

Western Village

RACE CONTROL

Inn & Casino

RENO AIR RACES

STEAD FIELD. WIND S/W GUST TO 20+

17 SEPT. 1978

MY NAME IS FRANCIS E. BENKO, FOR 20+ YEARS I'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH AIR RACING, IN PARTICULAR FORMULA O. TYPE A/C. ON THIS DATE I WAS ASSIGNED BY FORMULA O (IFI) TO THE RACE CONTROL TOWER AS OBSERVER TO MEL RACE CONTROL BOSS JACK THOMAS TO RUN THE IFI RACE, MY KNOWLEDGE OF THE IDENTIFICATION BEING MELPP.

AT APPROX 0945 HRS ON THIS DATE THE FOLLOWING OCCURRED. DURING AIR RACE HEAT 1C AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE RACE, 4 A/C PULLED UP AND OVER THE RACE COURSE TO COOL OFF & STRING OUT (FOLLOW ONE ANOTHER), & SET UP FOR A RIGHT BASE LANDING ON RUNWAY 26.

THE SPACING BEING APPROX 1/2 MILE BETWEEN EACH A/C. THE FIRST A/C #17 HAD ALREADY TOUCHED DOWN & ROLLED OUT, A/C #19 THE SECOND A/C IN STRING WAS OVER THE 26 RUNWAY NUMBERS & LANDED SAFELY. A/C #26 WAS ON SHORT FINAL AND APPEARED TO BE CLOSING A LITTLE FAST ON A/C #19, THE PILOT OPT FOR A GO AROUND AND BEGAN A LEFT TURN AND BROKE FROM THE LANDING PATTERN TO INITIALS

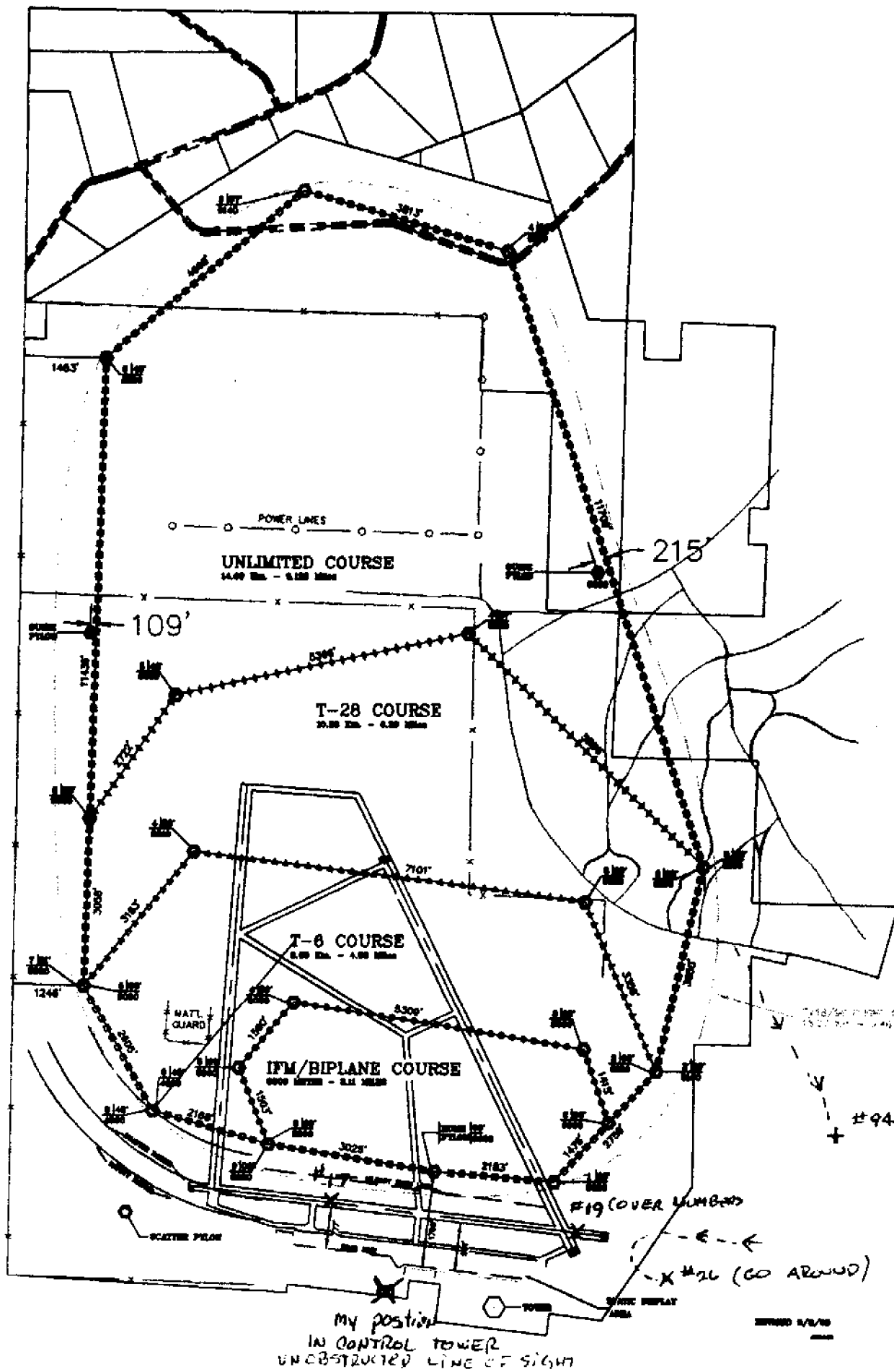
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(over)

A 360° SET UP FOR THE 26 RUNWAY. AT THAT TIME WHEN A/C #26 WAS APPROX 140°-160° IN THE MANUEVER MY ATTENTION WAS DIRECTED TO THE FINAL A/C #94 WHICH HAD JUST ENTERED HIS RIGHT TURN TO THE BASE LEG OF HIS LANDING SEQUENCE, HIS SPACING BEING 3/4+ MILES BEHIND THE #26 A/C WHICH WAS IN HIS MANUEVER TO GO ROUND. APPROX 2-3 SECONDS AFTER A/C #94 WAS INTO THE BASE LEG ^{AT APPROX. 600'-800'} A/C #94 SEEMED TO SUDDENLY SNAPROLL; DIRECTION OF FLIGHT IMMEDIATELY ~~TRANSITIONED~~ TRANSITIONED INTO A VERTICAL ATTITUDE, NO AUTO-ROTATION WAS OBSERVED, I IMMEDIATELY ~~WAS~~ SOUNDED A ~~VOICE~~ ^{VOICED} BACK TO AIRBOSS JACK THOMAS WHO THEN SOUNDED A "MAYDAY" OVER COMMUNICATION, SIMULTANEOUSLY, IFI OPS-BOSS SCOTT GARLAND CALLED OUT, "WE'VE GOT A CRASH." I DIDN'T COULDNOT SEE WHERE #94 A/C IMPACTED, NO SMOKE OR FIRE WAS OBSERVED. EMERGENCY EQUIP WAS SOMEWHAT SLOW IN RESPONSE DUE IN PART TO THE OUT OF SIGHT IMPACT AREA. A DIAGRAM OF MY POSITION IS ATTACHED, AS A GUIDE TO THIS LETTER.

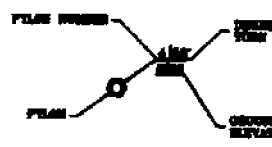



ATTACHMENT TO F. BENICO EYEWITNESS STATEMENT.



PIRAM ENGINEERS & LAND SURVEYORS
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- UNLIMITED COURSE
 - △△△△△ T-6 COURSE
 - IFM/BIPLANE COURSE
 - T-28 COURSE



#94 (APPROX POSITION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT)

-X #26 (GO AROUND)

MY position
 IN CONTROL TOWER
 UNOBSTRUCTED LINE OF SIGHT

PIRAM 1/2/93

Formula Unit #1

consisted of four aircraft. At the completion of the race, the first two aircraft were on the ground, and the third aircraft was on final, with the last one on base. The aircraft on final pulled up and turned to his left. At the same instant, the one on base pulled up and turned to his right and instantly went into a near ~~vertical~~ vertical climb.

~~Dear Linda~~

Wesley Jupp Squadron

9-17-98

- Last two formulas -

on Final The one "on final" ~~of~~ pulled
up and left - (his left)

on Base The formula - pulled up
and right - at the top
of his right turn he
nose ~~over~~ over and went
straight down -

~~Pat Jordan~~
Civil Air Patrol
Washoe Co. Jeep Squadron

9-17-98

1245 pm

Chris Ferguson Race #26 IF1
Comms SM Lead, Surface Penetration.

This Statement is what my observations
when on the Formula 1 Race at @945am
this morning when Race #94 Dick Roberts
crashed.

at the time prior to starting the Race
I saw no problems with Dick Roberts
on ~~the~~ his airplane. This gentleman was
one of the outstanding people that the class
was made up of, and was one of the
Better pilots in the group.

we raced with no problems in fact I could not
get around him because he was flying
So good! after we passed the checkered
flag we both started a ~~climb~~
climb left turn into the inner
course area (standard procedure for exiting the
Race course, at about 1000' to 1200' AGL
I rolled out wings level and saw #94
above me and directly to my right ~~at~~ top.

@ 1100+ yds out, we both then made a
right turn to down wind sort of a 90°-20°
off the ~~base~~ Race course to 26 Runway.
my base was out by the blue edge Fencing
#17 Carl Swanson. @ 1 mile or more ahead

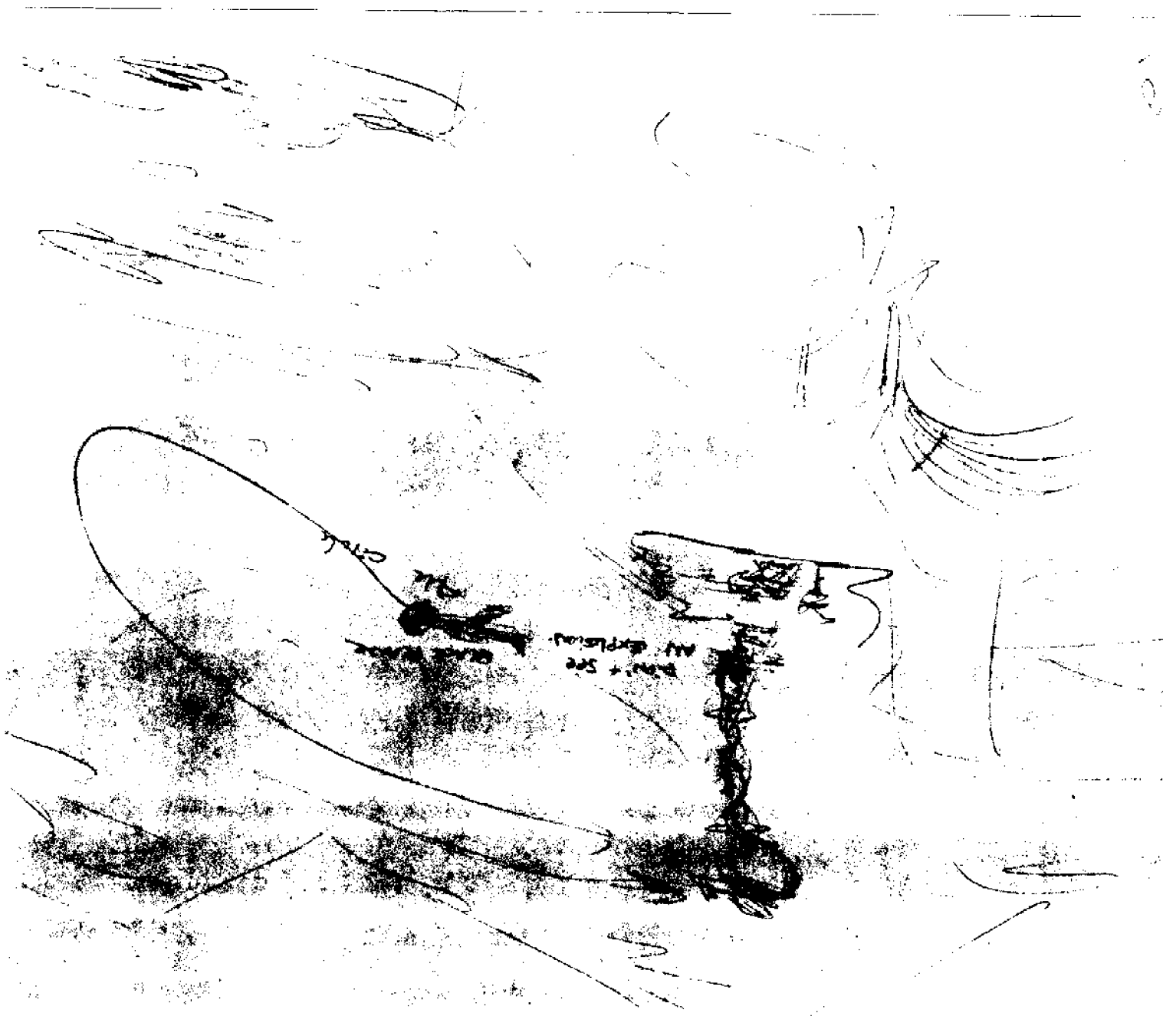
at this time I did not have any
Sherwood in sight #19 or #94
my judgement at this time was that
#19 was ahead of me and #94
was behind and to my left.
on Final I was at approximately
800' AGL to 600' AGL 120 mph, at 500' AGL
#19 saw Sherwood who was in the #2
position for landing moved into position ahead
of me the wind conditions speed and
proximity of #19 to be safe I made
the decision to make a left 360° turn
to maintain spacing. #19 did not do
~~anything~~ anything wrong in his maneuvering onto
Final approach it was strictly my decision
to do a left 360° turn. The weather ~~conditions~~
conditions on Base to Final where gusty
and Bumpy and the 24 Runway does have
a sink at the end of the Runway.
But where #94 was at there was no
adverse conditions to cause this type
of accident

These statements are true to the
Best of my recollection

D. J. F.

[Redacted Signature]

9/17/98



9.17.98

paper

Guido Heber

9-12-98

I had helped Launch the Formula 1's on runway 26. AFTER the 1 minute warning we cleared the runway in one of the tow vehicles and moved down the taxi way to the clear zone. I watched the race from there. Everything in the race as appeared to go normally. After the race the tow vehicle started to move down the taxi way to the west. At the same time I was watching the ~~aircraft~~ race Aircraft land the first 2 landed ok. ~~the~~ But the 3rd made a go around, which he did ok. At the same time I notice the 4th plane (Dick Roberts) was quite a ways to the ENE. He was in a RH Turn when I first spotted him. The Turn appeared to just get tighter and tighter and he disappeared behind the ridge in a near vertical attitude. It didn't appear to me that he was in a spin but rather an ever increasing spiralling descent.

Rick Gritters
~~Richard Gritters~~

As one of the crew members of base 94, Dick Roberts airplane, I was waiting near the hangar on the west end of the runway. I saw the first two of the four plane field land normally. When I next caught sight of Dick Roberts plane it was in a steep descending turn to the right which continued to steepen until he appeared to be nearly vertical as it passed below the horizon.

Rick PiERCY

A stylized signature consisting of two overlapping loops, with a thick black horizontal bar obscuring the lower portion of the letters.

David R Yanish

Peny No 89506

I (David) was in my R.V. Having Lunch with wife (Roberta) when we heard a hit on the ground we looked at each other and said The races really close this year. half a second later ~~we~~ we heard fence ripping and metal and aluminum bending. we ran out of R.V. big cloud of dust saw plane wheel and fence broken. I (David) looked up saw plane in air said how can he land the just dropped his wheel, then wife (Roberta) saw plane and said there it is its behind corral & Lois barn. I (David) looked and saw the pilot no movement saw blood. told wife (Roberta) call 911 I (David) ran to front opened gates also neighbors gate. I flagged emergency vehicles to let them know where plane was.

~~David Yanish~~

<u>NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD</u>		Time 1532	Date Dec 19/1998
RECORD OF [] VISIT [] CONFERENCE OR [X] TELEPHONE CALL			
Name(s) of Person(s) contacted or in conference and location RAY SHEKWOOD		Routing	
		Symbol	Initials
Subject LA498LA 295			
Digest MR. SHEKWOOD RACED IN THE INTERNATIONAL FORMULA ONE CLASS, HE WAS A FRIEND OF MR. ROBERTS. HE BELIEVED THAT MR. ROBERTS RACED FOR 3 YEARS AT REND AND HAD ABOUT 30 HOURS IN CASSUTTS.			
Conclusions, Action Taken, or Required			
Date 10/19/98	Title ASI-SWIRL	Signature 