



**NTSB** National Transportation Safety Board

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*Office of Aviation Safety*

# Operations

Captain Roger Cox

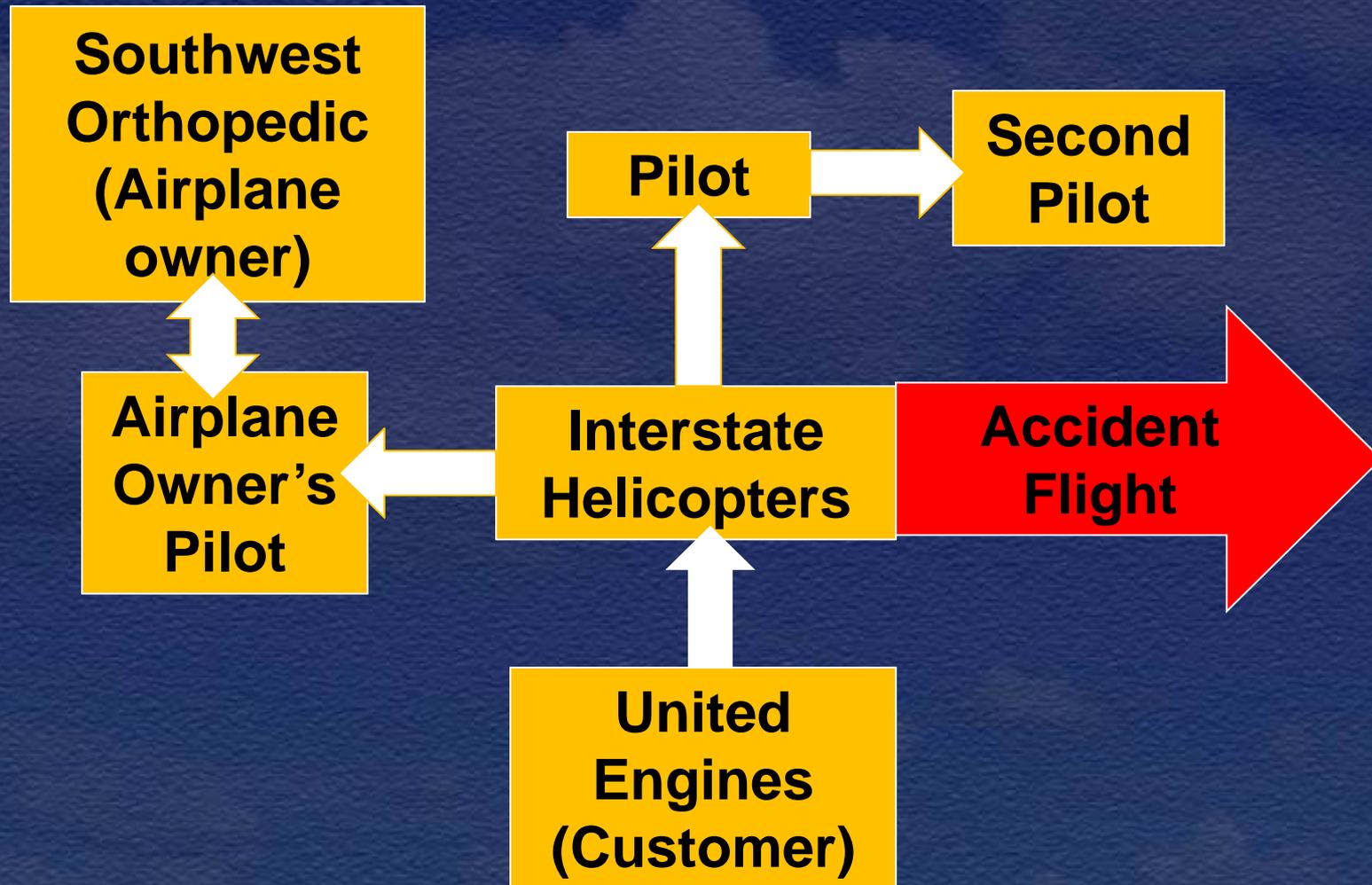
# Identity of the Operator

- Revenue passengers on board
- No one claimed to be operator
- Multiple entities involved in initiation, authorization, and operation

# Entities Involved

- Southwest Orthopedic - airplane owner
- Owner's pilot / airplane manager
- Interstate Helicopters - Part 135 helicopter operator
- Accident pilot
- Second pilot
- Passengers - United Engines

# Relationship of Entities



# The Pilot

- Accident flight conducted outside his regular employment
- Chief pilot at another company
- Qualified to fly Cessna 500 as single pilot under Part 91

# The Second Pilot

- Accident flight outside his regular employment
- Normally flew piston twin, ran flight school
- No record that he was trained on or current in Cessna 500

# Pilots' Qualifications

- Neither pilot employed by Part 135 operator
- Neither pilot trained under Part 135
- Neither would have been able to fly a clearly identified commercial flight
- Crew awareness of commercial nature of flight unknown

# Southwest Orthopedic (Owner)

- Received hourly rate when airplane used by others
- Believed airplane was “dry leased”
- Could not explain “dry lease” or “operator”
- Had no written or verbal lease agreements

# 14 CFR 91.23: Truth in Leasing

- Apply to airplanes more than 12,500 pounds
- Expanded use of airplanes weighing less for charter operations
- May operate without FAA knowledge of lease agreements

# United Engines (Passengers)

- Believed accident flight was commercial charter
- Stated that they did not lease
- Had used Interstate Helicopters for airplane flights multiple times
- Stated that Interstate Helicopters' prices were cheaper than other airplane charter operators

# Interstate Helicopters

- Part 135 helicopter operator
- No airplanes on certificate
- “Put the [accident] flight together”

# Interstate Helicopters

- Invoiced United Engines for airplanes as “lease” and “sales demo” flights
- Paid airplane’s owner for use of airplane
- Invoicing disguised flights, circumvented operating certificate

# Recommendation Areas

- Responsibilities of each of four main entities involved in accident flight
- FAA oversight

# FAA Oversight

- OKC FSDO reported staffing issues, inspector turnover
- FAA ramp checks were rare
- OKC FSDO investigated complaints about Interstate, found no basis

# FAA Oversight

- Special Emphasis Inspection
  - Purpose: Detect improper operations
  - No major issues found at Interstate

# FAA Enforcement Action

- Interstate Helicopters' Part 135 certificate revoked September 2008
- Interstate Helicopters reached settlement with FAA, gained new Part 135 certificate in January 2009



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