Hello and welcome to episode 241 of AvTalk. I am Ian Petchenik, here, as always with –

Jason Rabinowitz. How's it going, Ian?

It's going well, Jason. How are you sir?

That's good. I'm also good. Thank you. Had a nice little stint of travel and I'm happy to be home.

Yeah. I mean, there are lots of things going on. You were multiple places this week, even before we recorded. Good for you.

Thank you.

How was your adventure? I know last weekend, you popped down to Florida for a minute or two and then you were in Dulles. You just missed the pandas at Dulles by a day.

I did. I did literally the only exciting thing to happen at Dulles and maybe decades and I miss it by a day and it went right by literally right down the road in front of where our office previously was, unfortunately, which is just icing on the cake. Yeah, I was down in Florida with friend of the show, Ned Russell, to ride Brightline, the new train that opened at Orlando's airport that goes all the way down to Miami, and that was a fun time. Bit odd to take a day trip from New York down to Orlando and then fly back up from Miami in the same day. I did it and it was an adventure, let's say.

Go on.
[0:01:30] JR: Okay. Well, I flew Spirit both ways. From LaGuardia down to Orlando and then Spirit again, back up from Miami up to LaGuardia. It was cheap. It was very cheap. The price was right. It was hundreds of dollars less than anything else. I always say, if you know what you're getting into with Spirit, you're going to have a fine time. So long as everyone else around you also knows what the deal is and what's going to happen. That wasn't really the issue.

It was a 6.30 am flight Sunday morning out of LaGuardia. Very early first flight of the day for the crew, the aircraft. The aircraft was there overnight. You think everything is going to be fine. The flight usually operates almost always half an hour ahead of schedules. They push back early, they close the door. There's no one else out there at LaGuardia, so they block in half an hour early. I am sitting in row one, as I do on Spirit, because I bought up to the big front seat for how much do you think I paid, Ian?

[0:02:28] IP: Oh. I mean, the going rate was usually 40 bucks, but that was years ago. I would say 50.

[0:02:35] JR: I paid outright during booking, $40 for the return flight, so you nailed that. On the way down, I bid for an upgrade to the big front seat for $16. $16, which I'm pretty sure is the cheapest seat on the plane if that bid goes through. I don't think you can get a seat on Spirit that cheap. Anyway, I'm sitting at the front of the plane, so I can overhear all of the chatter between the ground crew, the flight crew, the cabin crew. There's also right in front of me is the flight attendant information screen, basically, that if you've ever been on an Airbus, any modern Airbus, you turn A320, at least you right as you enter the aircraft just to the left on the bulkhead wall, there's a computer display and it has all sorts of vital stats about the aircraft.

The audio message they can play, the lights, the door, the temperature, smoke protection, all that. It just so happened to be on the water waste screen of that display. I'm staring at that noticing, huh, the waste quantity meter is already at 70% for the first flight of the day. There's a message that says, "Waste tank, not empty. Check level ground surface required." I'm thinking to myself, I feel like that's going to cause a problem. Lo and behold, five minutes later, one of the flight attendants sees that and goes, "Huh, that's probably not right." The cabin comes out and looks at that. They're arguing back and forth. Maybe not arguing. They're conversing back and forth with the ground crew like, "Hey, this plane's been here overnight. What's going on?"
They go, “Oh, well, we tried doing it last night and it didn't really work. We'll get a mechanic and we’ll get another ground service vehicle out there. We'll try to do it again.” A couple minutes later, I can see the waste quantity meter going a little up, a little down, a little up, a little down and then something's not really going right. Then all of a sudden, the quantity drops to zero very quickly, as if there was something wrong with the meter telling us how much waste was actually in the waste tank. A few minutes later, the captain comes back onboard. He was outside overseeing what was going on. He goes, it is and I'm going to clean the language up here. It is a scene down there.

Apparently, what happened is the ground servicing truck they used had some issue. For lack of better terminology, it exploded on the ramp. Anything that was in the waste tank of this, the 70% full waste tank on the A320 –

[0:04:56] IP: 70% full.

[0:04:58] JR: - was now either in the truck, on the truck, or on the ramp all around the aircraft. Thankfully, it doesn't seem like anyone got a shower of any sort. But the captain came on with this look of like, “It is a mess down there. I can't believe what's going on.” Thankfully, there were no injuries, no machinery issues of any sort. They were able to, I don't know, shovel everything out of the way and get us pushed back about 20 minutes late. That's too much for 6.30 in the morning.

[0:05:25] IP: I mean, to me, there are a couple of things here. One, that, I mean, I assume Spirit doesn't service the waste tank on the A320 after every flight.

[0:05:35] JR: No.

[0:05:37] IP: I guess, I'm now very curious as to how much the tank fills up after each flight. How many flights can they go without having it serviced? Then two, you only left 20 minutes late.
[0:05:50] **JR:** Yeah, it wasn't so bad. I guess, that's the benefit of being 6.30 in the morning on a Sunday. There's really not much else going on. There are probably other aircraft at that hour that need any mechanical, or servicing, especially since they're not getting any other inbound aircraft yet, so they're not servicing anything. They probably could have operated the flight with the waste tank at about 70%. I've been told by some other professionals, but they didn't seem to want to do that. Or maybe they would have had it not been able to be serviced, or maybe they would have just told us to please hold it in until we get to Orlando.

[0:06:27] **IP:** Oh, I hope your return flight was a bit less eventful.

[0:06:30] **JR:** Yeah, it was fine. We did have a belligerent passenger, also on the poopa plane, I'm now going to call it. But the flight back out of Miami was great. Extremely uneventful. Miami is the worst airport, I think, I've ever been to and the worst major airport, at least the concourse that houses Spirit Frontier and unfortunately, United. It is whatever LaGuardia used to be. It is now located brick by brick down in Miami. Truly off.

[0:06:56] **IP:** They didn't rebuild LaGuardia. They just moved it to Miami.

[0:06:58] **JR:** They moved it brick by brick to Miami and called it Concourse G.

[0:07:02] **IP:** There you go. Well, you made it back and that's a good thing, because we've got a lot to talk about this week. We'll start with a follow up to last week's news, which was a Delta pilot being indicted on charges of interfering with the flight crew, because he threatened the captain with a gun on the flight deck if the captain diverted the aircraft due to a medical emergency.

If that wasn't story enough for you, it gets somehow worse, because it turns out that this particular person who has now been charged with a federal crime is also a lieutenant in the Air Force Reserve.

[0:07:50] **JR:** Actively deployed with the Air Force Reserve.
Deployed to Ramstein Air Base in Germany, as he was in training at the 603rd Air Operations Center at the base. A spokesperson for the US Air Forces in Europe confirms that he was there, confirms that the base will not be impacted, and confirms that this man's access to sensitive information and the center's sensitive facilities have been suspended pending the outcome of the judicial proceedings.

We learned about this, first, from a listener last week who emailed us and said, “Hey, did you see that there's filings in the docket that say this person can't make the arraignment and the arraignment has been moved?” I clicked on that and it turns out that the arraignment has been delayed, because he is in Germany, and they need to get him back from Germany. We'll now have to wait until January for the arraignment to learn more about what the government is alleging done did on the flight deck.

It definitely, the whole situation raises many more questions than we have answers. We have no answers, but we have a lot more questions. We do already know that it was quite a while between the incident and when the indictment was unsealed, or made public. We don't know if the incident was reported right away, or if the captain waited a while, or what took so long for this indictment to go through. If there were pending investigation, or charges, or whatever against the copilot here is why he was able to be actively deployed, because I have been told the military does background checks to see if there's any pending, I guess, litigation or criminal charges against anyone being deployed.

It's a very interesting situation, because clearly, somebody knew, because Delta had either fired the pilot, or he had quit, or something had happened here. I guess, we're going to have to wait until January to get a little more clarity on this extremely odd situation.

Yeah, especially to figure out the timeline of the investigation and the process here. Just, we'll keep on it and see what we see. Not for nothing, but the NTSB is planning on holding a pilot mental health roundtable in December, the first of multiple events. This was announced by Jennifer Homendy, who's the chair of the NTSB during a speech at the beginning of this week. Speaking at the Air Traffic Control Association's Global Aviation Conference. She says, “It's somewhat of an open secret that current rules incentivize people to either lie about their medical history when it comes to mental health, or to avoid seeking help in the first place.”
This is something that we’ve talked about in the context, not just of last week’s episode, but also, the week before that, when we talked about the Alaska Airlines pilot trying to shut down the Horizon Air E175. Homendy continues on that she's frankly concerned about the safety consequences of a system that unintentionally shames and silences people who are struggling. The NTSB is taking it seriously. That's all well and good. But as we’ve talked about in episodes past, and I think it's worth mentioning again, the NTSB's role is a safety organization and a safety organization alone. They can make recommendations to the FAA, but the NTSB themselves cannot implement policy that is then binding on airlines, or pilots, or anything like that. It'll have to come from the FAA.

This is good to see that the NTSB is taking it seriously, but it would be even better if the FAA were perhaps doing this and taking the lead on this, because they have the power to make the changes.

[0:11:48] JR: Yeah, the same is actually happening tomorrow as David Shepardson from Reuters obtained tomorrow's testimony for the near miss hearings. There's a bunch of hearings and panels going on. The NTSB is real clear to say, "We do not have the authority to promulgate operating standards, or do we certificate organizations, individuals or equipment. Instead, we advance safety through our investigations and recommendations." It goes on and on and on basically saying, “FAA, wake up and do something.” It's very much the same here.

Again, this is not an FAA standalone issue. This is a global issue of mental health, specifically with pilots of aircraft. This is not a US centric. This is not an FAA specific thing. But it is very refreshing to hear somebody, that the head of the NTSB get involved in this and say, “We have to do something, otherwise, safety could be jeopardized.”

[0:12:41] IP: Yeah. Jason, we talked about an error return for a Titan Airways A321neo. Shortly after it happened, we didn't really know much then. But we know a lot more now. What we know is not what we thought it was going to be. The UK AIB put out a special bulletin last week that said the damage to the Titan Airways A321neo that had up until a few months ago been operating as an aircraft for the United Kingdom's government, specifically carrying the king and
queen, that aircraft had been reconverted into their VIP configuration and going into the TCS world travel world tour, highfalutin world tour mode.

They were flying it from London to Orlando to pick up that leg of the tour. It departed Stansted Airport, and shortly after departure in the climb at about 10,000 feet, there were multiple staff members onboard, and one of the staff members onboard happened to be a loadmaster. The loadmaster was walking to the cabin not long after takeoff and heard excessive cabin noise and noticed that one of the window seals had been damaged. They stopped their climb. They made it up to 14,500 feet. They came back to Stansted, they landed and they realized that multiple windows had been damaged.

The AAIB, the airline conducted an investigation. They took the aircraft apart and they looked at those windows and they said, “Huh, there's a lot of melty bits here. What could have happened?”


[0:14:30] IP: Well, it turns out after they converted the aircraft back into the VIP configuration, after they repainted everything, they decided that it would be a good thing to do to use the aircraft for a film shoot. Now, what we don't know is whether or not this was a commercial for the airline, whether it was an external film shoot of something, or else, but there were large high-powered lights used to simulate a sunrise that were placed close to the aircraft on both sides of the aircraft.

On the left side of the aircraft, on the day before the aircraft flew, those lights were left powered on for hours on end, simulating the sunrise. Well, they also not in a simulated fashion, but in a very real fashion, melted the plane.

[0:15:25] JR: Yes. The AAIB put out a lovely report with lots of nice photos. They said, the lights were first shown on the right side of the aircraft for approximately five and a half hours with the light focused on the cabin windows just after the overwing exits. The lights were then moved to the left side of the aircraft where they illuminated a similar area on the left side for approximately four hours. The photos are great. You could see the very impressive looking lights. The light
array. It's not even lights. It's an array of lights that I assume they're LED, but I guess, they were halogen, or some sort of other old-fashioned high energy, very heat-intensive light that would start to explain things a little more clearly.

[0:16:06] IP: Yeah. So, we've got a blog post up that includes both the flight path, as well as some of the photos from the UK AAIB's report. Just very interesting to see the damage on the windows. Four total windows were damaged. One had a displaced pane, inner pane, and rubber seal. Two after that damaged window lost the outer pane. Then there was a fourth window where the seal was raised up. All four windows were the first four windows aft of the overwing exits on this particular aircraft.

Just the safety bulletin is interesting, because it lays out all of these and talks about the seals and the melting points and all the tests are doing. At the end, they're basically like, “We should probably come up with some better solutions for using high-powered hot lights next to an airplane.”

[0:16:59] JR: They even gave the parameters for the lights themselves to say, the lighting capacity was 12,000 watts. The object to be illuminated should be a minimum distance of 10 meters away from those lights. The maximum surface temperature should be 200 Celsius. Then they go out to say, “Well, it's likely the flood lights were positioned closer than 10 meters. That's probably why there was damage.”

[0:17:19] IP: I mean, I'm looking at the picture right now, and they were definitely closer than 10 meters.

[0:17:23] JR: Yes. They were definitely closer than 10 meters. They were pretty much as close as you're going to get without putting them in board of the engines. A couple people have asked, well, if these lights are shining on the aircraft and it's hot, why don't windows melt when an aircraft is left out on the sun? It's a good point. You have to remember, this is an array of six extremely powerful 12,000-watt total amount of energy shining on a very, very specific part of the aircraft. Very centralized to three or four windows. It's basically like, if you take a magnifying glass and try to burn an ant with the sun, you shouldn't do that. That's basically what they did to this poor aircraft.
When I read the AAIB report, I thought to myself, huh, I have a vague recollection of this happening before. This seems familiar, and indeed, it is familiar, because it has happened before, and not all that long ago. When Turkish Airlines took delivery of one of its first 787-9s, it did the same thing. It had a photoshoot for its brand-new aircraft and proceeded to melt some of the exterior windows. Thankfully, they noticed that before the aircraft had a chance to go back into service and operate a passenger flight, but this has happened before. When the AAIB says, “We should probably set some standards on how you light an aircraft for an event such as this,” there is now precedent at least twice in the last few years saying that, yeah, maybe that's a good idea.

[0:19:00] IP: We'll keep an eye out for the final report, because maybe we'll learn even more about the lights.

[0:19:04] JR: Do it in winter.

[0:19:05] IP: There you go.

[0:19:06] JR: It's a little colder.

[0:19:09] IP: I don't think that that would make a difference. Okay, for a long time, we had a weekly MAX, 737 MAX update when the MAX was grounded. Now it seems like, we have a weekly Pratt & Whitney 1100G engines update, and this week is no different. This week, we learned a few things. One, Indigo will ground 30 jets in 2024. At any one time, they're going to have 30 jets on the ground, which is, I mean, rough. They say, they're pushing forward with capacity and they'll be impacted, but their schedule will still run. Lufthansa will have 20 on the ground each day. 20 aircraft that is. Not 20 engines.

[0:19:54] IP: Is that Lufthansa or Lufthansa Group?

[0:19:57] IP: That is unclear. This was quoting Carson Spore speaking during the Lufthansa Group's earnings. We may have been speaking about Lufthansa Group. I guess, that would include the Swiss and –

[0:20:15] IP: Well, they just got there first, so they wouldn't be affected, but –


[0:20:19] IP: That's true. At this point, you never know. Things are still getting worse as the inspection regime becomes clear. Air New Zealand is suspending its service to Hobart and will have one to four aircraft on the ground during 2024 at any one time.

[0:20:37] JR: It doesn't sound like much, but they don't have a potato –

[0:20:40] IP: They don't have that many.

[0:20:40] JR: - orange fleet.

[0:20:42] IP: On the flip side, I don't know if this is the total flip side, but in the somewhat, hey, here's a fringe benefit column, Embraer has a Portuguese maintenance unit. That unit is going to be working on the Pratt & Whitney PW 1000GQ turbofan engines. There, I don't know if the word excited is apt, but they're forecasting a tripling of revenues at the Portuguese MRO, because of all the work that they're expected to bring in from the Pratt & Whitney engines.

[0:21:19] JR: Okay, good for them. They're not the newest generation of Embraers powered by GTF. This isn't exactly a best seller. But apparently, maintenance of other aircraft with those engines is a huge source of revenue. That's great for them.

[0:21:32] IP: Our final update on this one doesn't deal with Pratt & Whitney engines at all, because China Eastern has chosen the CFM Leap 1A to power its A320neo family aircraft order. I'm not sure if it has anything to do with the Pratt & Whitney engine issues, or if they just think that the CFM Leap 1A is better for them. I threw it in there just to see what sticks, so they will not be taking the Pratt & Whitney engines on their A320neo family orders.
[0:22:00] JR: Good move, probably.

[0:22:03] IP: Probably. At least for now. Jason?


[0:22:09] IP: You are thinking about changing careers and running a very particular airline.

[0:22:14] JR: I can't tell you about it though, because it's a secret, and you can't see it. You'll never see it. You'll never fly it. You'll never know where it goes. You might hear about it, but if you've ever heard of the airline, or the operation known as Janet, now might be your chance to operate the extremely secretive US Air Force outfit that runs out of Las Vegas' airport to classified destinations, not really classified, but secret locations, we all know where it goes. If you don't, look it up and end up on some US government watch list.

[0:22:47] IP: That's a good idea. Encourage your listeners to end up on a watch list.

[0:22:51] JR: Yeah, let's encourage them. Look up Janet. They operate a fleet of, or they own, I guess, outright a fleet of Boeing 737-600s. The US government is looking for a new operator of the type for some reason. This comes to us from Aviation Week. Apparently, it has been long operated by whomever EG&G is who has been acquired by URS Corp and AECOM. I know some of those names. But apparently, the Air Force wants someone new to operate its fleet of 737-600s to spooky, scary, classified places out in the desert of Nevada. That could be an interesting opportunity.

I can't help but wonder if maybe this ends up as some offshoot of a US commercial airline, or some other commercial airline that happens to operate that type. There aren't all that many, I guess, airlines out there that might be interested in this, but it would be very interested to hear like, welcome aboard this Janet 737-600 operated by Mesa Airlines. I don't know.

[0:23:57] IP: I mean, you get a fleet of, what? Six 737-600s. You have to operate 9,000 flights a year.
[0:24:11] JR: It's a big operation. A lot more flights than I thought. But apparently, you'll operate a lot of flights, but never more than 300 miles, according to the Air Force, which is just a very unique and interesting opportunity.

[0:24:25] IP: Yeah. Going back to the EG&G bit, the original operators of the Janet fleet, if you don't know about them, they had a hand in pretty much everything that was super-duper secret that the US government worked on from World War II onwards. Very interesting history. There's a couple good books. I'll have to think of the title and then put them in the show notes about EG&G's history, because they had their fingers in like, the lesser known – like, everybody knows Northrop Grumman, Lockheed and etc., etc. EG&G had a very strong hand in a lot of very super-duper secret stuff. It's an interesting history.

[0:25:11] JR: Well, Janet is definitely super, super secret, but it's also one of the most public in your face, super, super secrets that you really can't miss if you happen to be in Las Vegas.

[0:25:20] IP: I don't know what you're talking about.

[0:25:22] JR: Never seen it. Never heard of it. If the US government is listening, there is no Janet.

[0:25:29] IP: All right. Airlines that do exist, but slots that don't.

[0:25:34] JR: Hey, that was good.

[0:25:36] IP: I'll take it. When JetBlue first received permission to fly to Amsterdam from Schiphol Airport, or the slot coordinator at Schiphol Airport, the first slots they received, they denounced as commercially non-viable, which, I mean, true, mostly. Now, they have no slots at all, because of the massive cuts that Schiphol has put into place.

[0:26:00] JR: Is it Schiphol that put it into place, or the Dutch government?

[0:26:03] IP: The Dutch government is forcing the airport to put into place. They now just don't have slots at all. They're very, very upset.
[0:26:14] JR: Yeah. I think we talked about this before, where JetBlue threatened that it would proceed with legal action, “if we're kicked out of Amsterdam, because we have this open skies agreement, we're going to petition the US DOT to make sure that KLM loses access to JFK, because it's also a slot controlled airport.” That argument at first seemed pretty ridiculous, but it seems like, the DOT is buying into it, at least in theory, the idea of maybe we need to do something to move the needle with the Dutch government. In this case, I think for the first time ever, I might be wrong on that, but maybe for the first time ever, the US DOT has asked KLM to submit its winter or upcoming summer schedule with the DOT, which I don't think is something that they have done before.

Maybe we will see that the giant that is the DOT wake up and do something to help JetBlue, or probably not the other airlines that were also unfortunately kicked out of Amsterdam, probably just for JetBlue here, but this is not over.

[0:27:15] IP: No, it's certainly not over. The DOT is negotiating with the Dutch government. They have initiated consultations with the Netherlands and EU, while they try and figure out what's going on here. Who knows where this stops, but it's certainly gotten a lot more interesting this week. The DOT basically agreed with JetBlue, as well as Airlines for America, which is the airline's trade group that the Netherlands didn't follow the approach that they were supposed to as required by EU regulations.

The Dutch government has said that they're trying to reduce noise at Schiphol, so they're cutting flights. The DOT is saying, “Well, our agreement, the EU regulations and our open skies agreements say that the competitive impact of any noise related operational restrictions needs to be balanced against less restrictive alternatives.” This goes back to the fact that KLM has consistently argued that we're going to be less noisy, just because we have newer aircraft. We don't need to cut flights. It seems like the DOT, US DOT is buying into a bit of this. They have also raised some competition concerns saying, well, JetBlue got cut out completely and will receive absolutely no slots, whatsoever.
I wouldn't be surprised if we see some negotiated adjustment to this, but it's not clear what the DOT can force them to do for JetBlue, rather than what they can do to reciprocate the lack of slots given to JetBlue.

[0:29:06] JR: Yeah. We will definitely keep a close watch on this, because I'm not going to say it's unprecedented, but it's certainly something we have not seen in such a major scale at such a major airport. Remember, it's not just JetBlue that's impacted. Delta, I think it's the second largest operator at Schiphol. It also has lost a good number of slots that I'm sure they can't be happy about. Maybe they should stop operating 30-year-old 767s there and then operate something a little newer and lessen the noise, maybe went to piss everyone off so much. Definitely got to keep a close eye on this one.

[0:29:41] IP: There you go. Hey, you want to know a fun fact that I learned today, or yesterday?

[0:29:45] JR: I do.

[0:29:47] IP: That surprised me greatly, or so says Lufthansa. This year, all Lufthansa airlines will be profitable for the whole year for the first time ever.

[0:30:01] JR: Wow. I don't know if that's a good thing, or a bad thing because these are large airlines. I know a few of these specifically Austrian and I think Brussels have not exactly been top performers. The whole group here, Lufthansa, Swiss, Eurowings, Austrian, Brussels, Lufthansa cargo, I don't know where they fit something like that weird little Italian, Air Dolomiti operation they have. The whole group making a profit, that's pretty fantastic.

[0:30:28] IP: The whole group, yeah. Prior to the pandemic, the pandemic was a mixed bag of passenger airlines, of course, not making any money in cargo, making a ton of money. Prior to the pandemic, the whole doubt for Lufthansa Group reporting a profit was Eurowings, because it had never made money.

[0:30:47] JR: Well, we'll see what some of the more minor airlines, like Discover Airways, is it? Airlines, Airways –
[0:30:53] IP: Airlines.

[0:30:54] JR: - whatever. Eurowings Discover became, or CD Airlines, are we counting them, too? Next year might be a very different story. We'll see.

[0:31:02] IP: Yeah, we'll see next year. For 2023, it sounds like, the entire Lufthansa group will turn a profit. Not turning a profit, Spirit AeroSystems. We talked about it a few weeks. Was it last week? Might have even just been the last week.

[0:31:18] JR: Who keeps track of time?

[0:31:20] IP: Who can keep track of time indeed? Yes, we talked about it last week. Spirit AeroSystems lost 204 million dollars in the third quarter. We talked about that in the context of Spirit agreeing to new terms with Boeing, which basically gives them a huge chunk of money, a check for a 100 million dollars, as well as better near-term supplier agreements. Basically, they get more money now and they get a little less money later on to shore up their financial position. Well, now Spirit AeroSystems is seeking to renegotiate its contracts with Airbus.

Spirit is best known for producing the fuselage of the 737, the greenies that can put on the train and trained out west to Seattle. They also produce multiple pieces for Airbus aircraft. They produce the composite wings for A220s and they produce the A350 composite center fuselage sections. Important parts of these aircraft and a major supplier to Airbus. Now, they're seeking to renegotiate with them. Interim Chief Executive, Patrick Shanahan, who is a former Boeing executive in his own right, said that, “Between us and Airbus, we have to come to some solution. It's a near-term action that I am committed to undertaking and my counterparts at Airbus feel the same sense of urgency. While Airbus may share the same sense of urgency, they're not as likely to share the same sense of largesse that Boeing is feeling at the moment, or has recently felt.” They'll likely renegotiate their contracts with Airbus, but they'll also likely not get the same terms that they got from Boeing.

[0:33:07] JR: Really feel like Spirit AeroSystems is really primarily a Boeing customer. Is going to negotiate with Boeing, or really bend to the will of Boeing and Airbus is just – and also ran in this situation. They've got to make good between all of your customers, I guess.

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[0:33:25] **IP:** There you go. I don't know if we mentioned this, but we've got a little bit more information about Bamboo Airways just shedding roots, aircraft.

[0:33:37] **JR:** Everything. People, everything. Seemingly came out of nowhere. I know tourism in Asia has not rebounded quite as quickly as Europe and the Americas, but Bamboo is a somewhat new airline. I flew them, I think, in 2019 before they had any of their wide bodies, or flew really long haul, but they are already not flying long haul anymore. They have cut every major long haul international route. I think all their 787s have been either grounded, or returned to leasing companies.

Basically, all of the expansion over the last few years is gone. Really disappointing for a new entrant in a market that really had a lot of competition, but Bamboo is shooting more for the premium market, especially with those 787s on the long-haul segment. It just can't get a foothold and doesn't seem like it has all that much more time remaining, unless they really double down on domestic decor of what it originally set out to do. We've seen this play out before, and it's not typically pretty.

[0:34:44] **IP:** Yeah. We'll keep an eye on it to see if they can right the ship and whether or not the dissolution of its long-haul plans make anything better for the airline as a whole, or if it's just on its way out the whole thing. Sticking in Asia, some interesting order news coming out of EVA Air based in Taiwan with orders for 18 A350s and 15 A321neos. The 321neos aren't so much of a surprise, because they've got A321s now, but the 18 A350s is a big get for Airbus, because EVA is a very strong Boeing operator on the long-haul side.

[0:35:27] **JR:** Yeah, this is a big defection to, I guess, maybe not replace the 777s, but really augment them probably more focused to their older A330 fleet. This is a pretty big defection. A major, I don't know if this is an expansion, or maybe just a major replacement program for EVA, but that's exciting. Really seemingly, at least it came out nowhere.

[0:35:50] **IP:** I mean, the real news here is that the statistical likelihood of a Hello Kitty A350 just went way up.
[0:36:03] JR: Yeah. Some of EVA’s older 777s, one of which I think is one of the Hello Kitty jets is getting a little elderly. But yeah, an A350 in whatever one of their many Hello Kitty livery is, that would be a sight to see.

[0:36:17] IP: I hope we see it soon. We'll close the show with asking if you’re a pilot flying for FedEx, or UPS and you’re listening to the podcast, you probably already know about this, but your airline wants you to go fly for PSA.

[0:36:36] JR: Who?

[0:36:38] IP: Cargo demand is down. FedEx and UPS are both telling their pilots, go fly at PSA and PSA is saying, “You know what? That’s a great idea.” Because we will put you in as a captain. We will offer you a $250,000 signing bonus. A $175,000 of which comes in your first paycheck and you get a path to fly for American Airlines. Guaranteed.

[0:37:08] JR: Yeah, that's a nice offer. But wow, did the cargo market really peaked and cratered real quick.

[0:37:16] IP: I don’t think anyone didn’t see the macro dynamics coming, but it's very interesting to me watching how it's playing out at individual airlines. Because the FedEx and UPS shuttle to PSA. I assume other regional carriers are going to pick up on this, are going to come up with something of their own, because the amount of training that goes in to bringing these pilots onboard is a lot less. However, you then have more senior pilots making more money. I guess, it all balances out there. It's really interesting to see how major, major airlines, like FedEx and UPS, which have hundreds of aircraft are trying to whittle down their ranks and quickly.

[0:38:06] JR: Quite the fall from grace going from flying from FedEx and UPS, where you could be going Tokyo, Anchorage, Seoul, China, all these cities in China going to your super hubs on these large 747s, or 777s, and then suddenly, you're operating an E145 between Dallas and Pensacola four times a day. With humans in the back, not boxes. That's really the big difference. That's the problem. You'll have to interact with people and children and explain things. Boxes don't require much. They just sit there and they go. Wow, that's a big bonus and a nice path.
PSA, I know we’re talking about the pilot hiring bubble. Is this going to burst anytime soon? It feels like that's going to become a bigger and bigger topic recently, but both FedEx and UPS shepherding their pilots to PSA is not something I think I saw a year ago.

[0:39:04] IP: No, certainly not. We'll put a link in the show notes to the landing pages that PSA Airlines has on their website, just so you can take a look. Even if you're not a pilot, some interesting reading. But we'll leave it there, because this has been episode 241 of AvTalk. I am Ian Petchenik, here, as always with –


[END]