

NASA OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
303 E STREET, S.W., #P
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546
(202) 358-1600

NASA NEWS CONFERENCE

Speakers from NASA Headquarters:

SHANA DALE, Deputy Administrator, NASA
RICHARD WILLIAMS, Chief Health and Medical Officer, NASA
MICHAEL WHOLLEY, General Counsel, NASA

Speakers from Johnson Space Center:

BOB CABANA, Deputy Director, Johnson Space Center,
and NASA Astronaut
JEFF DAVIS, Director, Space and Life Science,
Johnson Space Center

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NASA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MODERATOR: Good afternoon, and welcome to NASA
3 Headquarters in Washington, D.C. I am David Mould with
4 NASA Public Affairs.

5 With us today is the Deputy Administrator of
6 NASA, Shana Dale, joined by NASA General Counsel, Mike
7 Wholley, along with NASA's Chief Health and Medical
8 Officer, Richard Williams.

9 Also joining us today from the Johnson Space
10 Center in Houston is the Johnson Space Center Deputy
11 Director and NASA Astronaut, Bob Cabana. Dr. Jeff Davis,
12 Director of Space and Life Sciences, along with Jim
13 Rostohar, also of NASA Public Affairs.

14 We will open today's event with a statement from
15 NASA Deputy Administrator Shana Dale, and then we will go
16 to your questions.

17 So we will now go to Shana Dale, Deputy
18 Administrator of NASA.

19 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: Thank you, David.

20 We are very concerned about the tragic situation
21 involving Lisa Nowak, and we are deeply concerned about the
22 safety and well-being of Lisa, as well as Air Force Captain

1 Colleen Shipman, and Astronaut Bill Oefelein.

2 This is, of course, a personal and legal matter,
3 and NASA is therefore limited in its involvement and
4 ability to discuss many of the details.

5 However, we know that there are a number of
6 questions about NASA policies and procedures, and we would
7 like to address those today, to the extent that we can.

8 First, we can tell you that Lisa Nowak, who had
9 been scheduled for duties related to the upcoming Shuttle
10 mission, has been removed from flight status. She also is
11 on 30-day leave. She has been released from police custody
12 in Orlando and is now back in Houston where she lives.

13 Her activities with NASA in Houston today are
14 confidential personnel matters that we cannot discuss, and
15 we appreciate your understanding and cooperation on this.

16 As you know, Lisa was a member of the crew of
17 STS-121, which flew this past July. Her performance as a
18 member of that crew was excellent. She took part in a
19 number of post-flight activities with other members of the
20 crew following their return. These included appearances at
21 sporting events, conventions, and visits to other NASA
22 centers and contractor sites.

1 There also have been questions about the status
2 of Astronaut Bill Oefelein, who last flew on STS-116 in
3 December as the pilot on that mission. He remains on
4 flight status in the NASA Astronaut Office.

5 Senior management at the Johnson Space Center,
6 where the astronauts are based, received word early Monday
7 that Astronaut Lisa Nowak had been arrested in Orlando and
8 was in custody. NASA management had few further details at
9 that time and dispatched the Chief of the Astronaut Office,
10 Steve Lindsey, to Orlando to look into the situation and
11 offer any appropriate assistance.

12 Lindsey made the trip on a Government aircraft, a
13 NASA T-38 training jet, at the discretion of NASA
14 management to expedite his arrival and NASA's ability to
15 assess the situation. Steve Lindsey attended the court
16 hearings associated with the case in Orlando.

17 Lisa returned to Houston on a commercial flight
18 this morning after her release, accompanied on that
19 commercial flight by Steve Lindsey.

20 We do not know where the facts and circumstances
21 of this case will lead. We will continue to monitor and
22 assess the situation, and NASA will do whatever is

1 appropriate in this case and fully cooperate with the
2 authorities within legal boundaries.

3 There are several general procedural questions we
4 would like to address. One question relates to
5 psychological testing of astronauts, clearing them for
6 flight and assessing their mental health following their
7 flights.

8 All astronauts are subjected to extensive medical
9 and psychological testing in order to be admitted to the
10 Astronaut Corps. In addition to regular health checkups
11 throughout their time of service to NASA, astronauts
12 receive extensive medical examinations prior to each
13 flight. While there is no specific separate psychological
14 examination for a Shuttle flight, NASA health care
15 providers are experienced in all aspects of health care,
16 including behavioral health, and they certainly look for
17 any potential issues or problems.

18 More extensive psychological examinations are
19 required for long-duration flights, such as an extended
20 mission on the Space Station. Astronauts also undergo
21 extensive medical examinations when they return from space.

22 I heard few details on the situation until Monday

1 evening. On Tuesday morning, the Administrator of NASA,
2 Mike Griffin, gave direction to the Center Director, Mike
3 Coates, of the Johnson Space Center, to do the following;
4 one, initiate a review of existing psychological screening
5 for admittance into the Astronaut Corps and a review of the
6 nature and extent to which we do ongoing psychological
7 assessments during an astronaut's career as NASA.

8 Issues to be addressed include who conducts the
9 screening, what are the professional criteria necessary to
10 conduct the screening, how often and in what manner are
11 astronauts psychologically evaluated throughout their
12 careers, and if concerns are raised during any evaluation,
13 how are those concerns adjudicated.

14 Two, in light of the current situation, determine
15 whether there were any areas of concern, any leading
16 indicators we might have picked up on, based on Lisa
17 Nowak's dealings with other astronauts or NASA employees.

18 Three, from those who participate in this review,
19 discern any recommended changes to existing procedures or
20 practice and whether there are lessons to be learned that
21 need to be incorporated into future practices.

22 Today, Mike Griffin has asked our Chief Medical

1 Officer, Rich Williams, to lead a review of our medical and
2 psychological screening and follow-on health care
3 procedures to determine whether any modifications would be
4 advisable to ensure that our astronauts have the level of
5 psychological and medical care and attention they need.

6 Other questions have related to any codes of
7 conduct NASA has for astronauts or other employees. There
8 are no specific behavior regulations for astronauts either
9 on or off duty beyond the basic expectations for employees
10 of any Government agency.

11 Members of the military, such as Lisa Nowak, who
12 is on active duty with the Navy and is working on detail to
13 NASA are subject to the rules and regulations of their
14 branch of the military service. We would refer you to the
15 Navy for any specific codes of conduct they may have.

16 This is a very difficult time for many people,
17 and it is a very tragic event. We appreciate your concern
18 and your interest, and we will now answer questions as they
19 relate to this issue.

20 I would like to reiterate the point that David
21 has made. We cannot answer questions that touch upon the
22 ongoing legal proceedings. So I would recommend that you

1 don't waste your time on those types of questions.

2 Thank you.

3 MODERATOR: Thank you, Shana.

4 Before we go to your questions, we are going to
5 go to Houston for a brief statement also by Bob Cabana, the
6 Deputy Director of the Johnson Space Center and a NASA
7 Astronaut.

8 Bob.

9 MR. CABANA: Good afternoon. I just want to say
10 that we are here to answer your questions as best we can.
11 This has been an extremely difficult time for everyone
12 involved, but I would also like to point out that we at JSC
13 are in the business of human space flight, and we can't
14 lose our focus.

15 We have got a very challenging space walk
16 tomorrow morning on the International Space Station. We
17 continue to process and work toward launching our next
18 Space Shuttle mission to complete assembly of the
19 International Space Station in mid March, and we continue
20 to work on the Crew Exploration Vehicle as we prepare for
21 the future.

22 So, in spite of all this, the team is focused on

1 getting the job done and flying humans in space, and with
2 that, I will turn it back to Headquarters for questions.

3 MODERATOR: Thanks, Bob.

4 We will go to questions now here at Headquarters.

5 Please wait for the microphone to come around, and please
6 identify yourself and your affiliation.

7 Let's start with Mark, please.

8 QUESTIONER: Hi. Mark Kaufman with The
9 Washington Post.

10 I was a little confused in terms of what policy
11 changes the Administrator proposed, what he did yesterday
12 and what he did today. It seemed that they were the same
13 thing, that there was going to be a look at whether or not
14 things were being done correctly in terms of assessing the
15 psychological difficulties or potential difficulties of
16 astronauts, but if you could just explain in detail what it
17 is that you are going to be doing.

18 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: As I mentioned, there
19 are two different reviews.

20 The first request went out to Mike Coates, early
21 Tuesday morning, and that was specifically a review
22 internal to NASA to find out details about ongoing

1 psychological screenings for admittance into the Astronaut
2 Corps, ongoing psychological assessments, and also getting
3 into issues of whether there were any indications of
4 concern in regards to Lisa by her fellow astronauts or
5 other NASA employees.

6 Also, in taking an open look at this process, we
7 have a very good track records within NASA. This agency
8 has been in existence since 1958. Our astronauts are
9 stellar performers. This is a unique, unusual situation
10 that we face, and we think we are doing things very, very
11 well in the agency, and the astronauts are incredible
12 performers. We just want to see if there are any areas
13 that need improvement along the way. So that is part of
14 the review.

15 In terms of the review by Rich Williams, who is
16 our Chief Medical Officer, he is going to be overseeing a
17 process that also includes external health officials, and
18 that review is both medical and psychological. We will
19 have internal participation, but also external.

20 Rich, if you want to add to that?

21 DR. WILLIAMS: I would characterize it as an
22 internally coordinated review, staffed predominantly by

1 external national-level experts in the disciplines we are
2 going to look at, which, of course, will include behavioral
3 health disciplines, and specifically those disciplines in
4 an aerospace operational environment.

5 QUESTIONER: Tammy Lytle from the Orlando
6 Sentinel.

7 I realize you are early in your investigation,
8 but can you tell us, so far, have you found any
9 indications, red lights, red flags, anything that would
10 have indicated that there were problems with Lisa Nowak?

11 And also, can you talk a little bit about what
12 impact this has had on the Astronaut Corps having to deal
13 with all this?

14 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: I would, first of
15 all, just note that what we are engaged in right now is a
16 review process. So it is not an actual investigation.

17 In my discussions with Bob Cabana, who is the
18 Deputy Center Director of Johnson Space Center, he has
19 indicated that they saw no indications of concern with
20 Lisa, but that is part of the review that we want to embark
21 upon is to go back -- you know, obviously, hindsight is
22 20/20 -- and see if there was anything that we missed along

1 the way. So that is part of the review process that has
2 been directed to Mike Coates, who is the Center Director of
3 Johnson Space Center.

4 In terms of impact on the Astronaut Corps, as you
5 know, it is a very tight-knit community. They care very
6 much for each other. Mike Coates is meeting with the
7 Astronaut Corps today to talk about upcoming Shuttle
8 missions, upcoming work on the International Space Station,
9 the need to stay focused on the work that is at hand.

10 Bob, I don't know if you have anything else you
11 want to add about Mike Coates' meeting today.

12 MR. CABANA: As far as how the Astronaut Corps
13 took this, I think folks were shocked and concerned.

14 As you said, we are a close-knit group, and we
15 try to support one another. I think Mike's meeting is just
16 to get the corps together, talk with them and discuss the
17 need to focus on the job at hand and not be distracted by
18 what is going on. As I said in my opening statement, we
19 have humans in space right now, and we have got some
20 challenging missions ahead of us, and that is what is
21 important. We need to stay focused on it and ensure that
22 we do it right.

1 MODERATOR: Tracy Watson.

2 QUESTIONER: Tracy Watson, USAToday, for Shana
3 Dale.

4 NASA has been attracting a lot of notoriety in
5 the last couple days and been the butt of a lot of jokes.
6 Do you think that you can escape some kind of harm to your
7 credibility in all this or whether this will have long-term
8 implications for the agency?

9 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: Well, in terms of
10 NASA being the butt of jokes or Lisa taking the brunt of
11 that, I think that is very unfortunate. This was a tragic
12 event, impacting many lives along the way, and I think we
13 need to deal with that with empathy and a certain level of
14 compassion.

15 In terms of long-term ramifications, I don't
16 necessarily see it at this point. This is a very unique
17 situation that we are facing. As Bob said, we were all
18 shocked by what we heard coming out of Florida. So, at
19 this point, we consider that to be a very unique situation.

20 We need to let the legal proceedings continue on in
21 Florida. They will take the course that they will take,
22 and we will support as we can and, as I said previously, be

1 responsive to the authorities within the boundaries of
2 privacy issues and any legal concerns that we face, but I
3 do not anticipate long-term consequences from this.

4 MODERATOR: Nell, please.

5 QUESTIONER: Nell Boyce with National Public
6 Radio.

7 Why was this decision made for Steven Lindsey and
8 Lisa Nowak to return on a commercial flight, and also,
9 could you tell me are any changes or investigations being
10 made into regulations concerning personal relationships
11 between astronauts?

12 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: In terms of
13 commercial flight, Lisa and Steve needed to get back to
14 Houston, and so they got on a commercial flight to fly
15 back.

16 In terms of relationships between astronauts, as
17 I think we mentioned, we treat astronauts as we do other
18 Federal employees within the Federal Government, and we
19 expect astronauts, as we expect any NASA employee, to
20 conduct themselves in a way that does not bring any
21 dishonor to the Space program , but we do not meddle into
22 the private lives of astronauts or other employees within

1 NASA.

2 QUESTIONER: Just as a follow-up, why didn't they
3 return to Houston on the flight, on the Government plane
4 that they originally had -- that Steven had originally
5 taken there?

6 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: I don't know the
7 specific details on that. I believe that plane had other
8 responsibilities. We can go back and check on that, but as
9 I said, Lisa and Steve had to get back, and they ordered a
10 commercial flight and came back. No big deal.

11 QUESTIONER: Mark Kaufman again with the Post.
12 Can you tell us where Lisa Nowak is now? I saw
13 one story that said that she is with her family, but I
14 don't know if that means her natal family or her husband
15 and children.

16 Is she at the Johnson Space Center, or is she now
17 at home with whomever?

18 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: I do not know where
19 she is at this specific moment in time.

20 I do know that she needed to take care of some
21 personnel-related matters at JSC. Where she goes after
22 that is her business.

1 QUESTIONER: Also, in terms of the review that
2 you are going to be doing, is this going to be also looking
3 at long-term impacts on astronauts? I bring that up
4 because I know that at least one astronaut took his life
5 last year, and I believe that there is some literature that
6 suggests that there have been some long-term consequences
7 that are negative. Perhaps it all works out and that is
8 just an arbitrary kind of thing, but is that going to be
9 part of the review, what happens long term?

10 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: Well, in terms of the
11 review that Rich is overseeing that has to do with medical
12 care, psychological issues, I will let Rich address his
13 review. We may also want to hear from Bob, Bob Cabana
14 being an astronaut too.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: The long-term health effects of
16 space flight and through all mission phases -- training,
17 the actual mission itself in space, and any aftermath of
18 the mission, if you will -- they have always been of
19 intense interest to us. To that end, we have for 20 years
20 had an ongoing study of astronaut health, taking as much
21 data as we can get from both active-duty and retired
22 astronauts.

1 So all aspects of medical care and behavioral
2 health care, including long term, the potential long-term
3 effects of space flight, will be of interest and will be
4 addressed by the review.

5 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: Bob? Let's see if
6 Bob wants to add anything.

7 MR. CABANA: As far as health care is concerned,
8 long-term effects, as Dr. Williams mentioned, there is a
9 longitudinal health study that I think all former
10 astronauts volunteer to participate in where our health in
11 all aspects is continually tracked, so that we can learn
12 what effects flying in space have over the long term as
13 well as accumulated effects.

14 I would like to back up and just clarify one
15 point on the question as to why they didn't fly back on a
16 NASA aircraft from Orlando. Lisa was on leave when she
17 went to Florida, and it was on leave and not there on
18 official business. It would have been inappropriate to fly
19 her back to Houston on at Government expense, and she flew
20 back on her own expense.

21 We did feel it appropriate, given the situation,
22 that Steve, rather than flying back in the aircraft he went

1 there in -- it was appropriate for him to accompany her
2 back to Houston, given the situation.

3 Jeff, on the long-term health care, would you
4 like to add any more about this study?

5 DR. DAVIS: No, other than it has gone on for 20
6 years, and we keep adding to that with our current
7 active-duty astronaut population, and we will continue to
8 track astronaut health care into the future, especially of
9 interest with our long-duration flights.

10 MODERATOR: We are going to now go for a few
11 questions to Johnson Space Center in Houston, and then we
12 will come back here. I will turn it over to my colleague
13 in NASA Public Affairs, Jim Rostohar.

14 MODERATOR: Thank you, David.

15 We will start with some questions here in
16 Houston, and please remember to identify yourself and name
17 your affiliation.

18 We will start with Mark Carreau over in the
19 corner.

20 QUESTIONER: Thanks. This is Mark Carreau from
21 the Houston Chronicle, and I have a question and a
22 follow-up.

1 My question is this. I understand that Captain
2 Nowak was off duty when these events transpired. Why was
3 it appropriate for NASA to fly supervisors in Government
4 aircraft to Orlando to accompany her through the legal
5 process and escort her back to Houston and use law
6 enforcement or security forces to transport her? I just
7 want to make sure I sort of have a clear understanding of
8 where the astronaut, who was off duty, is sort of on their
9 own, and why NASA has an interest in sort of protecting
10 that person, if you could sort of describe what the
11 conflicts were and how you resolved them.

12 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: Bob, why don't I
13 start off, and then you can respond specifically in regards
14 to Johnson Space Center and what you guys authorized there.

15 I do think it is appropriate. In the beginning
16 of this process on Monday, there were not a lot of details
17 in terms of what was going on. Initial details were very
18 sketchy. It was known that Nowak had been arrested, and
19 so, therefore, Mike Coates, the Center Director of JSC,
20 rightfully made the call to send the head of the Astronaut
21 Office, Steve Lindsey, who also happens to be Commander of
22 the Shuttle flight that Lisa Nowak was on, out to Florida

1 to find out what was going on and to get an unfiltered
2 information about what was going on. So I think that was
3 absolutely the right call to make.

4 As Bob mentioned, Lisa was on leave. So it was
5 appropriate in returning to Houston that they come back on
6 a commercial flight.

7 Bob, I don't know if you want to get into any
8 more details about the decision-making process at JSC.

9 MR. CABANA: Steve was dispatched to represent
10 NASA's best interest.

11 As Shana said early on, we didn't know what was
12 going on. All we heard was an astronaut was in jail, and
13 as with anyone, as a supervisor, when you have one of your
14 personnel in a situation like that, you want to find out
15 what is going on and see what is happening. It was most
16 appropriate for Steve to go down there.

17 As the events unfolded, it obviously was more
18 complicated than we originally anticipated, and Steve
19 continued to stay to ensure that the agency was represented
20 and knew what was going on firsthand.

21 As to security personnel being used, we didn't
22 require it. We didn't use NASA's security personnel. I

1 understand the airport chose to use security personnel to
2 see them off the aircraft because they did not want to have
3 the hassle that would cause within the terminal, and that
4 was their decision. We did not ask for that.

5 What NASA has done was provide Steve a way home
6 with Lisa on the commercial aircraft, but as far as looking
7 into it, I think that is why we looked into it.

8 QUESTIONER: Thanks.

9 And I think this follow-up question is for Dr.
10 Davis, just sort of a general question. As best you
11 experts know here at NASA involved in medicine and mental
12 health, do astronauts face stresses different than other
13 professionals with demanding careers, and if who, could you
14 tell us what you know about that?

15 DR. DAVIS: In terms of the astronauts facing
16 stresses, I don't believe the stress response would be
17 dissimilar to other high-stress organizations. It is just
18 that we have very unique focused missions, and we prepare
19 our astronauts not only through training, but also through
20 their medical evaluations to face those stresses. Again, I
21 don't believe it any particularly different than any other
22 high-stress organization.

1 QUESTIONER: Stef Watts, Fox News, Greta Van
2 Susteren's Show, "On the Record."

3 There was a brief discussion about behavioral
4 health issues. Is there a specific program within NASA
5 that if an astronaut is experiencing behavioral health
6 issues, it is like an outreach program that they can call
7 or talk to someone or speak to someone? Is there a program
8 in place now like that?

9 MR. CABANA: I will take a first stab at that.

10 It is not just for astronauts at the Johnson
11 Space Center. We have an employee program where anybody
12 that is in any stressful situation -- a death in the
13 family, divorce and so on -- can seek employee assistance
14 counseling. That is available to any civil servant or
15 anyone working here.

16 I will let Jeff address this, but we have assets
17 within our Medical Corps here to support specifically
18 astronauts involved in space flight.

19 DR. DAVIS: As a follow-up on your question, we
20 do have a behavioral health program here, and it is a
21 program that can be accessed by the astronaut. Also,
22 referrals can be made. So there is a behavioral health

1 program here for the astronauts that are here at the
2 Johnson Space Center.

3 QUESTIONER: Had Ms. Nowak accessed that program?

4 DR. DAVIS: I can't comment on any specific, you
5 know, private medical data, but we do have a program that
6 is available to all the astronauts.

7 MODERATOR: Another question?

8 QUESTIONER: Robert Arnold with KPRC in Houston.

9 Have you had any other specific incidents of
10 astronauts being removed from flight status and removed
11 from the Astronaut Corps specifically because they could
12 not handle the mental rigors of long-term space flight? If
13 so, how many, and what were the conditions?

14 MR. CABANA: Well, I wouldn't comment on any
15 personnel issues. It wouldn't be appropriate.

16 QUESTIONER: Can you talk in generalities?

17 MR. CABANA: Not everybody that selected into the
18 Astronaut Corps ends up flying in space for various
19 reasons, and I wouldn't comment on what those reasons are.

20 MODERATOR: Do you have a question?

21 QUESTIONER: Andrea Stone with USA Today.

22 Can you tell us where Bill Oefelein is? Was he

1 transferred to Kennedy Space Center? If he was, when did
2 that happen? Has he left Houston?

3 And also, as part of your investigation, is he
4 going to be subject to, under the UCMJ, possibly charges of
5 adultery if he was involved with Lisa Nowak, and, you know,
6 is he being interviewed now? Can you give us an update on
7 him?

8 MR. CABANA: I wouldn't speculate on anything
9 that the military is going to do or anything regarding
10 Billy Oefelein.

11 Billy was on leave in Florida, and he is still on
12 leave, and my understanding is he is returning to the
13 Houston area.

14 QUESTIONER: He is working here, or has he been
15 transferred?

16 MR. CABANA: No. He works here in Houston. He
17 is assigned to the Johnson Space Center.

18 MODERATOR: Okay. One more question up front.

19 QUESTIONER: Hi. It is Nancy Holland from KHOU
20 TV.

21 I want to ask you, Mr. Cabana, this question.
22 Even though you talked about the employee assistance

1 program, in a group of people like the astronauts, highly,
2 highly competitive not just to get into the Astronaut
3 Corps, but to fly in space, many of them from military
4 backgrounds, is there a climate and a culture that needs to
5 be addressed in your mind that makes it difficult for some
6 of these people who are so highly motivated to go and say I
7 need help, I need to ask for it? How willing are
8 astronauts to be able to take advantage of what is being
9 offered?

10 MR. CABANA: I think that is an excellent
11 question.

12 First off, those from a military background,
13 especially the pilots, tend to compartmentalize very well.

14 It is a trait that we are taught from the beginning of our
15 training that when you go off to execute a mission, you put
16 personal things aside.

17 We are also taught to look out for one another,
18 and as a supervisor, to know when people that you work with
19 or work for you are having issues that may impact their
20 ability to fly, that you ensure they get counseling and so
21 on.

22 From within the Astronaut Corps, I think we look

1 out for one another, and it is competitive, yes, but it is
2 also a close-knit group that ensures that everybody is
3 hopefully doing well. Like any group, sometimes some
4 things get missed, but I think that the general feeling
5 within the corps is that we look out for one another, and
6 we know that if somebody needs help, there are services
7 available, and there is no stigma to it. It doesn't
8 prevent anybody from future space flight assignments or
9 anything else. It is all part of normal life and care of
10 our personnel.

11 MODERATOR: And at this time, we are going to go
12 back to Headquarters for some questions there.

13 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: I just wanted to
14 follow up on a question that was raised a couple of
15 questions ago, and it had to do with has any other
16 astronaut been removed from flight status due to state of
17 mental health. I am paraphrasing.

18 We do not want to leave a misimpression here.
19 Mike Coates made the decision to remove Lisa Nowak from
20 flight status. He thought it was appropriate based on the
21 ongoing legal proceedings. It makes no statement
22 whatsoever on the state of her mental health.

1 Thank you.

2 MODERATOR: Okay. Let's go back to Houston for a
3 few more, please, and then we will come back.

4 MODERATOR: Okay. We have some more questions
5 here in Houston.

6 QUESTIONER: Chris Duncan from the Associated
7 Press.

8 What is the status of Lisa's husband? Is he
9 still a NASA employee, and who is taking care of their
10 children right now?

11 MR. CABANA: Lisa's husband is not a NASA
12 employee. He works for Barrios, one of our contractors,
13 and he is taking care of their children.

14 QUESTIONER: Hi. Steve Simon with KECW TV here
15 in Houston.

16 Before, they said all astronauts go through
17 extensive psychological evaluations while they are in the
18 program. Can you be a little bit more specific? Tell me
19 what they go through, what kind of issues. Is it more,
20 "Hi. How are you doing?," and you talk to each other? Or
21 tell me what kind of testing you do. Is there a format?

22 MR. CABANA: I will let Dr. Davis address the

1 psychological testing.

2 DR. DAVIS: Sure. Thanks.

3 Yes. The astronaut go through a very detailed
4 psychiatric and psychological evaluation at the time of
5 selection. These are done not only with a standard battery
6 of tests that are administered to collect psychological
7 information, but they are also conducted with two 2-hour
8 interviews that are combinations of a psychiatrist and a
9 psychologist for the first interview and then with a
10 psychiatrist alone for the second interview. The first one
11 is highly structured, and the second one is structured, but
12 also you can follow up on particular questions.

13 After those tests and interviews are done, they
14 are reviewed by a panel of experts to make a recommendation
15 to the selection board, and then finally, the psychologist
16 panel staffs all those cases for what we would call
17 suitability for short- or long-duration flights. So there
18 is both a component of the medical and psychiatric
19 certification, but also a suitability for short- and
20 long-duration space flight that comes out of that.

21 QUESTIONER: Once they are in the program, once
22 they are actively in the program, once you do the

1 interviews, how often do you follow up? How often do you
2 sit down and talk and evaluate the astronauts?

3 DR. DAVIS: Well, there's a several-part answer
4 to that question, I suppose.

5 The astronauts get an annual medical evaluation
6 that is very thorough. That is with a trained aerospace
7 medicine physician. As an aerospace medicine physician, I
8 am in that category. We are trained to look for behavioral
9 issues to be concerned about the family's well-being, a
10 spouse and other dependents, and any referrals can be made
11 out of such an evaluation.

12 Now, there is not a structured test given on an
13 annual evaluation, but there is this very thorough annual
14 medical evaluation by a trained aerospace medicine
15 physician who can make referrals to any discipline, and
16 that is a model that is used in other organizations that
17 have the flight surgeon be the primary contact with the
18 families as well as the astronaut.

19 As was mentioned at Headquarters, Dr. Williams is
20 initiating a review of our selection and ongoing care
21 procedures to see if there are things we can learn and
22 things we might improve.

1 MODERATOR: Next question.

2 QUESTIONER: KTRK, here in Houston.

3 A quick question. There have been published
4 reports about Captain Nowak having a psychological
5 evaluation today. Can we confirm that, and was that on her
6 own volition, or was that done through the Johnson Space
7 Center?

8 And also, a follow-up to the Chronicle, there are
9 also reports that the JSC requested the police presence at
10 the airport here in Houston. Was that something that was
11 out of this office, or was that her request?

12 MR. CABANA: As far as the request, I think what
13 was done was their decision at Intercontinental. I think
14 we made them aware that the flight was arriving and that
15 she would be on it.

16 For the medical information, I mean, it wouldn't
17 be appropriate to comment.

18 QUESTIONER: Hi. Ed Levander with CNN.

19 Is there any way, or is it too early to tell, or
20 is this essentially the end of her career, Lisa Nowak, at
21 NASA?

22 MR. CABANA: I wouldn't comment. I mean, that is

1 speculation.

2 MODERATOR: We will get the microphone around to
3 the back. I would also ask that you tell us who you are
4 directing your question to, because there are folks in
5 Washington as well that could answer some of these
6 questions, so you may be directing them to them.

7 QUESTIONER: This is more of a general question.

8 I am Tracy Sabo with CNN.

9 We were told by Public Affairs here at Johnson
10 earlier today that she was receiving a medical evaluation
11 here today. Has that changed since your response there was
12 a "no comment"? Or, if that is indeed true, without giving
13 up more personal information that you are not at liberty to
14 do, can you describe in general what type of medical
15 evaluation would even be appropriate while she either would
16 be on leave or what type of evaluation would be something
17 NASA would be interested in at this point?

18 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: This is Shana from
19 Headquarters.

20 Discussions about medical evaluations are
21 Privacy-protected, period.

22 MODERATOR: Okay. We have one over in the middle

1 here. Just a second, as we get the microphone around to
2 you.

3 QUESTIONER: Jeff Franks with Reuters.

4 In terms of Lisa's future here, if she were to be
5 cleared of all the charges in Florida, would she be
6 reinstated flight status?

7 MR. CABANA: Again, it is hard to comment until
8 we know what happens, and we will wait and see how it works
9 out.

10 QUESTIONER: Also, is there any plan at this
11 point to have ongoing psychological care for her at JSC?

12 MR. CABANA: Again, Jeff?

13 DR. DAVIS: At this point, in her duty status for
14 the next 30 days, we do provide health and medical services
15 for astronauts, even in the military. That is an
16 arrangement we do have with the military, and if she sought
17 some services over the next 30 days while she is in that
18 status category, that would be appropriate.

19 MODERATOR: A follow-up back here?

20 QUESTIONER: Yeah. Ed Levander with CNN again.

21 Here in Houston, Bob, to what extent have Orlando
22 authorities contacted you guys? Have people's computers

1 been confiscated or whatever? Has that investigation
2 reached in here to Johnson Space Center where you guys have
3 to capture e-mails or whatever?

4 MR. CABANA: To my knowledge, we have not been
5 contacted by the authorities for any information yet, but
6 we will comply to the full extent of the law.

7 We have frozen computers and e-mails, should they
8 be required, because of the criminal charges. It is
9 something that we would do for any employee in this
10 situation, to have information available and ensure that it
11 wasn't lost or modified.

12 MODERATOR: Okay. At this time, we are going to
13 go back to Headquarters, so that other centers can
14 participate.

15 MODERATOR: Okay. Thanks, Jim.

16 Let's start the questions here.

17 QUESTIONER: Tammy Lytle again from the Orlando
18 Sentinel.

19 Can you tell me when she went on leave, and was
20 there any reason given, requesting leave?

21 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: Bob, you are going to
22 have to take that question.

1 MR. CABANA: [Inaudible] -- administrative office
2 and actually look at the time, but it is very normal for
3 astronauts to request annual leave, days at a time, and not
4 state the reason why, just annual leave, personal leave.

5 As far as her current leave, given the situation
6 that she is in, it was appropriate that she go into a leave
7 status to take care of this.

8 MODERATOR: I will ask again that we direct our
9 questions to a specific person, please, and let's go ahead
10 with Tracy.

11 QUESTIONER: Tracy Watson, USAToday. I am not
12 really sure who should take this.

13 If Ms. Nowak were convicted of a felony charge,
14 could she remain a civil servant for the agency is my first
15 question, and my second question -- and I don't know if
16 this would be for Dr. Williams -- it seems hard for me to
17 believe that someone could deteriorate so rapidly as she
18 must have to do what she is accused of doing without giving
19 any sign whatsoever, and I am just wondering your opinion
20 as a medical professional. I mean, wouldn't there usually
21 be some kind of sign beforehand of this kind of break?

22 Thank you.

1 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: Do you want to take
2 that one first?

3 DR. WILLIAMS: I think that that sort of question
4 will be one of the focus points of the reviews that are
5 upcoming in a generic sense , and I think with regard to
6 the current case, for me to try to hazard opinions, I would
7 be entering into the realm of speculation, and it is not
8 appropriate for me to do that at this point.

9 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: In terms of your
10 other question, she is on detail from the Navy. So she is
11 not a civil servant. She is part of a military branch. So
12 that would be a question best reserved for the Navy.

13 MODERATOR: Let's take a couple questions now
14 from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

15 QUESTIONER: This is Kevin Oliver from WSTV in
16 Orlando. I believe my question is for Mr. Cabana in
17 Houston.

18 Can you tell me if Mr. Oefelein flew in a
19 Government plane, a T-38, to the Kennedy Space Center? I
20 understand you said he was on leave, but was he not here to
21 be questioned? And how long was he here, and when did he
22 leave?

1 MR. CABANA: He did not fly in a Government
2 aircraft. He was on a leave status, and he flew at his own
3 expense to Florida, and he is returning at his own expense.

4 Since he is on leave, I am not sure exactly when he is
5 returning. I believe he is returning sometime today.

6 QUESTIONER: We didn't hear it here in Kennedy
7 Space Center. Can you repeat that? We didn't understand.
8 We couldn't hear anything. The audio was not up.

9 MR. CABANA: Bill Oefelein was on leave and flew
10 to Florida at his own expense, and he is returning at his
11 own expense, and I believe it's sometime today.

12 QUESTIONER: A follow-up question. If another
13 NASA employee, other than Ms. Nowak or non-astronaut or
14 contractor was arrested on similar charges, would NASA make
15 the same arrangements or spare the same expense in terms of
16 using Government planes to fly across the country?

17 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: I think that is
18 really an issue of case by case. You know, it has to be
19 assessed when the situation arises.

20 I know, Bob, you also have -- I think you voiced
21 an opinion on that as well, but I really do think that has
22 to be a case-by-case analysis for whatever situation you

1 are facing.

2 MODERATOR: Another question from Kennedy,
3 please.

4 QUESTIONER: Hi. This is Bill Harwood with CBS
5 News.

6 I've got two questions I think for Bob Cabana.
7 One, Bob, you mentioned the distraction. I know Lisa Nowak
8 was, I think, the lead shift Shuttle CAPCOM for 117, and
9 obviously you will have to replace her if she stays on
10 leave. I am just wondering. Is there anything you are
11 thinking you need to do to keep everybody focused in this
12 environment? Are you thinking about that, and what can be
13 done?

14 And secondly -- and I don't know if this is for
15 you or not, and I am not trying to get any kind of a
16 medical opinion from anybody, but in a situation like this,
17 it almost sounds like you guys are saying she's on her own
18 when she's, you know, in her home or wherever she is going.

19 Is there anything being done to -- I shouldn't say being
20 done, but to keep a watch on her in a situation where
21 someone is in this sort of an environment, just to make
22 sure that -- you know what I'm trying to say. I just don't

1 want to say it.

2 MR. CABANA: First off, yes, Lisa was relieved of
3 her duties as CAPCOM on 117, and we are replacing her. So
4 somebody else will be doing that, and there is plenty of
5 time to train and make that work.

6 As far as maintaining focus, I think we have a
7 group of folks that are very focused and, as I said, able
8 to compartmentalize and put aside personal issues to
9 execute the mission, and I am confident that the team will
10 be able to focus and complete successfully the missions
11 ahead of us.

12 Lisa's mother and father have flown to Houston.
13 They will be with her and supporting her. As an
14 active-duty Naval officer assigned to the Johnson Space
15 Center, as Dr. Davis mentioned, we have an agreement with
16 the military that we provide health care for those military
17 personnel detailed here, and whether she is on leave or not
18 on a leave status, that health care is available. So that
19 will be available also during the coming days, if required.

20 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: And, Bob, I would
21 just add too that, undoubtedly, Lisa has a lot of friends
22 and a good support network down in Houston, and I would

1 expect her friends to rally around her as well.

2 MODERATOR: Now we have got a couple of questions
3 from the Langley Center in Virginia.

4 MODERATOR: Yes. Langley Public Affairs has two
5 questions on behalf of A.J. Hostettler, and her first
6 question -- she is from the Richmond Times Dispatch --
7 probably for the doctor; the second one, perhaps for Bob
8 Cabana.

9 The first question, does NASA track what
10 medications, including any psychiatric medications
11 astronauts take, and secondly, how does NASA monitor
12 fraternization among its astronauts?

13 DR. DAVIS: Yes. NASA does track and monitor the
14 medications that an astronaut would be prescribed for their
15 personal health care.

16 MR. CABANA: As far as fraternization is
17 concerned, NASA is no different than any other Federal
18 agency, and our employees are subject to the Federal
19 regulations, and our military personnel are subject to the
20 regulations of their parent service.

21 MODERATOR: Okay. Let's come back to
22 Headquarters for a couple more final questions.

1 Please, Nell.

2 QUESTIONER: Nell Boyce, National Public Radio.

3 What NASA official was the first person to learn
4 of this incident, and who told that person?

5 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: I assume it was
6 somebody at Johnson Space Center. I don't know
7 specifically who was the first one to hear about it.

8 Bob, do you know?

9 MR. CABANA: It was kind of simultaneous, and I
10 would have to go back and check, but I believe it was Ellen
11 Ochoa who immediately told Mike Coates, in roughly that
12 order.

13 QUESTIONER: But where did the information come
14 from?

15 MR. CABANA: The information came from Billy
16 Oefelein, who found out about it from the Air Force
17 officer. She informed him, and he knew it was important to
18 inform senior management and informed us.

19 MODERATOR: Okay. We have a follow-up question
20 in Houston.

21 QUESTIONER: Directed to Mr. Cabana. It is Stef
22 Watts, Greta Van Susteren's Show, "On the Record," Fox

1 News.

2 Will this unfortunate incident put NASA in a
3 position to do a reevaluation of your flight staff,
4 particularly because you have got a mission coming up
5 shortly?

6 MR. CABANA: I'm sorry? The question the
7 reevaluation of what?

8 QUESTIONER: Will you sort of have to go through
9 a psychological reevaluation of your staff, just sort of
10 for a comfort reason perhaps?

11 MR. CABANA: I think Rich Williams answered that
12 question, and Shana did.

13 Shana, do you want to add any more to that one?

14 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: There will be a
15 review that Rich Williams is engaged in, in terms of
16 overseeing a review of policies and procedures related to
17 medical care and psychological screening and evaluations.

18 So I don't want to speak for you on this one,
19 Bob, but in terms of upcoming missions, I don't think there
20 is anything specific planned.

21 As I have stated before, NASA has a great history
22 in terms of this agency has been operating for many, many

1 years. We have so many astronauts that have done a
2 wonderful job in terms of, you know, going back to the
3 history and the days of Mercury and Gemini and Apollo,
4 Space Shuttle, what's been done on the International Space
5 Station. So I think we actually have a very good record in
6 terms of how the astronauts have performed over the years,
7 and we expect that fine performance to keep going.

8 Having said that, we want to make sure, as we
9 proceed forward, that we are doing the best job possible.
10 So that is the reason for the two reviews that have been
11 requested by Mike Griffin, the Administrator, the one that
12 Rich Williams is overseeing and also the one that he
13 directed Mike Coates to engage in.

14 MODERATOR: We have a couple of follow-up
15 questions. Please state who your question is for.

16 QUESTIONER: This is for Jeff or Bob. Charles
17 Hadlock with NBC News.

18 This is a follow-up to Nancy's question about the
19 culture of the Astronaut Corps and how difficult it may be
20 for astronauts to come forward. If an astronaut were to
21 come forward and say that he or she is suffering from
22 depression or some other mental condition, is that a

1 career-ender?

2 MR. CABANA: I would say no. I will turn it over
3 to Jeff. I would say we would get that person help, and
4 once they are through the problem and have been cleared,
5 there is no stigma with that.

6 Jeff?

7 DR. DAVIS: I would agree with that. Once a
8 person has reached a diagnosis and has been effectively
9 treated, we model a lot of our standards on other
10 organizations as well, and that is certainly one that can
11 be worked with. It may take a period of time, but it can
12 be worked with.

13 QUESTIONER: Bob, this is for you. I just want
14 to clarify something. Was Lisa brought here after the
15 airport, and if she was, can you tell me what for, and if
16 she is still here?

17 And also, from a personal standpoint, your
18 dealings with her, your impressions of her, what kind of
19 woman astronaut do you think she is, and what can you tell
20 me about her from your vantage point?

21 MR. CABANA: Lisa was brought here from the
22 airport to take care of some personnel issues today, and as

1 I said, her family is in town to support her, and when she
2 is complete, she will be going with them.

3 Lisa was a vibrant, hard-working -- is a vibrant,
4 hard-working, energetic person that did her job extremely
5 well. She was a team player and dedicated to what she did.

6 I always found her to be extremely personable and a hard
7 worker.

8 QUESTIONER: Bob, Ed Levander again with CNN.

9 A question about Colleen Shipman and how she is
10 doing and what you can tell us about her.

11 MR. CABANA: I can't comment on Colleen. I have
12 not talked with her.

13 MODERATOR: We have one more here in Houston, and
14 that will do it I think from JSC.

15 QUESTIONER: Thank you. It is Mark Carreau from
16 the Houston Chronicle, and this is also a clarification of
17 the activities today.

18 I still don't quite understand kind of what
19 transpired from the airport when the airliner landed and
20 the transportation to Houston. So my question is this. As
21 I understand it, NASA informed the airport that Captain
22 Nowak was on the plain with escort, and then there was

1 transportation from the airport to the Johnson Space Center
2 and maybe some kind of security detail. So my question is
3 was it private transportation, and who provided the
4 security detail? Was it NASA or HPD or airport police?

5 Thank you.

6 MR. CABANA: Mark, my understanding, what went on
7 at the airport, we had private transportation arranged for
8 Steve and Lisa to return home, and because of the situation
9 up there, they chose to take her off the airplane and
10 provide her a ride to where that transportation was
11 waiting, and there was no security detail with her. They
12 just drove down here in a friend's car with their baggage.

13 It was just a private vehicle, on their own.

14 In closing, before we turn it over, I would just
15 like to say thank you for your understanding and support.
16 I hope we answered your questions.

17 We have got a real challenge in front of us here
18 with the missions ahead of us, and that is where our focus
19 is. We are going to support, as required, Lisa. We hope
20 this all gets resolved, but we are also flying humans in
21 space, and we are going to continue to do it well.

22 MODERATOR: Thank you, Bob.

1 We will send it back to David Mould at
2 Headquarters.

3 MODERATOR: Okay. Let's have final questions
4 here at Headquarters from Mark, please.

5 QUESTIONER: Bob, could you tell us when the last
6 time was that Lisa Nowak showed up for work at Johnson and
7 what it was she was doing at that point?

8 And also, if any of you can tell me, when was the
9 last time she made a public appearance for NASA? You had
10 mentioned earlier that she did a number of things at
11 different public events.

12 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: I don't know the last
13 appearance that she made.

14 Maybe, Bob, you are familiar with the last time
15 she made an appearance.

16 MR. CABANA: Yes. We would have to go back and
17 look in the records for that, but we could get it if you
18 really think it is important.

19 She was at work last week at the Johnson Space
20 Center. All the astronauts have technical jobs when they
21 are not assigned to a crew. Lisa's current technical job
22 is working as a CAPCOM in Mission Control. That requires

1 training in simulations and also supporting meetings
2 appropriately for the mission, as well as continue to
3 maintain training in the simulator for assignment to a
4 future space flight mission.

5 So I would have to go back and look at her
6 specific schedule of assignments, but that is the kind of
7 work she was doing before she went on leave last week.

8 QUESTIONER: If I could make a further one, she
9 was working then through Friday of last week?

10 MR. CABANA: As I said, I would have to go back
11 and look when her leave actually started, but, yes, she was
12 working last week.

13 MODERATOR: Okay. Let's go to Kennedy Space
14 Center for one more question, please, and then we will come
15 back here.

16 QUESTIONER: Kevin Oliver again from WSTV in
17 Orlando.

18 Who is replacing Lisa Nowak on CAPCOM during the
19 next mission, and how important is it to have a backup in
20 that role? How important was her role in this upcoming
21 mission?

22 MR. CABANA: We have an office staffed with -- it

1 is one of the branches within the Astronaut Office that
2 provides support for CAPCOM duties, and there is multiple
3 folks that are trained to provide what Lisa was providing.

4 So it is a matter of just sliding someone else into her
5 position and getting them familiar with the details of that
6 flight. So that will be fairly easily accomplished, and
7 there is still plenty of time to get the simulations
8 required on the ground, to make sure that person is ready,
9 but it won't be a brand-new CAPCOM.

10 It will be somebody that is already qualified,
11 and I don't have the name of that person yet. I would have
12 to talk with the Astronaut Office.

13 MODERATOR: We have got time for one or two more
14 questions here at Headquarters.

15 Nell?

16 QUESTIONER: Nell Boyce, National Public Radio.

17 Michael Griffin has requested these reviews. Is
18 there a sense in NASA's senior administration that the
19 agency failed Lisa Nowak?

20 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: No, there is not that
21 sense. I think we were all taken by surprise in terms of
22 the events that transpired in Florida. So we don't have

1 that sense now.

2 I have told you that I talked to Bob Cabana, and
3 he did not see any indications of concern.

4 Having said that, we want to go back and make
5 sure, was there something that we missed along the way, can
6 we make improvements to our procedures and policies
7 regarding medical care, psychological screening, any issues
8 that may come up in this review in terms of lessons learned
9 or things that can be improved.

10 So, at this point, we don't see something, but
11 that is why we are embarking on this process. We want to
12 make sure, and that is part of the reason why we are here
13 today to talk to you. We want to be open and communicate.

14 There are obviously questions to be directed to the
15 medical officials in the agency, as well as Bob who is an
16 astronaut and also the Deputy Center Director at Johnson
17 Space Center. We want to be open about the process as we
18 move forward.

19 QUESTIONER: Mark Kaufman with the Post.

20 Will the results of your reviews then be public
21 when they are done?

22 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: We will have ongoing

1 discussions. I don't know the exact format in which this
2 will take, but we will be open in terms of what we find
3 out. That is our intention.

4 MODERATOR: One final question here, please.

5 QUESTIONER: Can you just tell us the time frame
6 for the two reviews?

7 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: We had a specific
8 time frame on the review that Rich is initiating, and that
9 is to come back by the 1st of June.

10 Right?

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

12 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR DALE: Yes.

13 We did not have a specific time frame on what was
14 requested from Mike Coates. We are going to be in ongoing
15 discussions about that and what makes sense in terms of
16 getting complete information.

17 So we want it to be conducted in a timely manner,
18 but we also want to get a complete and comprehensive view
19 of the issues that have been directed to him, and we will
20 let you know when we have a better time frame.

21 MODERATOR: With that, we thank you very much for
22 attending today. For further information on NASA, please

1 go to www.NASA.gov.

2 Thank you for your attention, and have a good
3 afternoon.

4 [End of NASA News Conference of February 7,
5 2007.]

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