

## Statement of Cash Observation

On August 24, 2013, I was in the hanger on Merrill Field known as "Hanger.Net", with two other members of the Commemorative Air force. While we were talking we heard a loud bang, followed by a grinding sound and some engine sputtering. We looked at each other and said "That doesn't sound good" and hurried from the hanger to the taxi way. We looked down the runway towards the city away from the mountains. I saw the Cessna at the end of the runway barely airborne. The aircraft was silhouetted against the trees. We remarked that the aircraft was still going and had not aborted. We remarked that he was not very high and was not moving very fast. The aircraft appeared to attempt a left turn, and we remarked that it looked as though he was going to attempt to return to the airfield. Just after starting the turn, the nose of the aircraft pitched up and the plane rolled over to its left in a stall and crashed.

  
  
Jeffrey Deitz  
FAA Hazardous Materials Specialist  


9/5/13

## Cawthra Joshua

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**From:** Tom [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 27, 2013 4:16 PM  
**To:** Cawthra Joshua  
**Subject:** Re: Witness Statement

I was driving down 5th Ave to pick my wife up from work. I look over at this bus trying to pass me on my right in traffic. When I looked over I saw a plane that looked like a Cessna having trouble. It looked like it lost power twice because it went down and up twice and the second time the plane did a hard left bank and stalled and I watched the plane go into a nose dive straight down. Just before it hit the bus got in my way and I called 911 because I was hoping that those people on board would live. When the bus passed me in traffic I could see the aircraft on the runway and it didn't look good. I drove around to the holiday and I could see people already trying to help and fire trucks and ambulances on seen.

Thomas Mann

Sent from my iPad

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 28, 2013 7:52 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Witness Statement

Clint,  
Can you redirect this to Josh? Thanks Drew

Josh,  
This is to the best of my recollection. If you have any questions please feel free to call me on my cell (907) 360-1310.  
Andrew Young

On Saturday 24 August 2013 I was in an Astar turning on the Evergreen Ramp at Merrill Field. While completing my pre takeoff checks I heard tower call for an aircraft to go around. I looked towards the approach end and saw a small Cessna. It appeared the Cessna was flying a bit unstable (it appeared he was having difficulty in the pitch axis) I assumed the go around call was for wake turbulence. I returned to my pre takeoff checks.

A few seconds later I heard tower call for the Cessna (a 99 in call sign) to go around. I looked up and noted the same aircraft about mid-field still having problems in the pitch axis. It looked like he was oscillating +/- 10° in pitch. I watched him for a few seconds and then went back to my checklist.

Just as I was about to call for takeoff I heard tower give a third call for him to go around. I looked up and noted he was still having problems but then my view was obstructed as he transitioned behind my hangar. I then heard another aircraft call tower and state "you just had an airplane crash" or something close to that. There was no Mayday/Pan/99 call to alert anyone to the emergency and aircraft who did not hear or recognize what was said kept calling to taxi across runways and for takeoff. It took a few seconds for tower to recognize what had happened and start the response.

## Cawthra Joshua

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**From:** Scott Roelfs [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, Au  
**To:** Cawthra Joshua  
**Subject:** RE: ANC13FA084 Witness Statement

I was the pilot of N46694, a 1969 Cessna 172K. I had two passengers with me and we had been flying in the Eagle River area. I contacted Merrill tower at Moose Run golf course, and was told to do a straight in approach to runway 25. Around Muldoon I was told to follow traffic on left base, which I spotted quickly, and that I was cleared for 25. I maintained my altitude of 1000 ft until I reached Boniface, then put on 20 degree flaps and maintained 80mph to lose altitude. At Bragaw I throttled back and added another notch of flaps, keeping my approach speed at 70 mph. I touched down on 25 and was rolling out. While still rolling, prior to reaching taxiway Foxtrot, I heard the controller give a “go around”. I exited the runway at Foxtrot and contacted ground. I was initially cleared to taxi to parking, but was quickly told to get clear of taxiway November. There was an empty parking space off the taxiway I pulled into, facing to the west. Only then did I see the smoke rising off the end of 25. My passengers also were not aware anything had happened until this point. My passengers and I didn’t see the aircraft involved in the accident. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me; my work information is [REDACTED] Thank you

Scott Roelfs

Scott Roelfs, P.E.  
VEI Consultants

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
[REDACTED]

## Cawthra Joshua

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**From:** Bart [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 27, 2013 9:10 PM  
**To:** Cawthra Joshua  
**Subject:** Re: Witness Statement

Joshua,

per our telephone conversation, In the afternoon of August 24th, I was at the local Chevrolet dealership that is located at the west end of the Merrill Field Airport. I looked down a row of new trucks (looking east) and quickly noticed, just above the tree line, a Cessna 150 that appeared to be in a near vertical stall position. I could not hear the engine (do to the car traffic on 5th Avenue) but also it appeared that the propeller was windmilling and not under constant power. All that I could see was the underside of the craft as it slowly stopped climbing and it broke left descending into what appeared to be a direct nose dive. I only saw the plane break off to the left for a second or two before it was out of my sight due to the tree line coverage. Within moments I heard the impact crash. I then turned to our sales representative and said that a plane just crashed. He quickly motioned to get into his vehicle and we drove to the fence located at the west end of the airstrip. I remember looking at the position of the wreckage and thinking it was consistent in my mind with how the plane broke left and was slightly peeling away - like they might have been trying to make it back to the airstrip. The wings were perpendicular to the airstrip. The sales representative scaled the chain link/barb wire fence and ran to wreckage. A small fire was started at the nose of the plane and was beginning to increase in size. As the sales rep looked into the plane, it appeared that he was trying to open the passenger side door without success. At about this time, two individuals were running towards the wreckage and two APD vehicles were driving towards the scene as well. I only stayed for a few minutes longer before walking back to my POV and left.....This about all that I can tell you from what I saw....I hope this helps....Bart Mauldin

## Cawthra Joshua

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**From:** Niemiec, Andrew J (DOT) [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 03, 2013 7:47 PM  
**To:** Cawthra Joshua  
**Subject:** RE: ANC13FA084 Witness Statement

This is a summary of my observations of the accident aircraft at Merrill Field.

My wife and I were cleaning our aircraft in Gulf West parking. My wife was waiting for a different C150 or C152 to take off (it parks near us and had taxied out with a female pilot so caught her interest). I heard what sounded like a smaller plane taking off and we turned to look. It was not the plane that taxied out, but a different Cessna.

Observed plane that I thought was taking off, initially sounded like it was making full power. Approximately one-third down runway 25 and approx 150' above ground the engine cutout and then quit for a couple seconds (long enough to see the prop rpm slowing). Plane started to descend and engine restarted and was not running well. Plane went behind hangers approximately inline with tower. I assumed the pilot was landing the plane and made comment out loud to my wife that that's what they need to do. I mentioned to her that there was room to land. Emergency vehicles started to arrive and I thought the plane may have landed long off the runway. My wife said she saw the plane just above building height towards the west end of the field.

We walked to the pilots lounge (airport offices) and observed the accident site and emergency response.

As I said, I thought the plane was taking off. When the engine was cutting out, quit and restarted it sounded like fuel starvation or possibly water in the fuel (there was rain in the prior days). I don't know if this is relevant, but it was my observation at the time and the conversation with my wife at the time.

Andrew J. Niemiec  
[REDACTED]

Statement from Ed Kornfield made August 31, 2013

On the day of the accident (Saturday, August 24, 2013) I was working inside the Hangar.Net hangar, approximately mid-field on runway 7/25 at Merrill Field. The large hangar doors were approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  open. I could only see part of the runway. There were three of us in the hangar. At least two of us heard the sound of an engine powering up, backfiring and possibly momentarily quit or significantly lose power. I stated, "That doesn't sound good" and proceeded to go outside to take a look. At least one of the other people (pilot-Robert Renner) went outside with me. When I got outside, I saw a Cessna 150 (152?) about 200 feet to the West of my location at approximately 75' in the air. The deck angle of the airplane appeared to be in level flight. The airplane was not climbing nor descending. It appeared to me the engine was backfiring, missing and running rough. It sounded to me as though the engine was at less than full power. The airplane continued down the runway in level flight, at what appeared to be approximately 60 knots airspeed. It was neither climbing nor descending (at least not noticeably). At the end of the runway, I estimate its altitude to have been between 75 to 150' AGL, when suddenly it banked hard left to about 50 to 60 degrees of bank. It appeared to be an effort to turn around towards the runway. I even said out loud, "don't do that; don't turn around". At approximately 90 degrees heading from runway 25 (aircraft was facing South) in the left turn, the airplane appeared to lose control and continued banking (past 90 degrees to about 135 degrees or beyond), then the nose descended rapidly to a nearly vertical position. I heard the thud when it hit the ground. I could not hear to tell if the engine was still running rough when the aircraft was starting to turn around. In a few minutes, we saw some black smoke, and about 5-10 minutes later the smoke got heavier. One of the people with me drove over to see if he could help. We called 911 and alerted the police. One of the pilots waiting for take-off in a 185, came taxiing in and reported that the tower had told the airplane to go around.

Ed Kornfield

