

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

 IN RE: :
 :
 THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT THAT : NTSB Accident No.
 OCCURRED AT APPLE VALLEY : WPR16FA035
 AIRPORT ON DECEMBER 6, 2015 :
 :

INTERVIEW OF: BELLA CSONKA

Monday,
December 7, 2015

Apple Valley, California

BEFORE

STEPHEN STEIN, NTSB

This transcript was produced from audio
provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:25 p.m.

1
2
3 MR. STEIN: December 7, 2015 about 1:25 p.m.
4 I'm here with Mr. Bella Csonka, a friend of the
5 passenger.

6 Mr. Csonka, do you agree to be audio taped?

7 MR. CSONKA: Okay.

8 MR. STEIN: Okay. Excellent. All right.

9 Mr. Csonka, could you explain the passenger -- so
10 you're a friend of the passenger. Is that correct?

11 MR. CSONKA: Yes.

12 MR. STEIN: Okay. How did the passenger --
13 what was his involvement that day in the flight? Was
14 he just going along for a pleasure flight or what was
15 going on?

16 MR. CSONKA: He was -- he was talking to me
17 about maybe at one time to buy into an L-39. Not here
18 but in Van Nuys and he wanted an introductory ride.
19 That's all they were doing and it was a beautiful day
20 for that.

21 MR. STEIN: So he himself is a pilot then I
22 take it?

23 MR. CSONKA: Yes.

24 MR. STEIN: Was he a private pilot,
25 commercial?

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1 MR. CSONKA: He's a private pilot with, I
2 think, an instrument rating but I'm not 100 percent
3 sure.

4 MR. STEIN: That's okay. So how long has he
5 been flying for?

6 MR. CSONKA: I know him for the last seven
7 years and he started before that so I don't know how
8 many years he's been flying.

9 MR. STEIN: Okay. How did he come into
10 contact with the pilot of the airplane?

11 MR. CSONKA: That's where I feel very bad
12 about it. I have a hangar across from Mike. Gaza
13 (phonetic) went down to San Diego when the Red Bull
14 races were down there and he is so intrigues by the Red
15 Bull pilots, and especially by Mike Mangold, that he
16 was standing in line there to get his autograph.

17 It was a long line and he would never get to
18 it. When we were -- I'm a mechanic working at the
19 place where he was flying out of part-time. When he
20 mentioned that to me, I said, "Well, if you come out to
21 Apple Valley Mike has a hangar across from me and I can
22 do better than that. You don't have to stand in line.
23 I will introduce you to him."

24 At that time he said he purchased a flying
25 helmet, a Navy flying helmet. I said, "Well, let me

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1 have the helmet and if I see Mike, I'll ask him to
2 autograph it." I had the helmet for about two weeks.
3 I didn't have a chance then. He came out and visited
4 me every other weekend. We were very good friends.

5 One weekend he was out there and Mike pulled
6 up. I was really friendly with Mike, too. I said,
7 "Hey, I forgot to have Mike sign it but, here, let me
8 introduce you to him." They talked and that's how he
9 got to know Mike.

10 MR. STEIN: Okay.

11 MR. CSONKA: And I feel --

12 MR. STEIN: You shouldn't. It's not your
13 fault. You were trying to give him something really
14 good.

15 MR. CSONKA: Yes.

16 MR. STEIN: So I think that's all the
17 questions I have that I can think of.

18 Do you have any questions?

19 MR. CSONKA: Anything?

20 MR. STEIN: No, that's it. I was just
21 curious about the history.

22 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
23 off the record resumed at 1:36 p.m.)

24 MR. STEIN: December 7, 2015, 1:36 p.m.

25 Still here with Bella Csonka. He's going to take us

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1 through the accident site.

2 Bella, do you still consent to being
3 recorded?

4 MR. CSONKA: Yes.

5 MR. STEIN: Fantastic. He witnessed the
6 accident. Bella, go ahead. What we are going to do is
7 two things. No. 1, I'm going to have you describe
8 everything you saw. Then I'm going to videotape you
9 showing us what happened.

10 MR. CSONKA: Okay.

11 MR. STEIN: First of all, go ahead and
12 describe what you saw.

13 MR. CSONKA: What I saw is after the lift
14 off it looked to me that he must have lift off
15 somewhere around here and a very shallow angle I think
16 to make it comfortable.

17 MR. STEIN: The witness pointed at mid-
18 field.

19 MR. CSONKA: At mid-field. I think it could
20 be by this taxi here but it could be mid-field.

21 MR. STEIN: About mid-field.

22 MR. CSONKA: Yes.

23 MR. STEIN: Forward of mid-field.

24 MR. CSONKA: Forward of mid-field at a
25 shallow angle. I thought the reason because I know

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1 Mike and this was the gentleman's first ride in an
2 airplane like that and he was making it comfortable for
3 him with takeoff, not to a high climb or whatever.

4 Then when I -- after it passed by me I
5 noticed -- that's when I heard and I saw some fire
6 balls coming out from the exhaust of the aircraft. I
7 remember about two of them before I took my -- I'm
8 sorry.

9 (Cell phone interruption)

10 MR. CSONKA: I'm sorry. After I seen about
11 two of the small fire balls coming out, or whatever it
12 is, I wanted to take a picture but then I threw my
13 camera down and I watched the aircraft further slowly
14 climbing but not accelerating. There were several more
15 of these little fires and then small fire coming out of
16 the tail. Then the aircraft tilted left wing down and
17 started with the nose went down at about a 45-degree
18 angle.

19 It's my recollection that the left wing tip
20 hit still the remaining very short distance of the
21 runway. When that wing tip hit, the nose came down and
22 by then it was more than 90 degrees when it ended up
23 sliding in the dirt on its back. That's what I saw. I
24 jumped in my golf cart and that's when another
25 gentleman passed me with his little car. We were both

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1 trying to get up there to the airplane to see if there
2 was anything we could have done.

3 MR. STEIN: So stepping back a little bit,
4 you mentioned a fireball coming out of the aircraft.

5 MR. CSONKA: Yes.

6 MR. STEIN: So whereabouts did that happen?

7 MR. CSONKA: When it passed me right about
8 by this mark, the touchdown mark.

9 MR. STEIN: Okay. So the witness is
10 pointing to the last 8 or 9/10s of the runway.

11 MR. CSONKA: That's when I started seeing
12 it. It was at that time --

13 MR. STEIN: Forward of A6 taxiway.

14 MR. CSONKA: It was still in a shallow climb
15 and then everything went wrong.

16 MR. STEIN: Okay. It was in a shallow
17 climb. About how many degrees would you say was the
18 nose? Was it a few degrees? Was it 45 degrees?

19 MR. CSONKA: No, no, no. It was a free
20 degrees. I think maybe 30 degrees. The whole liftoff
21 was in a very mild manner as he was going up.

22 MR. STEIN: This is level so about maybe --

23 MR. CSONKA: At about that angle. I would
24 say maybe 30 degrees.

25 MR. STEIN: That looks like about 20 or 30

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1 degrees. Okay. All right. I'm going to switch off
2 and videotape you showing us and taking us through what
3 you did.

4 MR. CSONKA: Unfortunately -- you know,
5 somehow this picture doesn't justify it because I
6 thought there is more dirt between the end of the
7 runway than that. It's probably just me. That's where
8 the airplane ended up before the taxi, right?

9 MR. STEIN: This is actually -- I think this
10 is wrong because there is a lot more space in this
11 overrun area.

12 MR. CSONKA: I know there is more.

13 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
14 off the record.)

15 MR. STEIN: We are here with Bella Csonka.
16 He is going to walk us through exactly what happened.
17 He's going to give us a visual depiction of exactly
18 what he witnessed using this Boeing 707 model.

19 Go ahead and show us exactly what you saw.

20 MR. CSONKA: I heard and saw the aircraft
21 speeding up. It started rolling on the runway and
22 somewhere around this area here it started in a shallow
23 climb to coming up. As it passed me I was standing
24 right here on the dirt between the taxiway and the fuel
25 pit when it passed me probably about 50 feet in the air

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1 or maybe a little bit higher. That's the first time I
2 saw some fire coming out of it and I heard a noise.

3 MR. STEIN: Okay.

4 MR. CSONKA: And some fire coming out of the
5 tailpipe. Several more fire puffs came out. When it
6 got to about the end of this ramp here, that's when the
7 aircraft started turning to the left. Then it started
8 sinking and then the nose came down. The left wing tip
9 touched the runway.

10 Then the nose went down still on the runway.
11 By then it was tilting more than 90 degrees. Then it
12 ended up on its back between the end of the runway and
13 the taxiway which is adjacent to 8 and 26 runways.
14 That's when it came to a stop. I was going up there
15 with another person who got there first because my golf
16 cart doesn't go that fast.

17 He ran up to the cockpit and see if there is
18 anything he can do. I pulled up just then when he ran
19 up to the airplane. Fortunately I didn't even make it
20 to the airplane. Somebody said there is nothing we can
21 do.

22 MR. STEIN: Quick question for you.

23 MR. CSONKA: Yes.

24 MR. STEIN: The debris path itself shows
25 that it starts about right here which is interesting to

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1 me because the initial impact point is right here to
2 the right of the runway. When he was taking off did
3 you see him --

4 MR. CSONKA: Drifting?

5 MR. STEIN: At all?

6 MR. CSONKA: No. I didn't see it but don't
7 forget I was way back here.

8 MR. STEIN: Good point.

9 MR. CSONKA: I really didn't try to look and
10 see where he is going. I just seen the trouble the
11 aircraft had and by then it started the wing coming
12 down. I honestly thought when we looked at that part
13 of the runway that it was -- well, maybe I seen the
14 blacktop but to me it looked like maybe he hit here.

15 MR. STEIN: That's fine with the
16 perspective.

17 MR. CSONKA: I mean, back then I was in
18 disbelief that it's happening.

19 MR. STEIN: Okay.

20 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
21 off the record.)

22

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24

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Aircraft Accident that Occurred at Apple
Valley Airport
Accident No. WPR16FA035
Interview of Bella Csonka

DATE: 12-07-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 11 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

 IN RE: :
 :
 THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT THAT : NTSB Accident No.
 OCCURRED AT APPLE VALLEY : WPR16FA035
 AIRPORT ON DECEMBER 6, 2015 :
 :

INTERVIEW OF: Raymond Dedrick

Monday,
December 7, 2015

Apple Valley, California

BEFORE

STEPHEN STEIN, NTSB

This transcript was produced from audio provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:00 p.m.

MR. STEIN: December 7, 2015, approximately
1:00 p.m. We are here with our second witness.

Sir, what is your name?

MR. DEDRICK: Raymond Dedrick.

MR. STEIN: Raymond Dedrick. Can you spell
your last name, sir?

MR. DEDRICK: D-E-D-R-I-C-K.

MR. STEIN: Thank you very much, sir. Do
you consent to being recorded?

MR. DEDRICK: Yes, I do.

MR. STEIN: Excellent. Okay. Raymond, go
ahead and take it away. Please describe what you
witnessed.

MR. DEDRICK: I was sitting in my chair at
the fuel pit where my hangar is. I observed them
pulling the L-39 up with a pickup truck and refueled.
They refueled it there and I watched that. I usually
help him but he had enough help that day. There was
two other people helping him. One of them turned out
to be his passenger.

So they refueled it and then they pulled it
over in front of me and parked it over on the edge of
the fuel pit and disconnected the truck and so forth.

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1 Mike Mangold, who was the pilot, was briefing his
2 passenger. That went on for 45 minutes, the briefing.

3 By the time he got him into the cockpit and
4 briefed him on everything -- he's very thorough. I've
5 seen it before with his passengers many times. The
6 truck was moved over by the fuel pit and out of the
7 way. Finally he got in there and started the engine
8 and the engine started as normal.

9 They taxied out and they went to 18 and we
10 sat there and we sat there. Pretty soon we hear him
11 coming. As it goes by me I'm looking at him and
12 there's fire coming out of the tailpipe shoo, shoo,
13 shoo. He doesn't have much altitude. Maybe 30 feet.
14 Gears are still down. Normally when he goes by there
15 he's at 500 feet and climbing out.

16 MR. STEIN: Whereabouts was this in relation
17 to you?

18 MR. DEDRICK: I'm probably two-thirds down
19 the way from 18.

20 MR. STEIN: Okay.

21 MR. DEDRICK: Two-thirds probably.

22 MR. STEIN: Okay.

23 MR. DEDRICK: Probably right in there.
24 Probably right in there. You got me screwed up now.
25 Which way are we looking?

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1 MR. STEIN: Take your time. Here is 18.

2 MR. DEDRICK: Okay.

3 MR. STEIN: There you go. Take your time.
4 There is absolutely no rush.

5 MR. DEDRICK: So that's the fuel pit where
6 there, isn't it? Yeah, that's my hangar right there.

7 MR. STEIN: It sure is.

8 MR. DEDRICK: That's right there. That's my
9 hangar right there.

10 MR. STEIN: The witness is pointing to a bed
11 of hangars about two-thirds down runway 18.

12 MR. DEDRICK: Yes. Anyway, the engine was
13 malfunctioning and he had hardly any altitude but he
14 kept going. I wonder why he didn't slam it back on the
15 ground. The engine kept malfunctioning and
16 malfunctioning. Finally he started a left turn I
17 thought but, no, it just rolled over on its back and
18 went "thump."

19 MR. STEIN: So when it rolled over did it
20 knife edge?

21 MR. DEDRICK: It rolled steady. I thought
22 he was going to make a left turn. It went just like
23 that and the nose hit first.

24 MR. STEIN: So it rolled over inverted?

25 MR. DEDRICK: Yes. The nose hit first but

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1 it was almost flat.

2 MR. STEIN: Okay. You said back to where
3 you saw so when he was passing you, you said that's
4 when you saw flames shooting out the back?

5 MR. DEDRICK: Yes. And it would quit and
6 then here it would come again, "Whoop, whoop." Unused
7 fuel was coming out the back. I don't know if the
8 compressor stalled up there or what. The engine was
9 definitely malfunctioning.

10 MR. STEIN: So the fire coming out of the
11 exhaust shaft would you say was intermittent?

12 MR. DEDRICK: Intermittent, yes.

13 MR. STEIN: Did it ever become steady?

14 MR. DEDRICK: No.

15 MR. STEIN: It did not? Did you hear any
16 noises before you --

17 MR. DEDRICK: You could hear a "woo, woo,
18 woo."

19 MR. STEIN: While it was doing this or
20 before?

21 MR. DEDRICK: As it sent by me. Of course,
22 I didn't -- somebody else said it was doing it before
23 it ever got to my hangar. It was doing the same thing,
24 shooting flames out the tailpipe.

25 MR. STEIN: When you saw him what kind of

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1 angle of attack would you say he was at?

2 MR. DEDRICK: He was nearly flat.

3 MR. STEIN: He was nearly flat?

4 MR. DEDRICK: He wasn't climbing at all. I
5 think when he rolled over he probably had less than 50
6 feet altitude.

7 MR. STEIN: Okay. At any point -- so when
8 he lifted off the runway -- when you saw him go by,
9 from that point to the end of the accident site did he
10 change his pitch angle at all?

11 MR. DEDRICK: No.

12 MR. STEIN: He was flat?

13 MR. DEDRICK: Well, he had the nose up a
14 little bit but it wasn't climbing.

15 MR. STEIN: He had the nose up a little bit?
16 About how many degrees would you say?

17 MR. DEDRICK: Not much.

18 MR. STEIN: Was it -- would you say it was -
19 -

20 MR. DEDRICK: I would say five degrees.

21 MR. STEIN: Five degrees? So about like
22 that?

23 MR. DEDRICK: Yeah.

24 MR. STEIN: Okay, five degrees.

25 MR. DEDRICK: It wasn't climbing at all.

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1 MR. STEIN: Got you.

2 MR. DEDRICK: I don't know why. The engine
3 wasn't performing like it should is the reason why it
4 wouldn't.

5 MR. STEIN: Okay. I'm going to go ahead and
6 switch --

7 Do you guys have any questions for him that
8 we could include in the audio?

9 PARTICIPANT: Did you observe the gear? Was
10 it down?

11 MR. DEDRICK: The gear was down all the
12 time. Even when it inverted it was still down.

13 MR. STEIN: Okay. Impact you said was nose
14 first.

15 MR. DEDRICK: Yes. It was practically flat,
16 though.

17 MR. STEIN: I'm going to go ahead and shut
18 this off and move to a video. Of course, with every
19 video or audio we've done, we need your password.

20 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
21 off the record resumed.)

22 MR. DEDRICK: I didn't see him until he was
23 right there.

24 Mr. STEIN: Okay.

25 MR. DEDRICK: So he was climbing --- are you

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1 doing this? He probably had 25 to 30 feet of altitude
2 when he went by me and the gears were down and the
3 engine was malfunctioning. When he got to
4 approximately the end of the runway it rolled to the
5 left.

6 MR. STEIN: Okay.

7 MR. DEDRICK: Completely upside down. Gears
8 were still up and it nosed in.

9 MR. STEIN: Got it.

10 MR. DEDRICK: And a hell of a ball of fire.
11 I didn't get off my chair. I said, "There's no sense
12 of me going down there." A lot of people did run down
13 there but they didn't get close to it.

14 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
15 off the record.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Aircraft Accident that Occurred at Apple
Valley Airport
Accident No. WPR16FA035
Interview of Raymond Dedrick

DATE: 12-07-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 9 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

 IN RE: :
 : :
 THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT THAT : NTSB Accident No.
 OCCURRED AT APPLE VALLEY : WPR16FA035
 AIRPORT ON DECEMBER 6, 2015 :
 : :

INTERVIEW OF: Harry Monde

Monday,
 December 7, 2015

Apple Valley, California

BEFORE

STEPHEN STEIN, NTSB

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 provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:52 p.m.

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2
3 MR. STEIN: December 7, 2015 about 1:52 p.m.
4 Stephen Stein here. I'm with Mr. Harry Monde, M-O-N-D-
5 E. Is that correct?

6 MR. MONDE: Yes.

7 MR. STEIN: Harry, do you consent to being
8 recorded?

9 MR. MONDE: Yes.

10 MR. STEIN: Fantastic. We are going to do
11 this interview in two parts. Part No. 1 is going to
12 involve you describing everything you saw.

13 MR. MONDE: Okay.

14 MR. STEIN: We'll need a lot of details,
15 where you were in the airport, what you saw at specific
16 intervals on the runway, etc., etc. The second part we
17 will cut the audio recording switch to video recording
18 and I want you to demonstrate to us exactly what you
19 saw.

20 I'll leave it up to you. Go ahead and tell
21 me what you saw.

22 MR. MONDE: Okay. Do you need any data on
23 me or anything? This year I've been flying for 60
24 years.

25 MR. STEIN: You can give me your background

1 if you would like.

2 MR. MONDE: And I still have a current
3 plate.

4 MR. STEIN: Medical?

5 MR. MONDE: Medical and all that. I have a
6 hangar and a Comanche up here. Anyway, you want me to
7 show you exactly what happened?

8 MR. STEIN: Describe to me first what
9 happened.

10 MR. MONDE: Okay. I was sitting in the fuel
11 pit with all the other guys and watched Mike fuel the
12 plane. He was always around and just got that thing
13 out. Saw him start it up. Saw him taxi out and about
14 that time because the takeoff would have been out of
15 our view, I decided to go up and walk around where my
16 hangar is and stand off of the right side of the
17 taxiway and watch him take off, which I did. I was the
18 only one out there that had a view that would have been
19 blocked by the hangars. Okay?

20 He taxied down, went into the run-up area,
21 did whatever necessary, I guess. He's wasn't there too
22 long. Taxied out and he started down the runway. It's
23 my imagination or I don't know. I've seen him fly that
24 airplane several times.

25 I've never seen as much dark colored exhaust

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1 come out of the tailpipe as it did this time. I just
2 had a flashing bulb where I said, "Gee, that seems to
3 be an excessive amount of exhaust coming out of the
4 tailpipe." I didn't think anymore about it. It was
5 sort of a dark blackish gray like maybe only fuel
6 wasn't being burned at takeoff power.

7 Anyway, I was standing just west of the fuel
8 tank in between the hangars and he broke ground. When
9 he got to me he was probably 100, 125 feet above
10 ground. Everything looked okay and all of a sudden
11 "pop, pop, pop, pop" and flashes of fire coming out of
12 the back of the tailpipe.

13 MR. STEIN: That was about mid-field?

14 MR. MONDE: Right about smack -- where is
15 the fuel pit here?

16 MR. STEIN: I don't think it's depicted on
17 this map.

18 MR. MONDE: It's right about here.

19 MR. STEIN: Okay. The witness noted A5
20 taxiway.

21 MR. MONDE: Approximately halfway down the
22 runway.

23 MR. STEIN: Got you.

24 MR. MONDE: Now, I didn't know what the
25 "pop, pop, pop" was. I don't know much about jet

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1 engines. Somebody suggested he may be having a
2 compressor stall or something like that. I don't know
3 anything about that. My first impression was it
4 sounded like something was coming apart in the airplane
5 in the engine compartment but I can't testify to that
6 for sure.

7 Anyway, after about four, five, or six pops
8 there was flame coming out and it stopped for a few
9 seconds and he continued down the runway. All of a
10 sudden it started up again. He didn't appear to lose
11 any altitude but he did appear to have slowed down like
12 he didn't have the power to keep the airplane at
13 takeoff speed.

14 My own impression was I think even at that
15 point it might have been an emergency landing but I
16 couldn't understand why he didn't try to land the
17 thing. The gear was still down. I think he just tried
18 to keep the airplane in the air. When he got down to
19 the actual crash site, I could see there was a lot more
20 flame and black smoke being generated but nothing had
21 happened yet.

22 At that point another unusual thing. The
23 airplane did almost a 90 degree very sharp upturn.
24 Okay? It went up I don't know how many feet. I
25 couldn't tell from where I was but it went straight up.

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1 It took about -- it started into a 10 or 15 degree what
2 looked like it was going to be a left wing over.

3 The airplane stopped right there and then
4 just fell into the runway. Then there was a big
5 explosion and a couple after that. That is exactly
6 what I saw. I saw the airplane from takeoff to the
7 accident. Then I drove down there, a lot of us did, to
8 see if we could do anything to get the pilot out. We
9 new that they hadn't survived.

10 The only other thing and, again, this is an
11 impression. I got to ask you a question. Does that
12 pop pop pop and flames, is that any indication of a
13 compressor stall?

14 MR. STEIN: It indicates a lot of different
15 things. We have to figure out what it is.

16 MR. MONDE: There's one other thing I wanted
17 to tell you. What the hell was it? Like I said, the
18 airplane did maybe a 10, 15 degree turn like he was
19 going to try to turn around. He may have been trying
20 to go around but the thing fell into the runway and
21 everything went crazy.

22 The only thing I was going to suggest, and I
23 know nothing about jets, but did you guys go out and
24 examine the runway?

25 MR. STEIN: Yes.

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1 MR. MONDE: Okay. You didn't find any
2 little tiny debris or anything halfway down the runway?
3 That probably dispels my theory that maybe something
4 was coming apart in the engine because I guess if
5 something was, it would have spitted out the back of
6 the airplane and then the reason for that abrupt turn.
7 It was almost 90 degrees.

8 He was level. He went like this and that
9 was just before the crash. I got to thinking well
10 maybe something damaged the control cables in the
11 airplane or something like that, or he was trying to do
12 something and couldn't. Anyway, that's basically all I
13 can tell you.

14 MR. STEIN: Okay. I'm going to go ahead and
15 stop the recording now and we are going to switch over.

16 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
17 off the record and resumed.)

18 MR. STEIN: Second half of the interview
19 with Harry Monde. Go ahead and show me exactly what
20 you saw. Go ahead.

21 MR. MONDE: Okay. He came out of the run-up
22 area, turn the airplane on the runway, gave it full
23 power. Came down and I saw him about halfway when the
24 popping started and flames started coming out of the
25 tailpipe. I already told you about what I thought was

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1 excessive smoke when he did his full power thrust at
2 take off.

3 MR. STEIN: He was about 125 feet in the
4 air?

5 MR. MONDE: About 125 feet above the runway.
6 He continued on to the point of where he crashed. I
7 guess it's right around here or somewhere. Where's our
8 office?

9 MR. STEIN: It's right here.

10 MR. MONDE: Okay. It was past the office.
11 When he got to this point the aircraft did an abrupt
12 almost 90 degree straight turnup like this. Just for a
13 second did about maybe a 10 or 12 degree left turn like
14 he was going to do a wing over or something or make a
15 turn. Then the airplane fell straight down into the
16 runway and exploded.

17 MR. STEIN: He didn't knife edge? He didn't
18 roll?

19 MR. MONDE: No. He went from here to
20 straight up to a turn like this and then down into the
21 runway. Of course, you know, I was here and there was
22 a lot of black smoke but I could see the airplane. I
23 had a clear view of the airplane and I could actually
24 see the airplane in this position.

25 He had no forward speed. I mean, there was

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1 no way he could have recovered. The airplane was
2 actually in a turn like this. Not in a roll but in a
3 turn. It came up and went like this and like that. I
4 don't know if you call that a roll. I don't. I call
5 it a turn.

6 MR. STEIN: No, that's not a roll.

7 MR. MONDE: Okay. From that point to where
8 he took off, he went about -- he went about from here
9 to here where there was no backfiring or no popping
10 noise of the engine and it started again right about
11 here.

12 MR. STEIN: Okay.

13 MR. MONDE: And then it continued on. Then
14 there was an increase of black smoke coming out of the
15 airplane before the big explosion.

16 MR. STEIN: Okay. You said -- so you saw
17 everything. When he ran up did you hear from run up
18 the engine?

19 MR. MONDE: I just assumed that's what he
20 was doing because I was here. That is just typical.
21 Everybody who goes in there runs up their --

22 MR. STEIN: No kidding. Yeah, but did you
23 hear him run up the engine?

24 MR. MONDE: Did I hear it?

25 MR. STEIN: Yeah.

1 MR. MONDE: No, I didn't really hear it.

2 MR. STEIN: You didn't hear it?

3 MR. MONDE: I didn't really hear the engine
4 until it was facing me and coming this way. It
5 appeared to me he was there long enough to do whatever
6 engine check he had to do or whatever. One thing about
7 Mike that I know, and everybody knows, he was an
8 excellent pilot. He was very thorough. He was very
9 precise about everything he did when he was around the
10 airplane so I have a feeling that he probably did his
11 proper --

12 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
13 off the record at 2:03 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Aircraft Accident that Occurred at Apple
Valley Airport
Accident No. WPR16FA035
Interview of Harry Monde

DATE: 12-07-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 11 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

 IN RE: :
 :
 THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT THAT : NTSB Accident No.
 OCCURRED AT APPLE VALLEY : WPR16FA035
 AIRPORT ON DECEMBER 6, 2015 :
 :

INTERVIEW OF: John Hughes

Monday,
December 7, 2015

Apple Valley, California

BEFORE

STEPHEN STEIN, NTSB

This transcript was produced from audio provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

11:00 a.m.

MR. STEIN: My name is Stephen Stein. It's December 7 around 11:00 a.m. in Apple Valley, California. This is witness interview No. 1.

Sir, could you please state your name?

MR. HUGHES: John Hughes. H-U-G-H-E-S.

MR. STEIN: Excellent. And you do consent to be recorded?

MR. HUGHES: Yes.

MR. STEIN: Fantastic. Please start from the beginning what you observed.

MR. HUGHES: Well, I was sitting at the -- you see the oleanders over there? I was sitting on this side of the oleanders with about half a dozen other of my friends there. We are just enjoying the day. Mike with his truck towed the L-39 to the fuel pit, fueled it up, did a 180 and parked next to the gully and spent about an hour briefing the rear-seater.

I presume he's a rear-seater. I don't know where they were sitting. But they spent an hour preflighting and doing whatever and then they fired up, taxied down to 18 and I forgot about them. I used to go out and watch them take off but I've done it so many times I didn't this time.

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1 Well, just before he became visible this
2 side of the oleanders and the hangars, I heard this
3 bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. I would guesstimate
4 about eight, 10 times. Then he came into view and
5 about eight 10 times more it popped. And then it went
6 to a solid flame. Each time it banged and when it was
7 continuous it was a bright orange 20-foot, I
8 guesstimate, flame coming out of the tail cone.

9 MR. STEIN: Okay.

10 MR. HUGHES: It was obvious he was in deep
11 trouble. We watched him and by the time he got about
12 to the administration building on the other side of the
13 windsock there, he did one of these things. He just
14 kind of pitched up. First of all, when I first saw him
15 I would guesstimate he was about 100 feet, maximum 150
16 feet above the ground.

17 MR. STEIN: When the flames were coming out?

18 MR. HUGHES: Yes. Yes. When I first saw
19 him I guesstimate 100 to 150 feet. Usually he's like
20 500 feet by then so I knew he was in trouble. Then
21 when he got on the other side of the windsock there he
22 pitched up, rolled 90 degrees, and just dropped.
23 I saw the wing break off and then it was just dust. I
24 said, "Holy shit." Excuse me.

25 MR. STEIN: That's okay. Ray said, "They're

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1 dead." I says, "There's always a chance or not." I
2 ran to my car, this little blue Geo. I ran to it,
3 floored it all the way here. You can see the skid
4 marks as I'm coming off into the dirt to come over here
5 and park, you know, about 50 feet away from the burning
6 plane. The flame was small.

7 It was probably four foot in diameter behind
8 the cockpit. I didn't feel it was a threat. It was
9 about three-foot flames. I figured being a Jed Ace
10 (phonetic) it's not going to have a likelihood of
11 exploding. My friend is in there so I ran as fast as I
12 could. A canopy, I don't know if it was forward or
13 rear, was in my way and I just flung it aside.

14 It was not attached but it was between me
15 and the cockpit. I flung it out of my way, looked
16 inside. The first thing I looked for was the seat belt
17 to break them lose. I was reaching for my knife and I
18 looked up and I saw his face and it was just twisted
19 and distorted and flat and narrow. The top of his head
20 from the temples back over the ears was gone and
21 everything inside was gone, too. I go, "Wow."

22 I step to the right. I looked down at him,
23 just slightly down, and I stepped to the side and I got
24 to the backseater. I didn't even bother looking for
25 his seat belt this time. I looked at his face and his

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1 face was squished about three and a half to four inches
2 wide. I go, "No help here, man." I turned and I beat
3 feet and I got the hell out of there because the fire
4 was getting pretty big by then.

5 MR. STEIN: I can imagine. Taking it back
6 to the actual takeoff event, so could you do me a
7 favor? Actually, we'll probably switch to the
8 airplane.

9 MR. HUGHES: I can draw you a little picture
10 on the ground.

11 MR. STEIN: Let's do that. We are going to
12 go ahead and switch off for now and go to a video. I
13 don't have your pass code, man.

14 MR. HUGHES: I need a stick to draw with.

15 MR. STEIN: I need your pass code.

16 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
17 off the record.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Aircraft Accident that Occurred at Apple
Valley Airport
Accident No. WPR16FA035
Interview of John Hughes

DATE: 12-07-15

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