We've got TMC Engine Center, which just basically gives us
7 service of over hook and engines reparations. And in the
8 Dominican Republic as a provider of maintenance services is a
9 company called GDC Solutions. It's basically the same that
10 Extreme Aviation does for us here but there, all right.

11 Q. How is it determined --

12 A. And -- I'm sorry, okay. I was going to go to parts providers
13 but I think you had a question first?

14 Q. Well, I was curious how, how is it determined which of these
15 companies does which? So how do you choose GDC Solutions versus
16 Extreme or is that something that's --

17 A. Yeah, that depends, that depends on the, on the maintenance
18 department and --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- their judgment of -- that's, that's their call.

21 Q. Were you involved in the selection of -- how was it
22 determined which companies you are going to contract to?

23 A. Well, I was -- the part of it that I was involved in of the
24 companies that we finally hire was basically a financial view of
25 which company was going to be our provider. Our maintenance

1 department went to the market and look and, of course, in the
2 handout or with what our authority required if you -- and they saw
3 if they comply with the checklist and then we just basically ask
4 for, for offers.

5 And once they were over that we came up with the decision it
6 was basically an opportunity and financial decision. But in the
7 technical part of the selection, I honestly don't have the
8 expertise to determine if this or this maintenance department is
9 better.

10 So what I do in that part is just look at the numbers. If my
11 team says, yes, this is a good facility, this and that and then,
12 okay, just bring the numbers and we'll go from there.

13 Q. What is your interaction with ADAC is that it?

14 A. ADAC, yes.

15 Q. That's your -- that's like the equivalent of the FAA?

16 A. That's my FAA, yes, right.

17 Q. Correct. What is your interaction with them, are you
18 interacting with them on a daily basis? Do they interact with
19 someone else at your organization?

20 A. Well, with my employee I interact, I'm not going to say
21 daily, of course not, but I interact with him if not on a weekly
22 basis tops every 10 days and just the same going, going over,
23 going over, going over things of the operations and everything.

24 He interacts every single day with -- well, I'm not going to
25 say every single day because I don't know, I don't know that, but

1 he interacts a lot with my director of operations. They interact
2 more because they're usually going on with all the operations and
3 everything.

4 And my PMA which is the same but maintenance also is
5 interacting a lot with, with our maintenance department.

6 Q. Are you aware of any concerns that the POI has had or even
7 the PMA with any of the operation or and/or maintenance?

8 A. No, not concerns. They are, they are a very proactive state
9 agency and if they see something they will tell you, they will
10 give you recommendation, they will ask. They audit you and
11 sometimes they audit you and if there's a recommendation they will
12 tell you do this or that, we do it.

13 But expressing like a concern or sending a formal warning
14 that we're not complying with something --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So sorry to interrupt. Mr. Gomez --

16 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Yes.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- when you're done if you could
18 please come see Mr. Price (ph.).

19 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Of course.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

21 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: No, that would be, that would be no.
22 They haven't said, listen, worry about this, worry about that, no,
23 we haven't had that.

24 BY DR. WILSON:

25 Q. From the -- when was the last, do you know when the last

1 audit was done?

2 A. No, ma'am, I don't know the exact date of the --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- of the last audit because there are different type of
5 audits, so sometimes there are simple audits just to see if you've
6 got your manuals correct or sometimes it's an operation audit. So
7 if I tell you every single day --

8 Q. Okay. We'll put in a request for the --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- the most recent audits.

11 A. If I could hold up, if I could hold the date of every single
12 time something happens then I would probably not be sitting in
13 this chair -- it would be --

14 Q. When those audits are done do you see a copy of that report
15 then?

16 A. Yes, ma'am, of course.

17 Q. What about on the FAA side, from the U.S. side, do you
18 interact at all with the POI here?

19 A. Not as much as I do there. We have, well; we have out base
20 here, based and live in the Dominican Republic even though I
21 travel very often here to see the operations and everything. Also
22 when we, when we have interaction with the FAA or the DOT, since
23 this is so technical and it's also a foreign law that we have an
24 attorney that assists us with a lot of the interaction with FAA
25 and also DOT, with requests, an amendment of the economic permits,

1 amendment of the operation of the OpSpecs, for example, we have,
2 we have our attorney do that here in the United States, so I
3 don't, I don't interact that much with them.

4 Q. Do you know if the U.S. POI has done an audit of RED Air?

5 A. I know we had, we had once a TSA audit but I don't know if we
6 had a POI audit here in the United States. Ma'am --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- I'm not sure 100 percent. We might or might not.

9 Q. I don't know is perfectly fine.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. You mentioned that you travel here to, you know; interact
12 with the operation and stuff. What do you do when you come to
13 visit?

14 A. Well, most of the things that I do, we have an office here on
15 27th Street, on 27th, Northwest Street in Doral (ph.) which is
16 also like a financial and administrative and commercial office, so
17 that's where I'm based when I come here just to see financial
18 things, administrative things.

19 And every now and then, every now and then because we have an
20 (indiscernible) here in the, in the airport, every now and then I
21 come to see the operation, but I can't do much because I don't
22 have access to the inside part of the operation. So it's just
23 basically to see how, how the line -- if the line is moving in
24 good time, how are the passengers being treated.

25 So that's as much as I can do in that part of the operations

1 here because I can't go inside the airport so that's basically
2 what I do when I come here.

3 DR. WILSON: Thanks, Hector. I'm going to see if anyone else
4 has some questions.

5 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Okay.

6 DR. WILSON: I might have a couple of follow-ups. Warren?

7 BY MR. ABRAMS:

8 Q. I've got just a few, Hector.

9 A. Sure.

10 Q. You're interested in aviation law, are you a pilot yourself?

11 A. No, sir, I'm not. I wish I was.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I wish I -- I love aviation so much that I wish I was a pilot
14 and I don't, I don't discard that, at some point in my life I
15 might do some pilot work, not now.

16 Q. Your English is very good, did you go to law school here in
17 the states or where did you go?

18 A. Well, no, I lived, I lived, I lived here in the states for
19 two years when I was 10, my mom got a college scholarship here in
20 Florida, University of Florida up there in Gainesville. So I
21 lived there for two years. That's where I learned English. I
22 came here knowing nothing and I learned English in those two
23 years.

24 And then ever since we got back to the Dominican Republic I
25 have a lot of interaction with English and now I'm based in the

1 aviation world it's known English is the language for excellence
2 so I'm all the time talking in English. So I work more in English
3 than in Spanish if you ask me.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Your airplanes were former American airplanes?

7 A. That is correct.

8 Q. You seem to be kind of aligned with American Airlines, are
9 you having preliminary discussions that you can reveal about a
10 frequent flyer program between you and American, RED Air and
11 American? You may not be able to talk about that but --

12 A. Well, no, no, but I may be able to tell you, no, yeah.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. No, no, no.

15 Q. Not yet, not yet.

16 A. If it would be like I would tell you, yes, but the other part
17 is confidential but, no, no. We're not, no.

18 Q. Yeah, I understand. Counseling for the pilots and the flight
19 attendants, sometimes when an event happens it's an emotional,
20 it's a very emotional issue for the crew members that are involved
21 and we talked to both the captain and the copilot today and
22 they're wearing it right here on their heart.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. If they requested any kind of counseling would you provide
25 that for them?

1 A. Whatever they need, sir.

2 Q. Okay. They didn't ask me to ask that question so --

3 A. But whatever they need.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Absolutely.

6 Q. When you -- how did you get to Miami on this, this trip?

7 A. I flew.

8 Q. Who did you fly?

9 A. I know, I know, you know I flew, but I flew with American
10 yesterday in a 7:15 a.m. flight, yesterday morning, because I
11 couldn't get here on Tuesday afternoon because that flight, our
12 flight was basically the last flight that day that took off from
13 the Dominican Republic to Miami.

14 But you can be sure that if the event would have been earlier
15 I would have been here.

16 Q. Yeah, I'm sure, I'm sure.

17 A. The same day.

18 Q. Just kind of a global question, how have your growth numbers
19 been, are you growing as expected or had you hoped for better
20 growth or are you about where you want to be?

21 A. You always hope for more, sir.

22 Q. Oh, okay.

23 A. No, our numbers are growth and the numbers they have been
24 pretty good, they have been pretty good since. We have a pretty
25 decent low factor so that helps a lot. Of course, I will say that

1 as a business man and representing a board of shareholders, we
2 always expect to improve in everything.

3 Q. Certainly.

4 A. But so far I can tell you that the operations are going
5 pretty well.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Now we have to see what goes on after this event but we're
8 prepared to face it.

9 MR. ABRAMS: Okay. Thank you, Hector.

10 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: You're welcome, sir.

11 DR. WILSON: Jim?

12 BY MR. VANDERKAMP:

13 Q. You said you have an SMS?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Do you recall an ASAP Program, do you have an ASAP, a
16 confidential reporting for pilots?

17 A. Yes, yeah.

18 Q. What do you call it?

19 A. Well, no, we have, we have -- okay. I have the terms in
20 Spanish.

21 Q. Oh.

22 A. So sometimes --

23 Q. No, that's okay if you have it. Don't look it up.

24 A. No, no, because we have, we have, we have our safety policy
25 because we have it here, we have committees, we have everything,

1 but specific documentations and everything, that's a question that
2 I would rather have our SMS manager answer.

3 Q. Okay. My question is just, if pilots want to report
4 something anonymously there's a method --

5 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And there's, there's like a mailbox.

6 Q. And it's paper; it's not a computerized thing?

7 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But you can -- if you want to report something you can do it
10 in our SMS Program, you can do it anonymous, you can do it
11 personally and you can -- and it can be a verbal report, and it
12 could be a written report. And written can be email, it can be
13 handwriting letter.

14 Q. Okay. Who's the accountable executive for your estimates?

15 A. That would be me.

16 Q. That's what I want to hear, thanks.

17 A. That would be, that would be this gentleman here.

18 MR. ABRAMS: That's all I've got, thanks.

19 DR. WILSON: Sam, anything?

20 BY MR. GOODWILL:

21 Q. The aircraft are owned by RED Air or leased or was that --

22 A. Leased.

23 Q. Leased.

24 A. Leased. They're leased.

25 Q. Okay. And do you have as part of your SMS a flight data

1 monitoring program?

2 A. A flight --

3 Q. FOQA, flight data analysis, information coming off the
4 airplane and it's analyzed?

5 A. Oh, yeah, of course, yeah, yeah, of course.

6 Q. Maybe it's a different team.

7 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, we do, of course, we do.

8 MR. GOODWILL: That's it for me.

9 DR. WILSON: Mitch?

10 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Sorry, that sometimes with the, with the
11 technical terms --

12 MR. GOODWILL: Yes, understood.

13 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: -- Spanish, English and --

14 MR. MITCHELL: I don't have any questions at this time.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Okay, sir.

17 BY DR. WILSON:

18 Q. To follow up on what Sam asked you with the flight data
19 monitoring, kind of program, does that fall, fall under your
20 quality control, do you know, or does that fall under operations?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Or safety?

22 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: That would be -- sir?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Or safety, which department?

24 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Honestly I don't know.

25 DR. WILSON: Okay.

1 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: I don't, I don't know because since what
2 comes out of there is so technical I'm not sure which department
3 handles it, and I'm not sure under which department we still can
4 show because eventually all departments including me we have, we
5 have access to the information.

6 So the first one that I receive it, I will not tell that I
7 know who it is because I will not be saying the truth.

8 BY DR. WILSON:

9 Q. You talked about if someone has a concern there's the paper
10 they can fill out, they can call?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Does anyone ever come into your office and voice concerns
13 that they have?

14 A. Well, I'm going to tell you something and I don't know if I'm
15 doing it wrong or right, but my phone number only has my wife and
16 around over 20,000 people, so it's a very private number. It's
17 not a private number.

18 And if there's a thing that I do and try is to -- and since I
19 can still do it because it is a company of the size and I hope I
20 can do it, I always, no matter how much we grow, I try to be very
21 personal. I have -- I can't see everyone every single day because
22 there's so much going on but everyone has my phone number.

23 I'm a phone call, text message -- well, actually we use
24 WhatsApp a lot. I'm a WhatsApp away. I spoke to my copilot the
25 first day, two hours after, three hours after, once he got, he had

1 access to his phone and was allowed to use it.

2 He texts me on WhatsApp say, saying don't -- he was like Mr.,
3 everything is okay, pilots, crew, passengers are okay. And I
4 respond, thank God you guys are okay; we'll talk to you later. So
5 that's, that's the kind of relationship that I try to have with
6 not only, not only pilots or my crew but with everyone that works
7 at RED Air.

8 And my office doesn't even, doesn't even have a paper like
9 this that you can't see, my office is clear, it's a clear glass so
10 if I'm there you just have to knock and walk in. And if I receive
11 concerns -- no, I haven't received concerns.

12 I receive over time recommendations of how we can do business
13 better and that's basically it but not, not a concern like
14 something's going on, this is going on, no. Always receiving
15 constructive recommendation, we can improve here, we can improve
16 there and I'm always open to that. Of course there's always room
17 to be better.

18 Q. Including the accident airplane, how many other -- how many
19 aircraft does RED Air lease?

20 A. Four.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Currently four, yeah. Currently four.

23 Q. We had heard three and four and I just wanted to make sure.

24 A. Well, it's four but now you've got to take this one out so
25 it's three.

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. So that's, that's why probably you've been receiving three or
3 four.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. But we've got four, four aircrafts in our OpSpecs.

6 Q. Great.

7 A. And now unfortunately three.

8 Q. How often are you hiring pilots, is it an ongoing thing, does
9 it --

10 A. We've, we've basically had -- we've had two -- also can ask
11 the crew, we've had, two, two events of pilots hiring, once when
12 we were certifying the company and the second time like six, seven
13 months ago when we started making plans for, for the third
14 frequency that we were going to start to Miami to some other
15 routes that we were looking into in the Caribbean, South America,
16 so we started hiring those pilots back in January/December of last
17 month -- last year, sorry.

18 So it's been two, two hiring events. We don't have, we don't
19 have that rotation. We haven't had the need to and both times
20 that we have hired pilots it hasn't been, it hasn't been like we
21 hired one pilot, we've hired motions (ph.) of pilots.

22 Q. How does RED Air stay competitive, if you will, in terms of
23 hiring pilots, what is the draw for a pilot to come work for RED
24 Air versus another operation?

25 A. Well, right now unfortunately the Dominican aviation market

1 it's not -- there's not as many options as here in the United
2 States. We are an attractive company because we have regular
3 flights, we have an interesting growing plan, and I think we have
4 a decent, which we hope we can keep on improving, we have a decent
5 package, salary package.

6 And I think those three combined and the human quality of our
7 team, I think, that makes RED Air a very attractive place to work.

8 Q. How do you -- being a low cost carrier, how do you balance
9 the, you know, profits versus the safety aspect? How, you know,
10 what is, what is sort of your --

11 A. I think, I think the only reason why we are not making any
12 money is because we do not hesitate on everything that has to do
13 with safety and maintenance. So we are all the time spending
14 money on, on everything that needs to be done to make our aircraft
15 safe or profits will come with the growth of the operations, and
16 we have a combined or a mixed commercial strategy to say,
17 commercial and financial strategy.

18 We combine our scheduled flights with an interesting charter
19 scheme of operations because as you're maybe aware, the Dominican
20 Republic is a very interesting country and has two very, very
21 interesting seasons in the year that allow you to carry -- right
22 now we have requests that we can't even attend because of how many
23 flights come in the summer and the December part.

24 Punta Cana right now is receiving like 600 flights a week,
25 for example, so there's, there's a good, there's a good market, so

1 that's, that's how we stay alive, we combine, we combine that.
2 Where the business is that's where we try to be.

3 Q. Is the -- I don't know what the right word is, I don't know
4 whether it's the mission or the goal, and maybe passengers are
5 just passengers but is the goal of RED Air, are you trying to
6 bring the U.S. to the Dominican Republic?

7 Are you trying -- is it to help tourism in the Dominican
8 Republic? Is, you know, your, your main target audience, you
9 know, allowing the Dominican, you know, citizens to travel to
10 other places? What's sort of the --

11 A. If I say that we are bringing people to the Dominican
12 Republic, you say that's unfair, people come alone because our
13 country's so beautiful. We don't need too much. But, yes, of
14 course, that's, that's, that's our target.

15 There is -- I don't, I don't, I don't have the exact numbers
16 but there's an interesting amount of Dominican citizens that live
17 here in the United States, most of them based here in Miami and
18 the other part, and the big part of that is based in New York and
19 Boston, so that's our second target to serve Boston and New York
20 as a future plan.

21 But also there's a lot of people from here, from the United
22 States, traveling to the Dominican Republic and, of course, that's
23 also a target. And at some point we want to have, we want to have
24 operations to Punta Cana, like schedule an operation, a regular
25 operation to Punta Cana and that would be -- I'm kind of sure that

1 would be 95 percent foreign, American passengers, versus five
2 percent from the Dominican because Punta Cana is a tourist
3 destination.

4 Q. Does RED Air have any alliances or partnerships, not
5 necessarily, you know, to the point of like a frequent flyer
6 program but, you know, if I'm coming from New York and I want to
7 go to Dominican, would I -- could I book something that would, you
8 know, have me come to Miami, change planes and get on a RED Air
9 flight, or are the bookings, you know, somebody's just booking
10 Miami to Santo Domingo and back?

11 Like is it -- are you partnered with other airlines where,
12 you know, somebody might fly from another city to Miami to get on
13 one of your flights?

14 A. Yes, yes, yes. We have, we have, we have a partnership with,
15 with Laser in which we do not handle anything of their commercial
16 operations or anything. They have the passengers in, in Dominican
17 Republic and we bring them from Dominican Republic to here to the
18 United States.

19 But there's not an interline agreement, there's not like you
20 can go online and buy it, it's just you do your thing there, you
21 put the passengers here and basically charter them out for you.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 DR. WILSON: Warren, anything else?

25 MR. ABRAMS: Nothing, thank you.

- 1 DR. WILSON: Jim?
- 2 MR. VANDERKAMP: Yeah.
- 3 BY MR. VANDERKAMP:
- 4 Q. Your POI, do you know what I mean?
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. (Indiscernible) in the Dominican Republic.
- 8 Q. Yeah. He's, your POI, FAA POI.
- 9 A. No, I thought you were asking in the Dominican Republic.
- 10 Q. No, the one up here.
- 11 A. I'm sorry.
- 12 Q. Has he been down to see your operation in the Dominican
- 13 Republic?
- 14 A. He, I think he went once at the beginning of the operations.
- 15 I don't remember. He has -- what -- his name is --
- 16 Q. Raphael --
- 17 A. He has, he has a difficult last name, Monitor (ph.).
- 18 Q. Monitor.
- 19 A. Monitor, yeah, yeah, yeah.
- 20 Q. Yeah. And what is the status, the current status of your
- 21 certificate?
- 22 A. Of which certificate, the one in the, in the Dominican
- 23 Republic?
- 24 Q. Or the one here?
- 25 A. It's okay.

1 Q. It's okay.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. What about the Dominican Republic?

4 A. Well, we had and it's getting into -- when, when the accident
5 occurred on Thursday we had a probational, which is something I
6 did, I did not understand, like a probational suspension, not of
7 the -- not of our AOC ranking, just the operation.

8 They say like, okay, don't operate tomorrow or the day after
9 tomorrow. Let us, let us see what's -- a little what's going on,
10 so that's why I'm telling you it's like a questionable decision
11 and they're probably going to kill me when they read this but I
12 have to say it. And but right now, as we speak, the ADAC
13 authorities are here.

14 They're just doing -- checking the two other aircrafts that
15 we have here, the ultra-linear (ph.) 1066 and ultra-linear 1069 to
16 just -- to use the, the relief, like you say, okay, you're good to
17 go and we expect to be operating tomorrow again, we are request.

18 Q. That was my next question, so perfect.

19 A. Tomorrow.

20 MR. VANDERKAMP: Thank you.

21 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Yeah, no problem.

22 DR. WILSON: Sam?

23 MR. GOODWILL: No, thank you.

24 DR. WILSON: Mitch?

25 MR. MITCHELL: No, nothing here.

1 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Okay, sir.

2 DR. WILSON: All right. Well, thank you. We asked you a lot
3 of questions, is there anything that we didn't ask you that we --
4 you were hoping we were going to ask you about?

5 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: No, actually, no. I think we basically
6 went through the things that I would expect you to ask me,
7 basically how -- because I think it's always very important for
8 me, not, not only when I'm sitting speaking to authorities but
9 when I'm speaking to anyone to let them know that -- how we care
10 about our people and our people are the most important things for
11 us.

12 I'm personally here taking care of the situation. I've been
13 talking to my crew almost every single day. I want, I want them
14 to feel backed up. Our pilots were, as you, sir, said, feeling it
15 from the heart and we -- and they need to know that we care about
16 them and that the most important thing is that they're okay.

17 Everything is, is second. Losing an aircraft is something
18 that, that's business and losing, losing money it's losing money
19 but losing somebody, it's something difficult. So if I will have
20 to ask you to ask me something, I would say that how do you feel
21 about the people that work with you and they're basically the most
22 important thing that we have. That's our main asset so, no,
23 that's it.

24 And I'll, of course, just tell you that if there's anything
25 else that you need from me, from the company, just let us know and

1 we will be more than happy to help.

2 DR. WILSON: Great, thank you. And you have our card so if
3 there's anything, you know, that you think of.

4 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: (Indiscernible.)

5 DR. WILSON: Warren's going to give you one of his.

6 MR. ABRAMS: You will have my card.

7 DR. WILSON: If there's anything that you, you know, think
8 of, that you think we need or, you know, you wish that you had
9 told us that you, you forgot about, don't hesitate to --

10 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Perfect.

11 DR. WILSON: -- reach out to us. We really do appreciate
12 your time.

13 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: No, I appreciate yours.

14 DR. WILSON: Thanks so much.

15 MR. GOMEZ MORALES: Thanks.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: MD-82 GEAR COLLAPSE & RUNWAY
EXCURSION ACCIDENT IN MIAMI,
FLORIDA ON JUNE 21, 2022
Interview of Hector Gomez Morales

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA22FA132

PLACE: MIA Executive Tower

DATE: June 23, 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.



Cheryl Farnier Donovan
Transcriber

Interviewee: Jose Luis Gonzalez, MIA Station Manager, RED Air
Representative: Declined
Date/Time: June 23, 2022 / 1615 EDT
Location: MIA Executive Tower
Present: Katherine Wilson, Warren Abrams, Jim VanDerKamp – NTSB; Sam Goodwill – Boeing; Mitch Mitchell – FAA

During the interview Jose Luis Gonzalez stated the following:

As the station manager, his duties included coordinating the operations and conducting administrative duties, such as administrative reports as necessary, for RED Air at MIA. Regarding the operation, he coordinated with the company and also Ultra Aviation Services which worked the counter. He also participated in the daily briefing and debriefing which included information such as number of passengers expected that day. He summarized his role as customer service with the passengers. He reported to the RED Air CEO.

Asked if he ever received any complaints or concerns from passengers regarding safety, he said no. He thought passengers would report any concerns to the supervisor on duty before it would come to him. He clarified that he had not heard any passenger complaints about safety; the complaints or concerns from passengers was about money such as airline fees.

He knew the pilots that flew to MIA, including the accident pilots, but did not really interact with them. His only interaction with the mechanics that flew on each RED Air flight was if there was going to be a delay of the flight; Mr. Gonzalez did not have any technical expertise regarding maintenance. There were not many delays and he thought RED Air had good performance. He was not aware of any flights being cancelled due to maintenance. He did not interact with the FAA and said anything to do with the FAA went to the RED Air headquarters in MIA.

He had been with RED Air about 2 months but had worked at MIA since 1993, first assisting with wheelchair services before becoming a supervisor. He then worked for Aeropostal Airlines, two Bolivian airlines then Aruba Airlines before joining RED Air. He also worked for Ultra Aviation Services but preferred to work for an airline. His position did not require him to fly any observation/familiarization flights on RED Air, but he would occasionally fly on the airline if he had a meeting in the Dominican Republic. He loved his job and he loved working for RED Air.

There was a woman at the MIA headquarters who dealt with any pilot issues while pilots were in MIA such as hotel issues.