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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF ORANGE

JAN ("J.J.") WESSELS, AN)	Case No.:
INDIVIDUAL; NATALIE)	30-2018-00970710-CU-PO-CJC
RICHARDSON WESSELS, AN)	
INDIVIDUAL,)	
)	
Plaintiffs,)	
)	
v.)	
)	
RECREATIONAL AVIATION)	
FOUNDATION, AN ENTITY OF)	
UNKNOWN FORM; AND DOES 1)	
THROUGH 500, INCLUSIVE,)	
)	
Defendants.)	

DEPOSITION OF JAN MICHAEL WESSELS

Irvine, California

Thursday, March 14, 2019

Job No. NY-211475

Reported by:
 Sonia Llauger
 CSR No. 11676

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UNKNOWN FORM; AND DOES 1)	
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)	
Defendants.)	

Deposition of Jan Michael Wessels, taken on behalf of the Defendants, at 2020 Main Street, Suite 1100, Irvine, California, commencing at 10:10 a.m., Thursday, March 14, 2019, before Sonia Llauger, CSR No. 11676.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Tealeye Cornejo
Air Safety Investigator (Field)
Western Pacific Region

Person Contacted: Jay Wessel
NTSB Accident Number: WPR17LA088

Narrative:

Through the passengers' attorney, they reported that the airplane departed halfway down the runway, where the campgrounds were located. The passengers testified that the pilot used a very, very, high angle of attack, which did not fluctuate even during the stall, and failed to put the nose of the airplane down.

Date of accident April 20, 2017

Page 113 – Wessels and pilot talked about the airplane. Talked about the modifications and tires.

Page 114-139 talked about pulling the airplane out of the hangar to start staging the photoshoot. This included a preflight inspection. He noted that it was windy at that time. The pilot had driven them around the airport and the discussion of the photoshoot and pulling the airplane out of the hangar was in the car. Mr. Wessels asked if it would be a good idea to fly that evening because it was pretty windy. Mr. Wessels stated that maybe they could start the shoot at the hangar and then taxi to the campground. And just shoot those two locations and then film the rest in the morning.

He started documenting the airplane, and the preflight inspection. He stated that the pilot then started the airplane and then turned it off. They moved the airplane out of the hangar, and then he documented the airplane some more. Then they shot footage of the airplane from their car as the airplane taxied to the campground.

Once the pilot arrived at the campground, he parked the airplane and turned it off. Later that evening the wind had settled down, and the pilot asked if they wanted to go flying. Mr. Wessels indicated that the pilot was the expert and if he felt it was safe to fly, he would like to document the airstrip and campground from above.

The pilot told him that they would just fly in the pattern and he asked what that was. The pilot told him it was just in a circle.

The pilot boarded the airplane and started it to taxi it off the grass to the pavement. Mr. Wessels wife boarded the airplane and got into the rear seat. Mr. Wessels continued to take some photos before he boarded the airplane. The airplane taxied to the runway while he was still trying to buckle his seatbelt. Once his seatbelt was buckled, they took off.

The pilot asked if he wanted the doors opened or close for the flight and he asked if they could fly with the doors open.

He was seated in the front right seat.

Mr. Wessels stated they were off the ground very quickly and were gaining altitude. He stated that the takeoff felt like a rollercoaster with a weightless feeling. Shortly thereafter, the pilot indicated there was a problem and was troubleshooting solutions. He recalls the airplane facing up towards the clouds. He didn't recall if they started to descend or slow down, but they were at a pretty steep angle and then hit the tree.

Mr. Wessels stated that to the best of his recollection the engine sounded normal. (page 137) and ran at full power for the duration of the flight.

Page 304-307

Drove to Kernville, CA to volunteer their time and professional photography/video skills at the request of the pilot for a fly-in.

On the day of the accident, they boarded the airplane for a quick flight for aerial shots of the campgrounds and airport. Shortly after takeoff the airplane crashed.

Pilot stated that that the flight was personal, and they were taking photos for the passenger's apparel business – that is incorrect. Primary purpose was to assist the pilot in compiling marketing material (video) to promote the upcoming May 5-7, 2017, back country fly-in.