



## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

**Stephen Stein**  
**Air Safety Investigator**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**  
**Office of Aviation Safety – Western Pacific Region**

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**NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA035**  
**Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: N39AY; Aero Vodochody L39**  
**Accident Location: Apple Valley, California**  
**Accident Date: December 6, 2015**

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Note: The following interviews were documented by the Investigator –In-Charge (IIC), Stephen Stein.

### Interview #1 Summary

**Alby Redick and Service Mechanic**  
President, Aviation Classics, Ltd

Interview date and time: June 14, 2018; 1005 PT

The NTSB IIC interviewed Alby Redick in person at his office in Reno, Nevada. Harry Reichel, the investigation's powerplant group chairman and Greg Borsari, an Aviation Accident Investigator, were in attendance through teleconference.

Mr. Redick reported that he had owned and managed Aviation Classics, a repair station, since 1989 and specialized in warbird restoration and maintenance. They began to service Aero Vodochody L29s and L39s in the early 1990s; however, the restorations were expensive so they focused on maintenance. They wrote inspection programs for about 15 aircraft between the time they started working on the L29s and L39s and the present.

At the time of the accident, Aviation Classics employed 3-4 mechanics, all of which were airframe and powerplant mechanics, with the exception of one technician. Mr. Redick stated that he signs off the inspections.

Mr. Redick stated that he and his mechanic who typically works on L39s would not adjust the fuel control unit on the AI-25TL engine unless aided by an expert. His mechanic normally performs both pre and post-examination engine run-ups. The airplane met its run-up specifications during the last conditional inspection in November 2015. If the engine didn't meet the run-up inspection, he would then consult an expert, which had no need for after the last conditional inspection.

According to the mechanic who completed the accident airplane's most recent conditional inspection, he looks for a fuel delivery pressure from the fuel control unit (FCU) below 65 atmospheres (the maximum allowable pressure) during the post-inspection engine runup. He further remarked that he has never seen a fuel delivery pressure above the maximum allowable on an L39 airplane. In the past, pilots have asked him to adjust the FCU to increase fuel flow, but he refuses to make any adjustments that will increase fuel delivery higher than the manufacturer's specification.

The mechanic stated that he examines the fuel nozzles using a borescope, but does not remove them. The borescope inspection will show streaking and hot spots in the combustion section, but they have not seen an indication of a dirty nozzle. Further, he has never had a reason or request to change the fuel nozzles on an L39 or pull them out to clean them.

They also inspect for carbon buildup around the combustor, but never see buildup in the combustion liner of the AI-25TL engine. Rarely do they have to perform a compressor wash on the hot section of an AI-25TL engine.

The mechanic further remarked that he rotated the turbine section to verify blade clearance and observe nicks, scratches and any damage. He inspected the first and second stages, but cannot inspect the second stage aft without crawling up the tail for a visual inspection. The forward and intermediate sections are inspected using a borescope.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Bela Csonka**  
Pilot's Acquaintance

Interview date and time: April 28, 2016; 1407 PT

Mr. Csonka reported that he introduced the rear seat passenger, his friend, to the pilot about 2 months prior to the accident. His friend attempted to get the accident pilot's autograph during a competition in San Diego, but the line was too long. He later informed his friend that the accident pilot's hangar was across from his.

The rear seat passenger held a private pilot certificate and flew airplanes equipped with reciprocating engines. At the time, someone at Van Nuys Airport was selling their shares in an L39 airplane and the rear seat passenger was interested in buying the airplane. This would have been the rear seat passenger's first jet airplane.



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### Interview #1 Summary

#### **Bill Cox**

Crewmember of Commercial Flight with Accident Pilot

Interview date and time: December 15, 2015; 1522 PT

Mr. Cox reported that he was a crewmember on a flight to and from Sao Paulo, Brazil that returned to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on the morning of the accident flight. During the return flight to LAX, Mr. Cox witnessed the pilot go to a business class seat during their first crew break. During the second crew break, he observed the pilot go to the crew bunk for three hours. Mr. Cox surmised that the pilot slept during this time as the pilot's crew bunk light was off.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Jeff Turney**  
Racing Jets, Inc.

Interview date and time: June 21, 2018; 1246 PT

Mr. Turney stated that he met the accident pilot about 2003 when he started racing with the company. They immediately became well-acquainted as prior Air Force fighter weapons school graduates and developed the company's training programs and operating procedures together. The accident pilot subsequently became the company's President for 2 years followed by Vice-President and was a formation training clinic check airman for the company.

At times, he would take pilots up in his jet to give them some experience in the L39 airplane. The accident pilot would deliver an approximate 1 hr long safety briefing starting in the briefing room. During the briefing, he would discuss the operation of the canopy, parachute deployment, safety belt use, and conducting a manual bailout. He would normally fill the L39's internal fuel tanks, which would provide about 1 hr and 15 minutes of flight time.

Mr. Turney reported that he is an instructor pilot in the L39 airplane. In his experience, when the airplane reaches about 90 knots during takeoff, the pilot can gently lift the nosewheel and at 110

knots the airplane will depart the runway surface. The L39 does not accelerate quickly as it takes 4-6 seconds for the airplane to reach 140 knots, which is the airplane's minimum flap retraction speed.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Julie Mangold**  
Wife of the Accident Pilot

Interview date and time: December 10, 2018; 1203 PT

On Thursday, December 3, 2015 at 1500, the pilot left their home and drove to Los Angeles International Airport where he boarded a commercial flight to Sao Paulo, Brazil as the first officer. The flight subsequently returned at 0900 on the day of the accident flight.

### Interview #2 Summary

**Julie Mangold**  
Wife of the Accident Pilot

Interview date and time: July 9, 2018; 1400 PT

According to the pilot's wife, it was not unusual for the accident pilot to take people up for rides in the L39. He would customarily deliver and approximate 1 hour safety briefing in his hangar where they would discuss the flight profile, fit them in the parachute, demonstrate operation of

the seat belts, and use of the egress handle. If he allowed the passenger to fly, he would follow them on the controls, but would never give them the airplane. In any emergency conditions, the accident pilot would have resumed control of the airplane immediately.