

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL CRASH OF BEECH 19A
MUSKETEER SPORT AT THE OROVILLE
AIRPORT IN OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA
ON JUNE 3, 2022

Accident No.: WPR22FA196

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Interview of: DANNIE MCLENDON

Oroville, California

Friday,
June 3, 2022

APPEARANCES:

STEPHEN STEIN, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Dannie McLendon:

By Mr. Stein

4

I N T E R V I E W

(5:40 p.m. PT)

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3 MR. STEIN: This is Stephen Stein with the NTSB. June 3rd,
4 2022 at 5:40 p.m. Pacific Time in Oroville, California.

5 Dannie, would you go ahead and state your first and last name
6 and spell it please?

7 MR. MCLENDON: Yes. First name is Dannie, D-A-N-N-I-E, my
8 last name, McLendon, M-C-L-E-N-D-O-N.

9 MR. STEIN: Excellent. And Dannie, do you consent to being
10 recorded?

11 MR. MCLENDON: Yes.

12 MR. STEIN: Thank you very much. Okay. Great.

13 And then Henry, why don't you add your name and spelling as
14 well?

15 MR. SODERLUND: Henry Soderlund, H-E-N-R-Y, S-O-D-E-R-L-U-N-
16 D, and I also give permission to be recorded.

17 MR. STEIN: Thank you Henry. Excellent. All right.

INTERVIEW OF DANNIE MCLENDON

18
19 BY MR. STEIN:

20 Q. Dannie, go ahead and give us a little background. Tell us
21 about the previous flight as far as your experience and then we'll
22 talk about what you observed on the day of the accident.

23 A. So sometime back -- Ron, Ronald McHale (ph.), who was in the
24 left seat in the airplane. He and I are good friends. He's also
25 -- he was also my CFI and I'm a student pilot, so we've flown a

1 lot together.

2 And so sometime back, he bought a quarter ownership in this
3 airplane. So it sat in the hangar for a while and about two weeks
4 ago we decided to try to take it out. So we came down, we did all
5 the pre-flights, everything looked good, and we attempted to take
6 off on runway 31, right here next to us. And so as we got the
7 airplane into the air, I was piloting. As we got the airplane
8 into the air, about maybe 40 feet off the ground, it stopped
9 climbing, but it didn't appear to lose any RPMs. It just wasn't
10 pulling anymore. So Ron took the controls when we failed to
11 climb, and he, you know, he pulled out the power, he shoved it
12 back in, did that a couple of times. We settled the plane back to
13 the ground and we stopped.

14 So we took another route. We went back to the beginning of
15 the runway where Ron attempted to fly the plane himself. I was in
16 the plane, same thing. We took off, got, you know, maybe 40, 50
17 feet off of the ground, 60, whatever it was, not much, and same
18 routine, settled the plane back down again. We hangered it.

19 So --

20 Q. Real quick, and I'm sorry to stop you. But just for the
21 visual, this is 31, right?

22 A. Yes. This is 31 going this way.

23 Q. Got it.

24 A. 13 going that way.

25 Q. Copy that. Okay. So whereabouts did you get -- did you take

1 off and get to about 40, 50 feet off the ground?

2 A. I would estimate that we cleared the ground somewhere around
3 where the hangars are there, about parallel with the hangars. I
4 would say that probably, we flew the airplane to right down in
5 here somewhere, and let it land.

6 We were up for a little bit because we didn't expect a
7 problem so we nearly ran out of runway when we attempted to stop.
8 So -- but we did get it stopped, went back around. Second time,
9 we were kind of prepared for that. You know, took off, kind of
10 got it back down quicker. So that was two weeks ago.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So Ron called his friend, Kurt. That was the guy that was in
13 the plane that passed away with him. And Kurt's been a pilot
14 forever and ever. They've known each other a long, long time.
15 They've flown a lot of planes together. And so Kurt -- he called
16 Kurt up because Kurt was a really good pilot. He was flying every
17 week, had a lot of experience with all kinds of things. So he was
18 going to have Kurt come out and help him check the airplane out
19 and see if they could figure out what was happening with it.

20 So we got here about noon. We were waiting on Kurt. Pre-
21 flighted the airplane, everything was good. There were -- when
22 we'd flown it two weeks ago we filled up -- well, not filled up
23 the tanks, but we had 20 gallons in each tank. So minus whatever
24 it took to make those two passes down the runway, that's what we
25 had for fuel.

1 So everything was good and Kurt got here. So Ron and Kurt
2 pulled out to make an attempt to take off on this thing and see
3 what was going on. So -- and then I gave you guys the video.

4 So they came down right over here by the sock. And there's a
5 run up area right there. So they had the airplane up --

6 (Background static)

7 -- preflight and everything looked good, just like before,
8 two weeks ago. They pulled out on the runway, they made the run.
9 They took off right along by this taxiway right here, going out to
10 the airport. The airplane started climbing just fine and then it
11 looked like the airplane began to settle and not climb anymore.
12 And then it flew like that a little bit then the wing dipped. The
13 plane rolled around like this and spiraled into the ground.

14 Q. Okay. Just take me through that one more time.

15 A. Okay. So the plane took off.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It started climbing out initially to about 50 feet or so,
18 maybe 60 feet, maybe 100, somewhere thereabouts. And then it
19 appeared to just kind of hang there. And then it looked like
20 maybe it was going to go up a little bit and it was just kind of
21 hanging there. Then I saw the wing dip, the plane rolled this
22 way, and then it rolled right into the ground.

23 (Background static)

24 Q. -- about the fuel, so you guys filled it to 20 gallons each
25 side two weeks ago. Where did you get the fuel from?

1 A. Right there.

2 Q. Right on the field?

3 A. Right there.

4 Q. Okay. And then the fuel --

5 (Background static)

6 Q. Did you guys test the tanks?

7 A. The fuel looked good.

8 Q. All right. Both tanks?

9 A. Both tanks, yes.

10 (Background static)

11 Q. All right. So --

12 (Background static)

13 Q. -- going to talk about --

14 (Background static)

15 Q. Do you have any questions about the, those circumstances? So
16 I'm curious about the two weeks prior. So after the pilot
17 experienced, and you experienced, this performance issue on
18 takeoff, was there any conversation about -- I guess, what was the
19 follow-up conversation? Was there a conversation about taking it
20 a mechanic or anything like that?

21 A. So -- okay. So understand this, Ron is my good friend, but
22 also, you know, Ron was kind of arrogant and kind of an alpha-male
23 type. So he's got (indiscernible) that kind of thing.

24 So there were actually several conversations I attempted to
25 have with Ron, where I wanted to express to him that I was afraid

1 of the airplane. And I was concerned about the performance issue
2 and I'd asked him several times, you know, what do you think about
3 the airplane? And he would say, I try not to think. I'd say,
4 well, what do you think about -- did it, you know, it didn't want
5 to take off. He said it does want to take off. You know, stuff
6 like that, just kind of blowing me off, you know?

7 And so we'd had those conversations. And then Kurt -- okay,
8 so understand, because of Ron's experience with Kurt, he had
9 supreme confidence in Kurt's ability because Kurt had huge
10 experience with all kinds of situations. He had actually had a
11 crash some time back and he survived that. And, you know, some
12 other things that had happened to him in the course of being an
13 aviator for years and years and years. You know, he'd had a
14 number of close calls and incidents.

15 And so Kurt was very, very, very proficient as a pilot. And
16 Ron knew that and trusted that. So I think from Ron's
17 perspective, to have Kurt come down, you know, Kurt was kind of an
18 authority in his mind about these kinds of things; that they'd be
19 able to figure it out.

20 So in all of my time flying with Ron, Ron was always kind of
21 more safety-minded when it'd come to flying the airplane. You
22 know, when we made our two attempts on the runway here, as soon as
23 there was a problem, he went on and set the airplane down. We
24 made sure that, you know, get back on the ground where we could
25 stop the airplane. And he kind of was like that with all of it.

1 And Kurt was probably a little more willing to kind of take a
2 chance and try to make the thing fly, maybe? I feel like it maybe
3 is a little unfair to say that. That was impression, so I can't
4 diagram this out and show you -- it was kind of my impression
5 about Kurt.

6 So the day, yesterday morning, Ron and I had the conversation
7 again about my concerns about the airplane not wanting to fly. He
8 blew that off. He said the airplane wants to fly. I said well, I
9 think airplane doesn't want to climb. He said the airplane wants
10 to climb. And actually, I told him this, kind of as an off-handed
11 thing, I said, I don't really want to be the first one to show up
12 at the scene of the accident, I said to Ron. And so he blew me
13 off. He says there's not going to be an accident. This airplane
14 was born to fly. And then that was the end of the conversation.
15 So the next thing we had to say was we're going to have some beers
16 at Compadres after they got done flying. That was the end of it
17 all.

18 So I was concerned that he wasn't really heeding the things
19 that I was saying. And I kind of wrote it off to well, okay,
20 maybe him and Kurt got this, you know. They've done stuff like
21 this before and, you know, that kind of thing.

22 So when they went to take off, I thought that they were going
23 to do essentially the same thing we did. Take off, get off of the
24 ground, experience what the problem was, get back on the ground.
25 You know, maybe make another go of it, something like that.

1 In fact, in the video, I remember saying, when they pulled
2 out right here, I was kind of hoping they were going to cross over
3 and go over to 02 and 20 over here because that's a much longer
4 runway than this one. And so he turned on this runway, and it is
5 what it is.

6 Q. The wind was favoring which runway at the time, if you
7 remember?

8 A. The sock was pointed --

9 (Off the record)

10 (On the record)

11 A. -- and that's in the video too because in the video, the
12 plane was on the other side of the compass here. So the sock is
13 clearly visible in the image from right here where we're standing
14 right now. I was filming this.

15 Q. Got you.

16 A. So you can kind of see -- I might've been standing over there
17 a little bit, but you can kind of -- clearly see the sock and
18 there was about this much wind in about that same direction, so.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So they made that attempt and it didn't work out for them.
21 So I think that -- what I personally believe is that Kurt was
22 flying the airplane. And having thought it through, you know, the
23 whole point in Kurt being here was to help Ron figure out what was
24 going on with the airplane. And the fact that they flew past the
25 point that they could no longer land on the runway indicated to me

1 that probably Kurt was flying the airplane and trying to get it to
2 fly.

3 Q. Did they tell you anything up front about who was going to be
4 PIC --

5 A. No.

6 Q. Pilot in command?

7 A. No. None of that. We just climbed in the airplane and you
8 know, we made jokes and waved at each other and then they taxied
9 off. And I drove over here on my truck. Actually, it was an
10 afterthought to make a video of it.

11 When I got out of my truck to watch what was going to happen,
12 I thought right then -- because I was scared of the plane. I
13 thought right then, you know what, I'm just going to film -- it
14 can't hurt nothing. You know, I'm just going to make a video.
15 Everything will probably be fine. I'll just have a video of it.
16 It won't mean anything. But, you know, if something goes wrong,
17 probably a video would be a good thing. So -- and that kind of
18 was in the back of my mind, and then it went wrong.

19 Q. Yeah. In case -- so you wanted to make a video so you could
20 kind of capture, you know, any ambient engine noises or anything
21 you could see on the outside to give them feedback, right?

22 A. Well I just -- you know, I didn't really process it through
23 that far, really, to be honest with you. My thinking was simply
24 this: I'm afraid of the airplane. I don't necessarily know
25 exactly what's going to happen right here, but I didn't feel good

1 about it.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And so I wanted to make a video just -- in my thinking, just
4 in case something went wrong. Now, mind you, I had no idea that
5 they were going to die right there. You know, that was -- I
6 couldn't even believe that that happened, I -- you know.

7 Q. Yeah. Yeah. So just going back before when we spoke on the
8 phone, you had mentioned that he had previously owned this
9 airplane, right? Like, 20, 25 years ago?

10 A. Yeah. Something like that, right.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. So he was -- in his earlier years, Ron's earlier years as a
13 pilot, he had bought into this thing and he flew it quite a lot
14 apparently, so. And, you know, didn't have any real major issues.
15 He had some minor issues with it occasionally.

16 One time, early on, he didn't know how to -- exactly where
17 the measure mark was on the tanks to indicate where they were
18 supposed to be. And so that caused him a problem because one of
19 his tanks was lower on fuel than he anticipated, so he was able to
20 switch the tank and get the airplane running again.

21 But he was right there over Chico, so he could've easily
22 gotten on the ground, so. That was a minor thing that happened to
23 him. Once he switched it over, he flew back to Oroville, tanked
24 up, parked the plane. But other than that, he never had any
25 problems with this plane, really.

1 And then many years went by, he saw it on Craigslist that
2 there was an opening for a partner, so he bought back into it.

3 Q. And that was just a few years ago, right?

4 A. Yeah. Yeah. And he had another airplane. He generally had
5 like a 17 -- he's got a hangar over there somewhere. He had a
6 172, several of them. And so he wasn't really flying this one
7 because he had another airplane. And then he sold his last 172,
8 and that's when we wanted to go fly this one, so

9 MR. STEIN: Okay.

10 Henry, do you have any other questions?

11 MR. MCLENDON: No, I do not.

12 MR. STEIN: Okay.

13 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

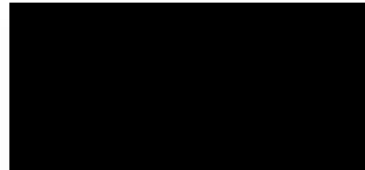
IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL CRASH OF BEECH 19A
 MUSKETEER SPORT AT THE OROVILLE
 AIRPORT IN OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA
 ON JUNE 2, 2022
 Interview of Dannie MCLENDON

ACCIDENT NO.: WPR22FA196

PLACE: Oroville, CA

DATE: June 3, 2022

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Angela Allen
Transcriber