

**Docket No. SA-531**

**Exhibit No. 2-Q**

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**

**Washington, D.C.**

Operations Group Chairman  
Interview Summary – Q400 Check Airman  
Dean Nitsos

(35 Pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

\* \* \* \* \*  
Investigation of: \*  
\*  
CRASH OF CONTINENTAL CONNECTION \*  
FLIGHT 3407, OPERATED BY \*  
COLGAN AIR, INC. \* Docket No.: DCA-09-MA-027  
FEBRUARY 12, 2009, 2217 EST \*  
CLARENCE, NEW YORK \*  
\*  
\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: DEAN NITSOS

NTSB, Conference Room C  
429 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, D.C.

Monday  
March 16, 2009

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: ROGER COX

## APPEARANCES:

ROGER COX  
EVAN BYRNE  
National Transportation Safety Board

KEN WEBSTER  
Regional Senior Investigator-Operations Air  
National Transportation Safety Board, Canada

EUGENE CONWAY  
ASI Air Carrier Operations, FAA

CAPTAIN TIM DITTMAR  
Colgan Air

HARLAN SIMPKINS  
Q Series Custom Liaison Pilot  
Bombardier

CAPTAIN MIKE WICKBOLDT  
Air Line Pilots Association

DANE JAQUES, ESQUIRE  
Dombroff Gilmore Jaques & French  
1676 International Drive  
Penthouse  
McLean, VA 22102  
(703) 336-8800  
(703) 336-8750 (fax)

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:45 p.m.)

## INTERVIEW OF DEAN NITSOS

BY MR. COX:

Q. We'll get started on some basic introductory material, then move into some questions. I'll speak first, then Evan, and then we'll go around the room.

A. Okay.

Q. Okay. If at any time you think there's something that we haven't asked that we should know, that you want to bring to our attention, by all means, please bring it up.

A. Okay.

Q. Okay. Just to make sure we're talking to the right person, let's make sure we have your full name, please.

A. Dean Nitsos.

Q. Okay. And your age?

A. Forty-three.

Q. And your current title and position?

A. Check airman.

Q. And check airman in what capacities? More precisely, are you an APD?

A. No, just an IOE in line checks.

Q. IOE in line checks. So I presume that would not extend to similar training?

A. That's correct.

1 Q. And how long have you been a check airman?

2 A. Let's see, it'd be nine months.

3 Q. And prior to that time, did you have any other  
4 responsibilities within the company?

5 A. I was a captain.

6 Q. Line captain. Have you done any training or management  
7 jobs before that, within Colgan?

8 A. Within Colgan, no.

9 Q. And can you tell me when you were hired at Colgan,  
10 please?

11 A. September of 2003.

12 Q. May I have your certificates and ratings, please?

13 A. ATP --

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. -- on the Saab 340 and the Dash 8.

16 Q. ATP. And is that multi and single engine?

17 A. Multi-engine.

18 Q. Multi-engine land. And that would probably be what,  
19 commercial on the single-engine land?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Is that how that works?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Any flight instructors' ratings?

24 A. Not currently.

25 Q. But you have a license, right? I mean a CFI

1 certificate.

2 A. Yeah, the certificate expired.

3 Q. And your flight experience, roughly?

4 A. Are you asking for time?

5 Q. Total time.

6 A. Probably close to 5,000 hours.

7 Q. PIC?

8 A. PIC is 30 -- about 3800.

9 Q. Do you recall how much time you had when you came to  
10 work at Colgan?

11 A. About 1200 hours.

12 Q. And can you tell me what you were doing before you came  
13 to Colgan?

14 A. I was a flight instructor.

15 Q. Um-hum. And where was that?

16 A. In Howell, Michigan.

17 Q. Hollow?

18 A. Howell, H-o-w-e-l-l.

19 Q. Okay. All right. I understand you've been out on some  
20 vacation.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Well, the reason that we wanted to talk to you, because  
23 we understand that you conducted operating experience on several  
24 occasions for Captain Renslow, as I understand, is that correct?

25 A. That's correct.

1 Q. In his transition to the Dash 8. So I'm just asking you  
2 to recall the flights that you took with that operating  
3 experience. Can you give us a synopsis of what you recall about  
4 your experience conducting that OE?

5 A. I remember flying -- I believe we did most of our IOE in  
6 and out of Newark to Columbus. Round trips, I should say.

7 Q. Round trips --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. -- on the 25th of November and again on the 3rd of  
10 December. And then you conducted his line check, that is, at the  
11 conclusion, is that right?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. Okay. Can you give us your general assessment of  
14 Captain Renslow's performance on the OE and the line check?

15 A. Satisfactory.

16 Q. Um-hum. Were there any areas that you thought were,  
17 although satisfactory, perhaps not quite as good as you would like  
18 to see?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Um-hum. Did you fly in icing conditions at all?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Can you recall, when you were flying in icing  
23 conditions, if the deice equipment was used?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And were landings made with the deicing equipment on?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Can you recall a specific instance that you can describe  
3 to me?

4 A. I don't remember if it was coming into Columbus or  
5 Newark, but I know that there was at least one like that we flew,  
6 that we landed with deicing equipment on.

7 Q. Okay. When you landed with the deicing equipment on, do  
8 you recall what the ref speeds were?

9 A. No, I wouldn't remember that.

10 Q. Would you have applied the icing increment to your ref  
11 speeds?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Do you recall at any time, particularly with reference  
14 to approaches, when Captain Renslow, when flying, may have gotten  
15 somewhat slower, close to the low-speed indication?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Um-hum. Were you sitting in the right seat or were you  
18 in --

19 A. The right seat, correct.

20 Q. On the final line check, were there any other observers  
21 on board?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Had you ever flown with Captain Renslow before or since?

24 A. Before, I did.

25 Q. Um-hum. Do you recall when?

1 A. In the summer of 2007.

2 Q. And I guess that would've been on the Saab?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Um-hum. Were you the captain?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Do you recall, on flights with Captain Renslow, those  
7 flights and specifically anything about his performance?

8 A. His performance was good. I don't remember any  
9 specifics.

10 Q. Um-hum. Did you complete any training documents or a  
11 check-ride form on your OEs with Captain Renslow?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Do you know what became of those records?

14 A. They were faxed into the training department.

15 Q. Um-hum. Did you have any remarks on any of the training  
16 records?

17 A. No.

18 Q. I believe that another gentleman also conducted part of  
19 that OE. Did you get a chance to brief him after the first day,  
20 about how it was going?

21 A. Well, I flew with Marvin and I believe it was a four-day  
22 trip.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. And I don't recall if I had any contact with the other  
25 instructor.

1 Q. Okay. So it looks like -- and correct me if I'm wrong  
2 -- that you started off with Marvin and then another check airman  
3 was with him for a while and then you finished him up. Is that  
4 kind of how it worked?

5 A. That's correct.

6 Q. Uh-huh. Did you have any opportunity to talk to the  
7 other check airman either before or after?

8 A. I don't remember if I did or not.

9 Q. No. If you have any issues on an OE that you were  
10 doing, how would you let the other check airman know about it?

11 A. Call him.

12 Q. So in his case, you didn't have to make a call?

13 A. Not that I can remember.

14 Q. All right. Did you know First Officer Shaw, at all?

15 A. No.

16 Q. When you're conducting an OE in this situation,  
17 transitioning to the Q in particular, what areas do you look for,  
18 for special emphasis?

19 A. Can you expand on that?

20 Q. Well, are there things that pilots transitioning onto  
21 the Q need to be especially aware of, that you want to make sure  
22 they understand?

23 A. Well, typically the FMS program is something that we  
24 initially focus on.

25 Q. Do you recall if Captain Renslow had any issues or

1 challenges with using the FMS?

2 A. He was a little slow, but that's typical of anybody  
3 transitioning over to learning the FMS.

4 Q. Do you recall if he used the autopilot a lot?

5 A. We use it frequently and Marvin did as well.

6 Q. Okay. Did you make a point of asking him to hand-fly  
7 any portion of the flight?

8 A. I didn't ask him to but he did, he did hand-fly it.

9 Q. Um-hum. What his usual practice on approaches, in terms  
10 of how long he would use the autopilot?

11 A. I really don't remember.

12 Q. No. What's your usual practice about when you would  
13 continue to use the autopilot on an approach?

14 A. It depends if I'm using flaps 15 or flaps 35 landing.

15 Q. Um-hum. So if you're using a flaps 15 landing, what  
16 would you typically do?

17 A. Typically, once the flaps are selected to 15 and the  
18 autopilot has configured the aircraft, I'll take it from there.

19 Q. So would that be just about glide slope intercept or  
20 after?

21 A. It would be right around there, yeah.

22 Q. Okay. Once you've gotten yourself to your final flap  
23 configuration, what speed do you fly on final?

24 A. Once a final -- say that again.

25 Q. Once you've gotten your final flap selection --

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. -- what speed do you fly on final?

3 A. Well, it depends on what my ref speed is.

4 Q. Well, that's what I meant, relative to ref.

5 A. Relative to ref, it's usually right around ref and 15.

6 Q. Ref plus 15?

7 A. Ref 10. Ref and 10 is what we strive for.

8 Q. Okay. So ref plus 10 you say you strive for. That  
9 would be your --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. -- company approach speed, normally?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. Do you know if that's written guidance or if that's just  
14 a technique?

15 A. I believe it's written. That's what I was taught from  
16 flight safety.

17 Q. Okay. In the company's documents you're issued a  
18 company flight manual and I think this FOPPM. Is it in one of  
19 those two manuals, do you know?

20 A. I don't know if it's there or not.

21 Q. Okay. Did you ever have occasion to discuss with  
22 Captain Renslow what you might do in the event of severe icing on  
23 the tail of the airplane?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Have you seen the NASA video, on recurrent training,

1 regarding tail plane icing?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Is that something that you apply to your daily flying,  
4 in terms of considering the possibility of doing what that video  
5 suggests?

6 A. Can you rephrase the question?

7 Q. Having seen the video, having seen this in training, how  
8 do you apply that training to your day-to-day flying?

9 A. I'm not sure what exactly you're asking.

10 Q. I'm asking you if you see a need to possibly recover  
11 from tail plane icing.

12 A. No, it's never crossed my mind.

13 Q. Okay. Have you ever seen anyone turn on their deicing  
14 equipment while at cruise and they continue to leave it on in  
15 approach, using non-icing ref speeds?

16 A. I haven't seen that, no.

17 Q. So what do you see normally when you have your deicing  
18 equipment on?

19 A. If deicing equipment is on, we program the ACARS to  
20 retrieve the data for the icing speeds.

21 Q. Okay. So if you're exiting icing conditions, what would  
22 be the practice then?

23 A. Well, it depends on the variables at the landing field.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. If I'm anticipating still being in icing conditions,

1 then I will still use the icing equipment on and keep the speeds  
2 bugged appropriately.

3 Q. Um-hum. And if you exit icing conditions and you're  
4 pretty sure you're going to stay out of icing conditions, what  
5 would you do then?

6 A. Well, I'd have to determine if the airplane is clean.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. If it's clean from icing contaminants --

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. -- and I'm above a thousand feet, then I can select to  
11 use regular ref speeds.

12 Q. Okay. Are you familiar with the company's air safety  
13 reporting system?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Have you used it yourself?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Would that include what they call ASAP reports?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. When you submitted an ASAP report, did you ever get any  
20 feedback from NASA/ASRS?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Was the issue that you addressed in that report a  
23 safety-type issue?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay, all right. Well, just out of my own interest in

1 this, would you say that safety oriented reports that are turned  
2 into the company's safety system, that are then forwarded to NASA,  
3 are important to you as an individual, because of the nature of  
4 the safety issues?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Have you ever turned in a NASA-type report yourself, I  
7 mean, that is the traditional ASRS form?

8 A. No, I have not.

9 Q. Are you aware that if you turn in a NASA form yourself,  
10 that you get a reply back from NASA, saying, yes, you know, we did  
11 receive your report? You know, keep this as an indication that  
12 you have in fact filed a report?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. But in the case of the report that you filed through  
15 Colgan's safety system, you didn't get a --

16 A. There's an acknowledgement, yes.

17 Q. Oh, you did get one back?

18 A. Yeah, yeah.

19 Q. Oh, okay.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Have you been to Buffalo recently?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Are you familiar with ILS --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Do you recall if there's any NOTAMS or issues regarding

1 -- ILS?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Do you remember what that is?

4 A. The glide slope is unusable at five degrees right of  
5 course.

6 Q. Do you know why?

7 A. Do I know why?

8 Q. Uh-huh.

9 A. No, I do not know why.

10 Q. At any time going into Buffalo, have you ever  
11 experienced any fluctuations of a glide slope?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Did you have any further contact with Captain Renslow  
14 after you did his --

15 A. I seen him in the crew room on occasion.

16 Q. Did you have any follow-up conversations with him about  
17 any flying issues at all?

18 A. We just had general conversations. You know, everything  
19 seemed to be going well for him.

20 BY MR. BYRNE:

21 Q. Captain, when did you upgrade to captain?

22 A. September '05. Yeah, September '05.

23 Q. What kind of training did the company give you when you  
24 upgraded to captain, as far as making the transition from a right  
25 seat to a left seat in the change of role?

1           A.    Well, we got a whole new bank of simulator training  
2 sessions, as well as a checkride and IOE as well.

3           Q.    What about ground school with respect to CRM or  
4 leadership or how to become a captain and how to act like a  
5 captain?

6           A.    Well, there was ground school, but I don't recall if  
7 there was anything pertaining to how to become a captain.

8           Q.    As far as Captain Renslow, when you flew with him during  
9 IOE, how would you characterize his stick and rudder skills?

10          A.    Satisfactory.

11          Q.    How would you characterize his procedural knowledge?

12          A.    Satisfactory.

13          Q.    How would you characterize his CRM?

14          A.    It was good CRM.

15          Q.    Why do you say it was good?

16          A.    Well, Marvin was always one to be meticulous when it  
17 came to that, because he kept everybody informed.

18          Q.    How assertive was he as a leader in the cockpit?

19          A.    He was very similar to any other captain.

20          Q.    In what way?

21          A.    What do you mean, in what way?

22          Q.    Well, when you say very similar to any other captain, I  
23 don't fly in your airline, I want to hear from you, what you mean  
24 by similar to other captains.

25          A.    Well, I mean, as far as a captain goes, you know, you're

1 responsible for getting the flight out on time and making sure  
2 everybody is where they're supposed to be. So you know, as far as  
3 managing the crew, he always made sure that everybody was where  
4 they were supposed to be and doing what they were supposed to be  
5 doing.

6 Q. What was your knowledge of his past experience in winter  
7 operations?

8 A. I have no knowledge.

9 Q. You didn't talk about it at all as you encountered  
10 things during the IOE? Did he talk about it at all, his  
11 familiarity with winter operations?

12 A. It was normal, as far as I gathered.

13 Q. What was his past experience operating in the northeast?

14 A. I don't know.

15 Q. What stood out about Captain Renslow?

16 A. What do you mean, what stood out?

17 Q. Thinking back on when you flew with him, what made him  
18 stand out in your mind?

19 A. Well, he was very friendly and cordial with everybody he  
20 encountered. He had a very, very well-demeanored personality.

21 Q. How would you characterize his greatest strength as a  
22 pilot?

23 A. Well, again, he was methodical and meticulous when it  
24 came to, you know, being a pilot.

25 Q. And when you flew with him, I think you already

1 mentioned that FMS experience or trying to get those habit  
2 patterns under his belt, what other -- were there any other areas  
3 that needed further refinement or needed further improvement as he  
4 ventured out onto the line?

5 A. None that I can recall.

6 Q. When you were flying with Captain Renslow during IOE,  
7 what stands out with respect to his seat position?

8 A. What do you mean?

9 Q. Did he have a habit of moving his seat forward and aft  
10 in different phases of flight?

11 A. I don't know.

12 Q. Did he express any difficulties that he had adjusting  
13 the seat for his comfort or ability to fly the airplane?

14 A. No.

15 Q. What are your habits as far as seat position when you're  
16 flying the Q400?

17 A. I'm kind of on the short side, so I like to be up near  
18 the controls.

19 Q. Do you adjust it from takeoff to cruise, back to  
20 landing?

21 A. No, it's in the same position.

22 Q. The same position. Do other pilots that you've flown  
23 with adjust it en route or during cruise flight?

24 A. Not that I've noticed.

25 Q. And did I hear you correctly, you flew with him before,

1 on the Saab? You were the captain and he was the first officer?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. How did he change from that time you flew with him, to  
4 when you were flying with him IOE?

5 A. Changes? What are you referring to?

6 Q. What changes did you observe in his abilities as a  
7 pilot?

8 A. His abilities were always solid. He seemed very  
9 experienced as a first officer, as well as when he came over to  
10 captain on the Q.

11 Q. And we've talked a little bit about bugs in icing  
12 conditions. But I guess when you're flying as a captain, what  
13 would you expect from a first officer if the clean speeds have  
14 been bugged on approach and you're in icing conditions and  
15 accumulating ice and the ice protection systems are on?

16 A. I'm sorry, what's the question?

17 Q. Would you expect any challenge or correction from a  
18 first officer, with respect to the speeds that you're selecting to  
19 use as a captain?

20 A. If the speeds are incorrect, I would expect -- if I  
21 didn't catch it, I would expect my first officer to catch it, yes.

22 Q. Did I hear you correctly, that the speeds that you use  
23 in a situation like that would be the ice speeds versus the clean  
24 speeds?

25 A. That's correct.

1 Q. Are you involved or have you been involved in LOSAs here  
2 with the company?

3 A. In what?

4 Q. In the LOSA program.

5 A. I've done safety observation flights.

6 Q. Safety observation flights?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Are those the same as --

9 A. Not the same as LOSA.

10 Q. No the same. What are the safety observation flights?

11 A. Safety observation flights are just that. We're just  
12 observing the flight and the ramp operations to make sure, if  
13 there's any discrepancies, that we would notate them and then it  
14 goes to the flight standards department.

15 Q. We spoke with the manager of flight standards last week  
16 and she mentioned some random observations or focused observations  
17 that happened, I believe, last summer.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. Are those the same as the safety observations?

20 A. I don't know if those are not. I was not involved in  
21 that.

22 Q. Okay. I guess, help me out with the time period of  
23 these safety observations. When did you participate in them?

24 A. I did them in December, I believe. Yeah, it was  
25 December of last year.

1 Q. Was that the first and only time you did them?

2 A. I believe so, yeah.

3 Q. Okay. When you've flown the aircraft, has the -- have  
4 you ever experienced a stick shake or firing when the increased  
5 ref speed switch is on?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Have you heard of that happening on the Q400 fleet at  
8 Colgan?

9 A. No.

10 Q. When did you last see Captain Renslow?

11 A. The week before the accident.

12 Q. Where?

13 A. In the crew room.

14 Q. Anything remarkable from that encounter?

15 A. No.

16 Q. What was he doing?

17 A. I think he was on reserve that day.

18 Q. What time of day was it?

19 A. I don't remember.

20 Q. Did you know if Captain Renslow had a crash pad in the  
21 Newark area?

22 A. I don't know.

23 Q. How would you characterize -- how often do you fly the  
24 line as a captain versus -- do you still fly the line as a  
25 captain?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. How often do you do it?

3 A. Routinely.

4 Q. So you're out flying with first officers?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Characterize the standardization that you see among  
7 first officers.

8 A. What do you mean, characterize it?

9 Q. What variations do you see from one first officer to  
10 another, in terms of procedural adherence, techniques, how they  
11 fly the aircraft? Do you see any of these?

12 A. There are some variances amongst first officers.

13 Q. What types of variances are there? In what form do they  
14 take?

15 A. It really comes down to technique, I guess, pilot  
16 technique. And everybody has their own way of doing things and I  
17 just try to expand their knowledge.

18 Q. Can you give an example?

19 A. Flying an approach. You know, try to avoid any large  
20 power movements.

21 Q. How would characterize the sterile cockpit discipline  
22 among first officers who you fly with?

23 A. It's good.

24 Q. Have you had the opportunity to challenge or correct a  
25 first officer who's deviated from sterile cockpit?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. How do you correct them or how often? How do you  
3 correct them?

4 A. Well, if it's occurring during a sterile cockpit, I  
5 ignore any conversation that they might be trying to strike up and  
6 when we get on the ground I brief them on it, or debrief them.

7 Q. Do you, I guess, raise your level of assertion in the  
8 cockpit, from ignoring the conversation to active confrontation or  
9 challenge, a reminder that what phase of flight the aircraft is  
10 in?

11 A. I've never had to do that.

12 Q. And how would you characterize the frequency with which  
13 you have had to challenge or correct a first officer?

14 A. Rare.

15 Q. Do you fly with first officers from Norfolk and Albany  
16 as well as Newark?

17 A. I wouldn't know where they're based at.

18 Q. Okay. Are you based in Newark?

19 A. Based on Newark, yes.

20 Q. And you commute to Newark?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Are you allowed to sleep in the crew room at Newark?

23 A. No.

24 Q. How do you know that?

25 A. A memo that was generated by the company.

1 Q. Do pilots sleep in the crew room at Newark overnight  
2 instead of having a crash pad?

3 A. Not that I know of.

4 Q. Have you had the opportunity to use the company's sick  
5 -- fatigue policy?

6 A. No.

7 Q. How would you characterize the safety culture at Colgan?

8 A. Well, everybody's obviously very safety oriented and  
9 take it very seriously.

10 Q. What information do you get about safety, from the  
11 company?

12 A. As check airmen we get monthly newsletters, and as  
13 pilots, they also generate a quarterly newsletter as well as any  
14 memos that might be generated from management.

15 Q. The quarterly newsletter that goes out to all pilots,  
16 what's that called?

17 A. I don't know what it's called.

18 Q. Do pilots talk about it after an issue has been  
19 released? Do you hear chatter on the line, among the pilots that  
20 you fly with?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. When was the last issue?

23 A. I really don't remember what the last issue was.

24 Q. Do you remember the content of the last issue?

25 A. No.

1 Q. What about the monthly -- is it a monthly check airmen  
2 newsletter?

3 A. Yeah, there's a monthly check airmen newsletter.

4 Q. What was the content of the last monthly check airmen  
5 newsletter?

6 A. I believe it was just pertaining to procedural  
7 documentation for IOE.

8 MR. BYRNE: Okay. Captain, thank you. That's all I've  
9 got for now.

10 MR. COX: Mike, you're up.

11 BY MR. WICKBOLDT:

12 Q. Hey, Dean, have you ever referenced or reviewed the AOM  
13 or AFM while you're in flight?

14 A. Yes.

15 MR. WICKBOLDT: That's all I've got, thanks.

16 MR. COX: Gene?

17 MR. CONWAY: No questions, Dean.

18 MR. COX: Ken?

19 BY MR. DITTMAR:

20 Q. I just want to clarify. Before, you were talking about  
21 your autopilot usage. You said that you disconnect at the final  
22 approach fix, usually. Now is that IMC or VMC or both?

23 A. It could be either or. That's not how I always do it.

24 MR. DITTMAR: All right, that's it. I don't have any  
25 other questions.

1 MR. COX: That's it? Ken, are you with us?

2 BY MR. WEBSTER:

3 Q. Yes, I am. Just a couple quick questions. I didn't  
4 quite catch when your initial type cert on the Q400 was.

5 A. November 2007.

6 Q. Was that 2007?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. And do you know -- where was that?

9 A. In Seattle.

10 Q. Did you have FlightSafety instructors for that or Colgan  
11 instructors?

12 A. For the checkride or for the training?

13 Q. For the training.

14 A. For the training it was FlightSafety.

15 Q. Okay. During your training, was a pusher ever  
16 demonstrated to you?

17 A. I believe it was demonstrated, yes.

18 Q. Okay. Do you recall what portion of the training and  
19 what lesson plan?

20 A. I don't recall.

21 Q. Okay. Approach to stalls, were they in any lesson plan?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Do you recall what lesson plan?

24 A. No, I do not.

25 Q. Do you recall the procedure that was taught to you, to

1 recover?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Do you remember what it is? Can you state it?

4 A. Yeah, it's power to the D tent. And at the first sign  
5 of positive rate it's gear up, and at flap retraction speed we'll  
6 call for the flaps to zero.

7 Q. Okay. How about any instruction on heading and  
8 altitude?

9 A. Maintaining heading and minimal loss on the altitude.

10 Q. Okay. And was there any guidance given you about a  
11 pitch attitude to hold for that?

12 A. Well, initially relax the pressure on the yoke and then  
13 we're trying for 10 degrees pitch attitude.

14 Q. Okay. Does that differ from any other training you  
15 received on the Q400 in recurrent training?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Have you ever had the opportunity or during -- let's go  
18 back to your initial training again. Were you given icing  
19 scenarios during your training?

20 A. I don't recall.

21 Q. Did you ever have to land with the ref -- increase ref  
22 switch on during your training?

23 A. I don't recall.

24 MR. WEBSTER: Okay, that's all I have, thank you.

25 MR. COX: Harlan?

1 BY MR. SIMPKINS:

2 Q. Okay, I have a question about sterile cockpit. How do  
3 you personally define sterile cockpit?

4 A. Well, it's only pertinent conversation regarding the  
5 safety of the flight below 10,000 feet or while taxiing.

6 Q. Okay. And you discussed that -- can you just tell me  
7 again how you would enforce that? I believe you said you'd just  
8 ignore what they were talking about --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- the first officer?

11 A. Yeah, I mean, it's been very rare that it's come up, but  
12 you know, if it's ever broken, it's, you know, just silence says  
13 it all.

14 Q. Okay. When was the last time you flew into Buffalo?

15 A. A week and a half ago.

16 Q. That was after the accident?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. What were the weather conditions like?

19 A. I don't remember what the weather conditions were like.  
20 I've been in and out of there several times since the accident.

21 Q. Okay. In the several times that you've been in and out  
22 of Buffalo since the accident, has there been an occasion where  
23 the weather has been fairly clear, that you could see the ground  
24 from five miles back from the beacon?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Upon any of these flights that you've done recently into  
2 Buffalo, was there any time that you discussed the accident on  
3 this flight?

4 A. No.

5 Q. On any of these flights, did you ever attempt to view  
6 where the ground impact site was?

7 A. No.

8 MR. SIMPKINS: I have no further questions.

9 MR. COX: I've got a couple. Do you, Evan?

10 MR. BYRNE: No.

11 BY MR. COX:

12 Q. Okay, just to kind of just try to recapitulate a couple  
13 of things, as I've been able to think here a little bit. Would  
14 you characterize Colgan's checklist procedures as either challenge  
15 and response or read and do?

16 A. Challenge and response.

17 Q. That would pretty much true from before start through  
18 the FLN check?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Do you have any silent checklists?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Could you tell me what they are?

23 A. The climb checklists and after-landing checklists.

24 Q. Does the captain or the pilot flying call for the  
25 checklist even if it's silent?

1 A. The pilot flying will call for it.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Unless it's the after landing, then it's the captain.

4 Q. And then does the person -- the checklist state that  
5 it's complete?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Do you have stabilized approach criteria at  
8 Colgan?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Can you briefly tell me what that is?

11 A. On glide path and minimal inputs for correction to  
12 latitude or pitch --

13 Q. Um-hum.

14 A. -- to maintain the glide path and speeds no greater than  
15 VRF and 20.

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. And configured before a thousand feet IMC and 500 feet  
18 in VMC.

19 Q. Is there any program for managing pilots who may have a  
20 little marginal proficiency issue at Colgan?

21 A. I don't know.

22 Q. You don't know. Did you ever have anybody on an IOE  
23 that simply didn't complete it or that you felt was not  
24 satisfactory during the time that you were with them?

25 A. No.

1 Q. And that would include new hire first officers as well?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Does Colgan ask you, as an IOE check airman, to evaluate  
4 captains' ability to supervise a less-experienced new hire pilot?

5 A. Can you rephrase that or repeat it, I guess? I didn't  
6 quite understand it.

7 Q. When you're giving IOE to a captain on the airplane,  
8 you're obviously highly experienced on the airplane. So your  
9 interaction with that captain would naturally be somewhat  
10 different than that captain when he's interacting with a brand new  
11 person who had just come into Colgan and was newly hired. Do you  
12 or does Colgan specifically train captains on techniques for  
13 supervising less-experienced pilots?

14 A. Not that I'm aware of.

15 Q. When captains are transitioning to the Q at Colgan, does  
16 anyone evaluate them in terms of whether they might be suitable  
17 for transitioning to that airplane?

18 A. Can you repeat that again?

19 Q. All the captains that come onto the Q, come from another  
20 airplane at Colgan.

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Is that done purely on a bid basis?

23 A. I don't know what the process is for how they pick.

24 Q. Does anyone at Colgan attempt to evaluate those pilots  
25 who are transitioning to the Q, in terms of whether they have

1 adequate skills or proficiency to do that?

2 MR. JAQUES: I'm going to object. It calls for him to  
3 speculate and he said he was unaware of the process.

4 BY MR. COX:

5 Q. Well, just do you know?

6 A. I don't know. I'm sure there is, but I don't know what  
7 the process is or who's involved.

8 Q. Um-hum. During the time that you were conducting IOE  
9 with Captain Renslow, did he ever try to correct you for anything  
10 he felt you weren't doing?

11 A. No, not that I can remember.

12 Q. Did you ever omit anything on a checklist or overlook  
13 anything as an attempt to determine whether he was watching you?

14 A. Yes, I do do that.

15 Q. Um-hum. Do you recall how he did or what that was?

16 A. He caught them.

17 Q. What was it?

18 A. I don't recall. Typically, it's something simple, of  
19 maybe a light switch in the wrong position, on an after-landing.

20 MR. COX: Okay. Very well. Anyone else?

21 BY MR. BYRNE:

22 Q. Just a quick follow-up on the IOE with Captain Renslow.  
23 When you were the pilot flying and he was the pilot monitoring,  
24 how did he perform there?

25 A. He did well.

1           Q.    Anything stand out or anything remarkable about his  
2 performance as a monitoring pilot?

3           A.    No, he did everything he was supposed to do.

4           MR. BYRNE:   Thank you.

5           MR. COX:    Okay, thank you.   That's it.

6                   (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled matter  
7 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:           CRASH OF CONTINENTAL CONNECTION  
                                  FLIGHT 3407, OPERATED BY  
                                  COLGAN AIR, INC.  
                                  FEBRUARY 12, 2009, 2217 EST  
                                  CLARENCE, NEW YORK  
                                  Interview of Dean Nitsos

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-09-MA-027

PLACE:                    Washington, D.C.

DATE:                     March 16, 2009

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to  
the recording accomplished at the hearing.

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Timothy Atkinson  
Official Reporter