

June 25, 2012

To: Joshua D. Cawthra  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Aviation Accident Investigator  
Western Pacific Region

From: George Trauger  
[REDACTED]  
Veneta, OR 97487

Director of Maintenance  
[REDACTED]  
Eugene, Or 97402

RE: Aircraft Accident on private property south of [REDACTED], Veneta OR.

On Saturday, June 23, 2012, approximately 15:05 – 15:10, I had just stepped out onto the back deck of the house to go into the back yard. I heard an airplane engine powering up to take off from the airstrip across Suttle Road. By the sound of the engine, I knew that he was going to be coming over the roof of the house very soon. I stood on the deck, waiting to see the plane go over. It was the brown and white Cessna airplane that I had witnessed taking off and landing many times before at the summer time of year over the past couple of summers.

I am a diesel mechanic of 30+ years, accustomed to many gas and diesel engine sounds. I have also had flight experience with a brother who flies out of Glenwood Springs, Colorado at 6000' where the air is thin. Everything to me sounded very normal, until I actually saw the plane pass overhead, once it cleared the deck roof. At the time I recall thinking that, it just didn't seem as high as I normally thought it usually had been other times. I estimate it may have been at approximately 200'-250' instead of the usual +400' or so. However, in my opinion, the engine sounded normal on takeoff power. This sounded like other takeoffs. I glanced away, when I soon heard quiet, as if the engine just shut off. I did not hear any missing, sputtering, or hesitation of the engine at all, just as if it was shut off with no fuel, ignition, or turning off the key. I looked back into the sky, seeing the airplane losing altitude very rapidly towards the wooded area behind our pasture. All I could hear, very briefly, was the wind noise going over the wings. I recall thinking, oh my god, he's not going to make it over the trees, he is going to crash! Within a couple of seconds, I witnessed the airplane crash into the tall fir tree, tearing off the right wing, and clipping off several small tree tops, other pieces of the airplane, metal tearing, crumpling, as it was crashing toward the ground. It ended with a big thud when hitting the ground.

I dialed 911, informing them of the airplane crash I just witnessed, as I ran toward the scene. I saw that it had landed upside down. I had to climb over the fence at the end of our property. From there I saw one torso in the front passenger seat and feet with hiking type boots in the rear seat. I hollered to see if there were any responses, but it was quiet and there was not any movement of the bodies. By that time, a neighbor, Ed Daniels, also on 911, came to my assistance, and checked the other side of the plane for life. He did not find any there either. At that time, I could hear the first responders' sirens coming down the road, and had to meet them at the driveway entrance to guide them into the scene.

If there are any other questions or require any clarification, please don't hesitate to contact me and you can reach me at [REDACTED] Office, [REDACTED] Cell, or [REDACTED] Home.

Thank you,  
George Trauger