

**VERBATIM TESTIMONY OF
MP1**

PRESIDENT: My name is Brigadier General Scott Kindsvater. We're investigating the F-16/Cessna 150 aircraft accident that occurred on 7 July 2015, near Monks Corner, South Carolina. This investigation is conducted under AFI 51-503. It is separate and apart from the safety investigation conducted under AFI 91-204. This accident investigation board is a legal investigation that was convened to inquire into all the facts and circumstances surrounding the aircraft accident, to prepare a publicly-releasable report, and to obtain and preserve all available evidence for use in litigation, claims, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative actions, and for other purposes.

A safety investigation was previously conducted on this accident. Any testimony you gave before the safety investigation board will be kept confidential if you were so advised, and can be used only for mishap prevention purposes. This board does not have access to any confidential testimony you gave before the safety investigation board. You may not state that you gave any particular information to the safety board under a promise of confidentiality. Your sworn testimony to the board may be used for any proper purpose. Additionally, your testimony can be released to the public. Do you understand the difference between your testimony before the safety board and this accident board?

WITNESS: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

WITNESS: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Today is 2 September 2015, at 1039 hours, at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina. The following members of the AIB are present: Brigadier General Scott Kindsvater
Colonel (Legal Advisor), Major (Maintenance Member),
Major (Pilot Member), Captain (Medical Member), CMSgt
(Operations Member), and Technical Sergeant (Recorder).
Captain is present as a subject matter expert appointed to the board. The witness' area defense counsel, Captain, is also present. The witness has been sworn.

Q1 (PRESIDENT): Please state your full name and rank.

A1 (WITNESS): Major MP1.

Q2 (PRESIDENT): What is your job title, and present duty assignment and location?

A2 (WITNESS): 55th Fighter Squadron, Chief of Mobility.

Q3 (PRESIDENT): How long have you been in your current duty assignment?

A3 (WITNESS): Eleven months.

Q4 (PRESIDENT): How long have you been in the military?

A4 (WITNESS): Twelve years.

Q5 (PRESIDENT): You gave non-privileged testimony to the interim safety board on 7 July 2015. A transcript was provided in Tab R-1, pages R2 through R6. Do you adopt this statement as part of your testimony to the AIB?

A5 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q6 (PRESIDENT): What is your flight training and experience? You can just briefly describe your aviation training.

A6 (WITNESS): I went through about 50 hours private pilot license; went to Laughlin for T-6, T-38s, IFF for T-38s; Luke Air Force Base for the F-16 B course; to Aviano, first assignment; and then to Creech Air Force Base MQ-1s and then 9s for two and a half years; Holloman Air Force Base with MQ-9s for two and a half years; a requal training at Luke Air Force Base in the F-16; went to Kunsan for a year, and now I've been here for about 11 months.

Q7 (PRESIDENT): Do you have a private pilot certificate?

A7 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q8 (PRESIDENT): How much flight time, etcetera, can you explain your private pilot as well?

A8 (WITNESS): I haven't flown it since I started T-6s, so about 50 hours whenever I left.

Q9 (PRESIDENT): Fifty hours, okay. Thank you. Any other special schools or exercises like Red Flag, or any other special training that you've done?

A9 (WITNESS): I've done Red Flag Alaska. I did Red Flag in Las Vegas in March, this March. We did Green Flag in Barksdale in May. That's it.

Q10 (PRESIDENT): I'm going to ask you a few questions about the days kind of leading up prior to 7 July. Would you typically (garbled) and a little bit about your patterns, etcetera. When do you typically fall asleep at night and awaken in the morning?

A10 (WITNESS): It depends on the flying schedule, so if it's night or days, but for a day shift, I probably go to bed about nine o'clock, wake up -- I try to get about eight and a half hours of sleep, if able.

Q11 (PRESIDENT): What is your normal sleep pattern, and then where you feel like you're rested and you're ready to go for the day?

A11 (WITNESS): Eight to eight and a half hours of uninterrupted.

Q12 (PRESIDENT): Do you remember how many hours that you got then on 4, 5, 6 July, the days leading up to that?

A12 (WITNESS): Sir, I don't recall.

Q13 (PRESIDENT): Do you remember how many hours -- if you had any difficulty sleeping on those nights, or kind of the pattern of what those days were a few months ago, or any sleep disruption?

A13 (WITNESS): I don't remember any disruptions leading up to those few days prior.

Q14 (PRESIDENT): How would you characterize your activities during those days, in general? Anything unusual?

A14 (WITNESS): My parents were visiting, so that's a little bit unusual. Other than that, pretty normal.

Q15 (PRESIDENT): How would you describe the ops tempo and the workload in the 55th Fighter Squadron leading up to 7 July?

A15 (WITNESS): It's been a busy year. We're getting ready for the second Red Flag that we were going to later that week. As a mobility guy, I was working to get everybody out the door for that, and we're getting ready to deploy here in a month. So it's been a pretty busy year with multiple TDYs, and then a deployment coming up. The AEF's been up, but I'm sure it's the same stuff everyone else is dealing with.

Q16 (PRESIDENT): Can you explain to me AEF and TDY?

A16 (WITNESS): Yes, temporary duty. The AEF being our deployment, when we're going overseas to an undisclosed, current location, to fight the war on whoever the government tells us to.

Q17 (PRESIDENT): Were there any other external issues affecting your work, or life stressors affecting your work?

A17 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q18 (PRESIDENT): Do you remember what time you left work on Monday, 6 July 2015, the night prior or the day prior, when you left for home?

A18 (WITNESS): It was in time to make dinner, about six.

Q19 (PRESIDENT): When did you become aware of the 7 July OCF, operational check flight?

A19 (WITNESS): The afternoon prior.

Q20 (PILOT MEMBER): Describe the squadron's expectations regarding the planning and regarding getting ready for an operational check flight. And then were you able to accomplish any of that planning the day prior, based on the notification?

A20 (WITNESS): I asked the question to see if I could join with the other eight aircraft that were going out, fighting a suppression of enemy air defense mission. They said they didn't want another aircraft in that fight, so I opted to do an instrument ride. So that was the, I guess, the mission plan the day prior, and then I thought of a plan that I wanted to do. I hadn't been to Myrtle Airport for any approaches, and wanted to do that, as well as Charleston.

Q21 (PRESIDENT): Can you give me a little bit more detail, then, on the day of, kind of up to step? What was your plan for preparing for the plane?

A21 (WITNESS): Checked weather NOTAMs. We don't have a stereo flight plan that takes us to Myrtle and Charleston, so I grabbed a DD 175, and filled that out with a flight plan to Myrtle, then to Charleston, and then back to the air refueling route over Shaw. And the plan was to get gas after all of the other flights had gone through, and then go to our Poinsett Bombing Range for dry, basic surface attack practice prior to landing.

Q22 (PRESIDENT): And had you been to Myrtle -- you said you had not been to Myrtle Beach or Charleston before?

A22 (WITNESS): I've been to Charleston, but I had not flown approaches to Myrtle.

Q23 (PRESIDENT): Was there anything that interrupted or changed your plans as you started on that, that you had set the Myrtle Beach/Charleston AER, Poinsett plan?

A23 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q24 (PRESIDENT): And you said you ran all the applicable notices to Airmen to those locations?

A24 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q25 (PRESIDENT): Do you remember what the weather forecast was for that day?

A25 (WITNESS): It was some scattered clouds, but it was supposed to be VFR at both of those airports.

Q26 (PRESIDENT): What mission materials did you have for the flight?

A26 (WITNESS): I had my DD 175, I had grabbed an extra low-approach book, high-approach book, and I had a low chart, other than what was in our pubs kit that carries all the required publications, so I could have them out and easily accessible for the approaches, as well as my in-flight guide and line-up card, and all the other things I took (inaudible).

Q27 (PRESIDENT): Did you say you had a low-approach plate and a low chart?

A27 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q28 (PRESIDENT): How about a sectional?

A28 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q29 (PRESIDENT): No sectional? Tell me about additional training you've had. Any briefings to include mid-air collision avoidance training, that you remember? Or any briefings to cover local and private small regional airports in the area?

A29 (WITNESS): No, sir. The only one I've heard about -- received a briefing on was Sumter.

Q30 (PRESIDENT): Sumter County Airport?

A30 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q31 (PRESIDENT): So you don't have any recollection of anything at all exterior to the region, relative to local airports around Myrtle Beach, local airports around Charleston Air Force Base?

A31 (WITNESS): No, sir. Our local area orientation briefing covers places that we can take our aircraft, and in case of emergency, not all the small airports.

Q32 (PRESIDENT): How familiar are you with the Charleston airport and the surrounding area? You said you'd been there a couple of times on other instruction sorties.

A32 (WITNESS): That's -- the familiarity I had was a couple of times doing approaches there.

Q33 (PRESIDENT): Have you done this OCF flow before, this operational check flight flow before?

A33 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q34 (PRESIDENT): You had never done it? Okay. But you did say you'd been down to Charleston. Have you ever had any conflicts in the pattern, or traffic down there, or any HATRs, hazardous air traffic?

A34 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q35 (PRESIDENT): Had you worked with air traffic control down there before?

A35 (WITNESS): For the previous approaches, yes, sir.

Q36 (PRESIDENT): Tell me about your operational risk management sheet.

A36 (WITNESS): Sir, I don't remember what I put on there. I could guess --

Q37 (PRESIDENT): No, don't guess. Let me ask you a specific question, and if you don't remember, that's fine. Tell me what -- you wrote down on there slow is fast, on that. What does that comment mean?

A37 (WITNESS): It was probably referring to my instrument cross-check, having a diligent instrument cross-check, but I don't know why I put slow is faster on there. That may have had something to do with going to the tanker.

Q38 (PRESIDENT): Did you speak -- I know we think through in the fighter business briefing flight leads, wingmen, mission partners, etcetera, but you're single ship on this mission. So walk me through a little bit of your planning and your preparation. Walk me through your briefing, and I know you're not going to necessarily brief yourself, but walk me through that, as you do in the private moments of getting prepped for the flight.

A38 (WITNESS): Yes, sir. I remember grabbing my briefing guides, and I have a motherhood briefing that I give for my flight, typically, and I sat in the briefing room and read through it to make sure I was thinking of all the required items, to be good with 11-2F-16 vol 3. So with the SIIs, special interest items on the board, or I'm sorry, on the door, that were there, and I don't remember what those were now, but I just read through those. And I spent a good amount of time -- I don't know exactly how much, but looking at each of the approaches that I was planning on doing. Based on the weather at Charleston, I was expecting a runway 1-5 flow. So I looked at those approaches primarily. And I also looked at my in-flight guide which has a

section on simulated flame-out procedures, which have LOA, letter of agreement, with Charleston and Myrtle, because I was planning on doing those as well.

Q39 (PRESIDENT): Specifically, in that flight guide, it talks about mid-air collision avoidance potential areas to brief your formation. Did you cover that then in your own head, as part of your prep work? And then, do you recall then, what areas where you thought, “These are going to be my highest areas of mid-air collision potential?”

A39 (WITNESS): Sir, my way of mitigating the mid-air collision avoidance potential was to do good visual scan and radar. It wasn’t like you said with briefing our formations on when we’re looking outside, and formation maneuvers. I had nobody else with me, but it was just going to be good scan patterns.

Q40 (PRESIDENT): Now I’m going to talk a little bit about pre-flight and ground ops. Describe the OCF requirements for the flight, operational check flight requirements. Anything there that you were working with, or through with maintenance on your OCF check?

A40 (WITNESS): Maintenance just requested that I fly it as long as I could. Something along those lines, per their verbiage.

Q41 (PRESIDENT): Describe your actions from step brief, with the top-three in the squadron, through engine start for me, if you would.

A41 (WITNESS): We’re already dressed and have all of our gear at step, so I received a step brief, including weather, any updates on weather, which, I don’t remember any updates. Status, I had no spares for my plane because my plane was the only thing that was trying to fly that day. And I think there was a status of a tanker that passed as well, the tanker that I was supposed to be linking up with. So nothing else for the step brief. I walked out to my aircraft at the parking spot, talked to the crew chief, read the forms. Actually, I don’t know if I had the forms out there or if I had them with me when I left. I don’t remember because of the check flight stuff. I know I looked at some of the forms inside as well. I went out, did my normal walk-around. Nothing out of the ordinary with the aircraft, and up into getting the cockpit.

Q42 (PRESIDENT): What was your aircraft configuration? Do you remember?

A42 (WITNESS): Sir, it was two external fuel tanks, HARM targeting system pod, a sniper pod, and a captive ALIC and I don’t know what that stands for, and a HARM High Speed Anti-Radiation missile. So a training missile, as well as our AIM-120 missiles, then we have an AIM-9, heat-seeking missile, and our ACMI. I don’t know, that’s how they can track their aircraft pod. The HARM was on the left wing.

Q43 (PRESIDENT): Any abnormalities or unscheduled maintenance from your start through taxi time? What we would call red ball; anything there that --

A43 (WITNESS): I did not call any red balls or any maintenance issues. I had a mids BAT fail.

Q44 (PRESIDENT): Can you explain that? Mids BAT fail?

A44 (WITNESS): Yeah, it has to do with our solar link 16. So I had no link 16 that day. It was not a Min Equipment System List MESL item for us, so I pressed with it because the battery fail,

I assumed, because it had been sitting in maintenance for awhile and it wasn't going to work. I opted to take it as is and just write it up when I returned.

Q45 (PRESIDENT): So you had no data link then on that airplane?

A45 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q46 (PRESIDENT): Can you explain what that, then -- is there any negative limitations to not have a data link that day?

A46 (WITNESS): Not as a single ship, I didn't. We don't get surveillance tracks sent to us, so I wouldn't have seen any other traffic out there. Definitely when we're flying in formations, doing some of the missions, that we do have the data link as a big force multiplier, but not a factor, I didn't think, on that day.

Q47 (PRESIDENT): Were you wearing your contact lenses, or glasses, during the sortie?

A47 (WITNESS): Contact lenses.

Q48 (PRESIDENT): Did you have any issues with them? Or did you need to use your spare glasses at all?

A48 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q49 (PRESIDENT): Did you have any issues with your helmet or your visor?

A49 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q50 (PRESIDENT): Briefly describe the flight, takeoff to Myrtle, Myrtle Beach.

A50 (WITNESS): So runway 2-2, into the Sumter departure and picked up my IFR clearance during the turn. I held it to -- it's not 100 percent, but I can tell you fairly certainly they gave me like a 15,000 was final altitude on the way there, over to Myrtle. Nothing of note on departure. Set max endurance just based on maintenance request to fly the plane for awhile, and I wasn't in a hurry. So set max endurance, flew towards Myrtle. Standard instrument stuff on the way there. Checked ATIS and got ready for any approaches going into Myrtle.

Q51 (PRESIDENT): Was there any performance or jet issues, or avionics issues with the aircraft?

A51 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q52 (PRESIDENT): Did you receive any weather reports while airborne? Anything that's different than what you had planned or briefed?

A52 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q53 (PRESIDENT): What did you do then at Myrtle Beach?

A53 (WITNESS): I did two ILSs, and then I --

Q54 (PRESIDENT): Could you tell me what ILS and which approach? Do you remember them?

A54 (WITNESS): Instrument landing system and it's a precision approach to runway 1-8. Southern flow. So I did the initial one. Climb out for vectors for another instrument landing system approach, and requested the simulated flame-out overhead, simulated flame-out landing, or approach. I was approved for that. Went per the letter of agreement that we have, which caps our altitude pretty low, and so I delayed configuration. I ended up not completing the simulated flame-out because of the gross weight of the plane. It was not -- I didn't feel that it would be safe to do so. So I left the power in. I flew a descending power-in turn, and up the runway and got my clearance, then went to Charleston.

Q55 (PRESIDENT): This whole time at Myrtle Beach, what is your radar setup and interrogator setup? You briefed -- you mentioned that your mid-air collision avoidance mitigation tools. So what were those?

A55 (WITNESS): I run between a 20- and a 40-mile radar scope, alternating. So I'm standing -- nothing on 20, bump out to 40-mile scope and see if there's any traffic conflicts. I think I remember, but I may have locked aircraft up on the way down just to verify their position, and then if they're no factor, then break lock and go back to searching in the notch, we call it. But basically, bracketing my altitude with an altitude search.

Q56 (PRESIDENT): How about your interrogator?

A56 (WITNESS): Usually, scan for about 1 and 4, and I've been thinking about this. I cannot certainly say if I had the mode-3 set up to scan that day, I do on a VFR, low-level type of sortie. I brief that. I can't really remember at this point.

Q57 (PRESIDENT): If you had that setup that day?

A57 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q58 (PRESIDENT): Would you call that as something when you're in that low altitude environment, or in down that environment that's more cluttered relative to VFR traffic? Would that be a standard, or is the flight lead -- to your standards, or would that be a squadron discussion that you're going to use, you're interrogator to avoid?

A58 (WITNESS): In like an approach, like a Class C airspace type thing?

Q59 (PRESIDENT): Or just anything that (voiceover) --

A59 (WITNESS): Well, very low-level. When we're VFR and we're not getting any traffic calls, it can be another way to, at least in azimuth, find somebody. If I get a radar call and I don't see them on radar, outside of ten miles when I'm searching in the radar, it could key me, to look for a mode-3. In the airport, especially if it's congested, it could just clutter up my scope and make it almost unusable.

Q60 (PRESIDENT): And you don't remember that day if you had it set up for mode 3's?

A60 (WITNESS): I can't say for certain.

Q61 (PRESIDENT): What were your clearing -- visual clearing and deconfliction techniques down at Myrtle Beach?

A61 (WITNESS): Just to use the -- I use a left to right sector, pausing a second, looking for any movement as I go across the horizon, above and below, for the near rocks, far rocks type thing. So anything on the horizon first, and then above and below, anything that might be a factor.

Q62 (PRESIDENT): Our training teaches us to focus your eyeballs at something on the ground or a cloud, or something to focus your vision at, at range. Do you use that?

A62 (WITNESS): I try to. It was pretty clear out over the ocean, I remember, as I was flying into Myrtle. There wasn't much to focus on.

Q63 (PRESIDENT): How about down in Charleston, did you?

A63 (WITNESS): There may have been some clouds to try to focus on. I'm sure I was trying to focus on something. I don't remember now.

Q64 (PRESIDENT): What was the weather like when you entered Charleston-controlled airspace?

A64 (WITNESS): I think it was few to scattered clouds that I was flying with between Myrtle and Charleston; they were in the same airspace. Bottoms, probably 4- to 5,000 feet and the tops were up above me, they were just some puffy clouds throughout.

Q65 (PRESIDENT): Did you see any external visual limitations or other issues?

A65 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q66 (PRESIDENT): Was anything inside the aircraft causing you any visual difficulties: glare or reflections on the canopy, or other obstructions? Anything at all? Pubs bag up in the glare shield?

A66 (WITNESS): Not that I remember, sir.

Q67 (PRESIDENT): Tell me about your perspective on visually acquiring a general aviation aircraft.

A67 (WITNESS): How I find the aircraft?

Q68 (PRESIDENT): How, hard or easy. Tell me now how you do it, just tell me, as a pilot, your general perspective of visually acquiring a general aviation Cessna.

A68 (WITNESS): They're pretty small and not easy to find. It depends on sun angle, and things like that. A lot of environmental factors. But yeah, they're usually hard to find just due to size.

Q69 (PRESIDENT): What was your radar setup going down there? I've already asked you about Myrtle Beach, but --

A69 (WITNESS): The same as between the 20- and the 40-mile scope, alternating.

Q70 (PRESIDENT): And your interrogator setup still --

A70 (WITNESS): Did not change. I mean, I could speculate. I think I had something set up, but I can't tell you for sure.

Q71 (PRESIDENT): No, don't speculate. That's fine. Do you recall any controller directions regarding altitude and vector? Had you started your en route descent down into Charleston?

A71 (WITNESS): No, sir. I was told to descend from 6,000 to 1600 feet, and head 2-6-0.

Q72 (PRESIDENT): What was the weather like? Do you remember if you established that at 1600 feet and 2-6-0?

A72 (WITNESS): I was in VMC. Visual meteorological conditions.

Q73 (PRESIDENT): Describe for me, then, your approach to field and kind of checklist as you're going through the approach, and prep for the TACAN. Were you doing the TACAN approach?

A73 (WITNESS): Yes, sir, I was doing the TACAN to runway 1-5, then requested to climb-out to the ILS for the same runway. I had already reviewed the approaches in my mission planning, and had the approach books. I had a high and low book out. Myrtle is not in the high book, so I definitely had them out for that. And then I had the high and low book for Charleston. I don't remember which approaches I was looking at, but I set up the ILS frequency, the correct TACAN channel, and I'd listened to ADIS while I was still at 6,000 feet on the way down there.

Q74 (PRESIDENT): Tell me about your management, then, of time relative to setting all that up, looking in the radar tube, looking outside visually; how do you manage that as a pilot?

A74 (WITNESS): It's got to be a good cross check. So making sure you're on the correct altitude, airspeed, heading, and then scanning outside, open to the next pub. I had everything set up prior to my descent. Now I'm at 1600 feet for the approach books. I'd already checked ADIS, so I was-- very little time spent looking at those at that point. It was between radar and scanning outside, and just double-checking my instruments, make sure I was complying. That was it.

Q75 (PRESIDENT): Were you on autopilot in that descent at any time?

A75 (WITNESS): I was on autopilot at 6,000 and at 1600 feet. I don't recall if I set the attitude hold for the descent or not.

Q76 (PRESIDENT): At some point in there, Charleston calls out a local altimeter setting or to a new ADIS. What's your habit pattern, then, when a controller makes that call to give you a new radar altimeter setting?

A76 (WITNESS): Set it.

Q77 (PRESIDENT): Set it, or look down to quality control it, or see it through on that?

A77 (WITNESS): Yeah, just look down, dial, and then that's it.

Q78 (PRESIDENT): So after you're established at 1600 feet and 2-6-0, you kind of already walked me through that -- what you were doing. There was a traffic advisory from Charleston Air Traffic Control. Do you remember what was said? Do you remember the couple of minutes --

A78 (WITNESS): The two-mile call?

Q79 (PRESIDENT): -- the two-mile call?

A79 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q80 (PRESIDENT): That was the first traffic advisor message from Charleston?

A80 (WITNESS): Yes, sir. There was traffic at two miles, 1200 feet, my 12 o'clock, and that's what my other statement said. What I've read in other reports, is probably what I remember for the rest of the call. I know there's more to it.

Q81 (PRESIDENT): Do you remember what you were doing then, and where you were looking, and then as that call was made, what did you do in the cockpit as a pilot, for your attention and processes, and hands? And what were you doing?

A81 (WITNESS): They gave me a -- a two-mile call is the closest call I've ever received. That was a big alert for me. I immediately tried looking left and right over the HUD, anything in my way to try to find the aircraft visually. Hands-wise I was still on autopilot, still flying normal stuff, I really had nothing else taking away from my task time. I was looking aggressively, trying to find that plane.

Q82 (PRESIDENT): So your primary means was visually acquiring it?

A82 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q83 (PRESIDENT): A few seconds later, ATC calls your call-sign at the time, turn left, heading 1-8-0, if you don't have traffic in sight. Walk me through what you were thinking and doing then.

A83 (WITNESS): When I heard a call to turn left to 1-8-0, I remember there's immediately with that, and I started a left-hand turn to 1-8-0. Standard rate turn, and looking. Obviously, still, the timing is ticking down for the -- yeah, becoming more and more anxious to find that plane.

Q84 (PRESIDENT): Do you remember a call that was turn left before the immediately call?

A84 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q85 (PRESIDENT): As you made that turn -- so I'm going to ask you some of these questions here in a second, but I do want to know about the -- tell me about that turn. After the immediately, do you know when? Did you make the turn before that immediately call; did you make the turn after that immediately call? And then how did you make that turn? Was it an autopilot turn, was it a -- just tell me how you made that turn.

A85 (WITNESS): I think it was at the immediately call, and I used autopilot to do that turn, to free-up any time spent inside the cockpit to look outside.

Q86 (PRESIDENT): So was it a standard rate turn?

A86 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q87 (PRESIDENT): So the airplane put you in a 30 --

A87 (WITNESS): A 30-degree bank.

Q88 (PRESIDENT): -- what would -- 30-degree bank which is a standard, standard rate turn? Okay. So you were still on autopilot?

A88 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q89 (PRESIDENT): After you were established in the turn, then already in the turn, what were you doing?

A89 (WITNESS): I looked in the turn direction, didn't see anything, and based on the traffic call of 12 o'clock, and slightly low, I was looking to find that aircraft to see if I needed to do anything else to move my plane. So splitting my time between look out front and then back, looking from now 12:30/1:00 o'clock to like visored, kind of as I'm turning, trying to find this plane.

Q90 (PRESIDENT): So then your focus was -- were you looking inside the turn, or was your airplane starting to turn, were you looking inside and forward? Can you explain that to me again?

A90 (WITNESS): So, clearing through the turn, I didn't -- you know, nothing that I saw there, and then looked back where I was expected to find the plane based on the traffic call, to my right, increasing that 1:00 o'clock position. Still not finding him. Looking back, went through that cycle a few times. And then when I looked back up front, the last time, there was an aircraft rapidly approaching. I don't know if I'm getting ahead of myself, but reeled back on the control stick, but too late.

Q91 (PRESIDENT): Did you notice any decrease in your altitude as you turned?

A91 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q92 (PRESIDENT): Tell me again where the Cessna was in relation to your aircraft; where did you spot it?

A92 (WITNESS): Right off -- right in front of me.

Q93 (PRESIDENT): Do you know how close, about, that Cessna was? What is your estimation?

A93 (WITNESS): Within 500 feet.

Q94 (PRESIDENT): Do you recall anything distinctive about it, color, etcetera?

A94 (WITNESS): It was a high wing. I know now it was a 150, but I didn't know the exact type of high wing type plane at the time. I think it was white winged, and I don't remember anything else.

Q95 (PRESIDENT): You said you pulled on the stick?

A95 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q96 (PRESIDENT): Explain that to me, then. What exactly you did and how your aircraft responded.

A96 (WITNESS): Full aft stick. So a slight nose pitch up based on gross weight, angle of attack I was flying wasn't a real aggressive G or anything at that time. I pulled back and felt impact.

Q97 (PRESIDENT): How long, then, from the time you saw the Cessna to impact? Your estimation.

A97 (WITNESS): Less than a second.

Q98 (PRESIDENT): What did you do immediately after the impact?

A98 (WITNESS): I looked back over my left shoulder. I know I was in a left turn before, I don't know if I leveled out when I pulled, but I know I looked back over my left shoulder to visually acquire and see the state of the other aircraft, and I saw the other aircraft spiraling to the ground. That was -- then immediate thought was circle back to offer any possible assistance, at least, in search and rescue, and realized that my plane was very sluggish at that point. So I leveled back out, went to full afterburner. Didn't feel much increase in thrust at all. Was sweeping my engine instruments. Nothing seemed -- appeared out of the norm. I had a FLCS AOS fail, and the pilot fault was the actual thing for flight control system, but that was it. Everything else appeared normal, but still no -- very low thrust, so continued with critical action steps and jettisoned my stores via the emergency jettison button. I did take a quick look, saw I was over a river, so I thought the least chance of hitting something. Punched those off my aircraft, and put Charleston TACAN needle off the nose and tried to start going towards Charleston. Somewhere in the next however long I was flying, I don't even remember time, I realized that I was not going to make it to Charleston, and then started thinking about getting out of the aircraft, and looking for somewhere to -- that my aircraft wouldn't hit, and somewhere that would be clear for me to land.

Q99 (PRESIDENT): Did you happen to notice any other thing in your instruments, at all, instruments or engine indications?

A99 (WITNESS): I don't remember anything abnormal with the engine indications. There was no fire or anything weird. Nothing that I remember yelling at me. I do remember that my HUD, all data was gone except for a diagonal green line across it. So that was useless to me. That had nothing -- I was flying straight and level, or close to it. So that was -- I don't know -- that was all calm.

Q100 (PRESIDENT): You said in your non-privileged interview, and I'm quoting here, "I'm assuming hydraulic damage. I'm sure, to the tails. It wouldn't control the aircraft at all, so probably a nozzle might have been taken off." Describe what you meant by that.

A100 (WITNESS): I don't know what I meant by the hydraulic damage. I guess with battle damage you think of something like that, and with the FLCS warning, but because of the lack of thrust and then going to afterburner, that's why I was assuming -- at the time, I have some sort of nozzle damage. I didn't know the extent at the time, but I knew it was enough where I was not getting any thrust. That's why I chose to discontinue our critical action procedure, which is secondary, then PRI. If I had done that, it would have just killed any thrust I might have been getting from the afterburner, and I thought maybe it would have made the situation worse. So -- which at the time, that is what I thought, and now it looks like that was also correct.

Q101 (PRESIDENT): And you had no thrust coming out of the airplane? There was nothing that was giving you lift?

A101 (WITNESS): Whatever I had was not much.

Q102 (PRESIDENT): I'm going to play the tapes for you, from just a few minutes prior to impact until just a couple of seconds after impact. Okay?

A102 (WITNESS): Okay.

Q103 (PRESIDENT): Have you heard those before?

A103 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q104 (PRESIDENT): After hearing the replay, I'll let you pause for a little bit and then we'll just see if that spurs any recollection of events for me. Okay?

A104 (WITNESS): Okay.

[PLAYED AUDIO RECORDING]

Q105 (PRESIDENT): Explain to me after the two-mile call, what you were doing, where you're looking; radar visual, left-hand, right-hand, etcetera.

A105 (WITNESS): Sir, I was purely visual at the two-mile call, looking out the front of my aircraft within 10- to 20-degrees either side, and low. So trying to see anything that wasn't obscuring my view off the nose. So leaning it either way the best I could to try to find this traffic.

Q106 (PRESIDENT): A few seconds later, the controller makes a turn left to 1-8-0 call, and you didn't make the turn. Do you know why or why not?

A106 (WITNESS): Sir, I just heard the call on the tapes, I don't remember hearing that call.

Q107 (PRESIDENT): You said "Confirm two miles;" do you remember what you were thinking when you said "Confirm two miles?"

A107 (WITNESS): Prior to this traffic call-out, I had traffic about 20 miles on my nose, and again, as I previously said, I never heard a two-mile. It's very close, obviously. So looking aggressively and then just confirm two miles, I was very surprised by that call. I didn't know it'd be that close.

Q108 (PRESIDENT): And you were talking about a 20-mile radar contact that you had?

A108 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q109 (PRESIDENT): Not a visual contact, a radar contact?

A109 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q110 (PRESIDENT): Do you remember the call, then, when the controller told you to turn left 1-8-0 immediately?

A110 (WITNESS): Do I remember that call? Yes, sir.

Q111 (PRESIDENT): What, as a pilot then, when a controller tells you to turn left immediately, I mean, what were you thinking, what were you doing?

A111 (WITNESS): Immediately turn now.

Q112 (PRESIDENT): And you executed the turn?

A112 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q113 (PRESIDENT): And you used that with an autopilot turn; is that correct?

A113 (WITNESS): Yes, sir.

Q114 (PRESIDENT): Prior to the turn immediately, when that immediate call came out from the controller, were you thinking of any other options that you had? Were you considering -- was anything going through your mind on other options that you may have had?

A114 (WITNESS): I wanted to find the plane before I did anything. So, if I moved the plane as required, deviate for safety of flight, obviously, but not without actually finding the aircraft.

Q115 (PRESIDENT): On the autopilot turns that you had previous on the mission, did you notice any performance issues, or altitude deviations? Had you -- I didn't ask you that question, so did you use autopilot on your descents and stuff into Myrtle Beach and execution?

A115 (WITNESS): I can't say it with certainty, but I did not notice any -- typically, with our autopilot turns, the plane will dip maybe 10, 20 feet, but nothing off of our altitude.

Q116 (PRESIDENT): And then on the sortie -- the sortie then that you flew, did you notice any altitude?

A116 (WITNESS): No, sir.

Q117 (PRESIDENT): Did you notice anything that you'd have wrote up with the airplane, or talked to maintenance about?

A117 (WITNESS): I didn't notice anything, sir.

PRESIDENT: Your interview is part of an ongoing official investigation. You're to refrain from discussing your testimony with anyone without my permission until the report has been released to the public, and that's probably going to be some months from now.

This concludes our interview.