



The National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety
Central Region
Memorandum for the Record
Witness Summaries
CEN18FA132AB
Marion Indiana
April 2 2018

Andrew Darlington, Airport Manager [REDACTED]

Describe what you saw...

Jeff, Gary and I were in the lobby of the airport, talking. I saw the 150 taxiing out, heard him call for back taxi (122.7). Gary was facing me, didn't see plane taxiing out. Turned around, asked who's that. Don't know how long 150 was at the end. The next thing I saw was the Citation landing. I got up and remembered 150 back taxiing, saw 150 rolling on takeoff. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I started heading toward radio to warn somebody...but it felt like slow motion, happened too quickly. I saw the Citation after touch down, saw the 150 takeoff, pull up, and for a split second thought it was going to miss, but saw it clip the tail and hit. I called 911. I opened the gate so ambulances could come through. Then I hopped in Leland's car and drove out there. Jeff had already left, hopped in jeep to head out to scene. Dr. Frick got into his truck and drove out there. By the time I got out there, dad was already out, jet pulled up. I asked if everyone was ok. Then I headed up to make sure ambulances could get in.

More details on what you saw when you got to the scene...

When I got out there, I parked the car on the right side of jet – smoke was rolling over top of Citation, door was open, and dad was out. I left car there, walked around...dad and Jeff were already over there. Jeff and Dr. Frick were over the other person in the grass. I didn't know there was another person in the plane. I heard sirens, then went to make sure they could get in. The other plane was on fire. I didn't know til much later.

While you were sitting there, was the UNICOM turned on?

Yes and it was working

Did you hear any transmissions from any aircraft?

After initial call for back taxi, did not hear anything else from either plane

The call you heard on back taxi, it was the 150?

Yes

Is it a normal procedure for you to acknowledge?

Just an open frequency, just announcing the traffic.

When you heard 150 announce for back taxi, did you then look?

I saw plane taxiing out from where I was sitting.

Do you recall what he said on UNICOM? (150)

Marion traffic 140 echo, his whole tail number. Back taxiing 15. (Tail number is N5614E)

In that transmission, you just talked about back taxi, not takeoff?

Yes

The assumption is that he is going to position and take off?

Yes

That's what you observed and heard?

Yes

Are there any safety concerns? (re: Owner/operator safety recommendations)

I don't feel like it was there, the result makes it feel like there should be, but I don't feel like it was anything other than the worst possible timing. We have planes in and out of here without radios. Don't know what could have been done differently.

Jeffrey McLaughlin, [REDACTED]

Describe what you saw...

Where I was sitting (in the airport lounge), I was sitting at an angle. We were talking. I was talking to Dr. Frick, a customer and good friend. Andy was sitting there. One of my mechanics students had just gotten back in a 172, he had left. We were talking about that. Not sure the exact time, maybe 430, wasn't paying a lot of attention. I heard the callout, back taxiing runway. I heard Dick call in. He's on final for runway whatchama call it (main runway). That's when it all came together. I don't recall honestly 100 percent if there was anything else said.

Andy popped up and looked around. I popped up. I recall seeing the airplane. I watched it happen. I saw it. The jet had all three wheels on the ground and it was rolling out, 60-70 mph. The other plane was already airborne and what I saw was it seemed to be a shallow climb out. (When I fly I like to put in 10 degree to flaps), but he didn't seem to do one of those. I can't say for certain which wing hit. It wasn't a fire ball per say. I saw the airplane ignite and fuel ignite, it was a liquid fire. It turned into a fire ball on the other side of plane (jet). It wasn't an explosion, it was a pop. But due to the distance of where it at to where I was, it had to be somewhat loud.

I hopped in the jeep. The jet had turned back around. I pulled jeep up and walked up. The rest is history I guess. The body I saw looked...well obviously was not showing signs of anything. In my mind he was incapacitated. I didn't even know...I walked up to the burning aircraft...didn't know there was another person in it; couldn't discern it. I knew it was bad when I saw parts ripped off the jet.

Can you clarify what you heard on the radio?

Both the radios were working. I heard them both. I heard the 150 call back taxi. Heard Dick call short final. I heard the 150 call back taxi, runway 5. There is an interval. Then I heard Dick call short final runway 22. On UNICOM frequency, 1227. I am positive 100,000%. As I recall N – call letters for jet – short final runway 22.

Did you look outside then when you heard that...?

I didn't deviate from talking. I heard the jet coming in and then I kind of watched.

What was the weather like?

A little hazy. Had an altitude. Perfectly fine day to fly. Around 5 – looking at 3 o'clock sun. Sun was west.

Dr. Gary Allen Frick, 

Describe the event...

There are two couches, they face each other. Jeff was sitting across from me, closest to counter; I was across from him. Andy sitting next to me. I was looking on my phone. I hear the Cessna echo departing runway 15. Then I hear the jet come in. Andy jumps up and says something. We all turned around. I just couldn't believe. The Cessna had left the ground, maybe 10 feet. As it got closer, it pulled up like 45 degrees. It looked like that to me. Two streaks, could have been landing gear. The jet kept going, the tail came off. The fuselage spun and burst into flames. I thought this can't be happening. Andy called 911 and took off in the jeep. We got in my truck and got out there. Dick had turned the jet around. Andy went over toward fuselage. I saw a body in grass. I got up to him, he had no pulse. He was dead from blunt trauma.

I never met a better pilot than Dick. He is such a good man. I didn't see that he did anything wrong.

When sitting there with Andy/Jeff, the radio is right there...what did you hear?

I know I heard something. I was on my phone. Hard to hear on the UNICOM. Maybe he did say back taxi. I know the pilot of the 150 said departing runway 15 and may have said back taxi. I think he said that.

Any other transmissions?

I didn't hear anything else. But I wasn't listening.

Alexander Lemishko


Senior Air Safety Investigator
NTSB Central Region Aviation