

Who Runs American Airlines' Communications on Flight 5342.

A sample of the brief, prepared from public sources. Every name and fact carries its source.

OLIVER & GINGER

PUBLIC SAMPLE

Defense Communications Brief

MATTER

Litigation over the Jan. 29, 2025, midair collision of American Eagle Flight 5342 and an Army helicopter, which killed 67 people¹

COURT

U.S. District Court, District of Columbia, Judge Ana Reyes. Jury trial set for April 2027.¹²

DEFENDANT COVERED

American Airlines

PREPARED

Oct. 7, 2026, from public sources

01 • WHO

Three named executives, all in-house

Ron DeFeo

Executive Vice President, Communications and Marketing, and Chief Communications Officer

CONFIRMED

American's senior communications executive.³

Jen Crichton

Managing Director, Communications

CONFIRMED

Hired by American as managing director of communications.⁴

Jim Carter

Vice President, Care, Continuity & Global Outreach

CONFIRMED

Came out of retirement to take this role. His team is the single point of contact for the families.⁵

Outside communications firm

NOT SHOWN IN THE PUBLIC RECORD

The sources reviewed do not name an outside firm on this matter.

02 • THEIR RECORD

Where they worked before

DeFeo: The Home Depot from 2003 to 2011, leading media relations and brand strategy; four years at the public relations agency Ketchum; senior vice president of communications at Darden Restaurants.³

Crichton: Named a managing director at TrailRunner International in February 2022. Earlier, communications director at Frito-Lay and leadership roles at Edelman, Weber Shandwick, FleishmanHillard and Zeno Group.⁴⁶

03 • WHAT THEY HAVE SAID AND BUILT

The public line

When the first lawsuit was filed in September 2025, American's statement said the flight was on a routine approach when the Army helicopter, flying above its published route altitude, collided with it. American said it would defend itself and PSA Airlines against any claim that it caused or contributed to the crash.⁷

The family-contact operation

American reported that more than 220 CARE Team members from more than 80 departments and 30 locations deployed overnight to Washington and Wichita.⁸ By May 2025 the work had moved to a longer-term team under a vice president, described as the single point of contact for families and in touch with several families every day.⁵

In court

American argued that PSA Airlines, a separate entity, operated the flight. On Feb. 27, 2026, Judge Reyes declined to dismiss American from the case.² The federal government admitted liability in a

04 • THEIR PLAYBOOK AND WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

These two sections are written for counsel and are not published.

SOURCES

1. AVweb, "Judge Sets 2027 Trial in Fatal D.C. Midair Collision Case," Oct. 14, 2025. [avweb.com](https://www.avweb.com)
2. WKYT, "Judge declines to dismiss American Airlines from DCA crash lawsuit," Feb. 27, 2026. [wkyt.com](https://www.wkyt.com)
3. American Airlines, leadership biography of Ron DeFeo. [aa.com](https://www.aa.com)
4. PRWeek, "American Airlines hires Jen Crichton as MD of communications." [prweek.com](https://www.prweek.com)
5. View from the Wing, "American Airlines Still Talks To Flight 5342 Families Every Day," May 1, 2025. [viewfromthewing.com](https://www.viewfromthewing.com)
6. Business Wire, "TrailRunner International Names Jennifer Kuperman and Jen Crichton as Managing Directors," Feb. 10, 2022. [businesswire.com](https://www.businesswire.com)
7. KMPH, "Family of Flight 5342 mid-air crash victim sues airline & government," Sept. 24, 2025. [kmph.com](https://www.kmph.com)
8. American Airlines Newsroom, "Flight 5342: How American's CARE Team answered the call," Feb. 5, 2025. news.aa.com
9. Kansas Public Radio, "U.S. admits liability in deadly crash involving Wichita flight," December 2025. [kansaspublicradio.org](https://www.kansaspublicradio.org)