

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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BEEHCRAFT A-36 CRASH NEAR ROUND

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VALLEY AIRPORT IN COVELO,

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Accident No.: WPR24FA018

CALIFORNIA ON OCTOBER 20, 2023

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Interview of: ARMSTEAD WANT, JR., Property Owner

Covelo, California

Sunday,

October 22, 2023

APPEARANCES:

STEPHEN STEIN, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

PETER BASILE, Air Safety Investigator
Textron Aviation

MATTHEW DESEELHORST
Federal Aviation Administration

ANTHONY HERSHBERGER, Air Safety Investigator
Textron Aviation

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I N T E R V I E W

(12:15 p.m.)

MR. STEIN: Stephen Stein with the NTSB. It is October 22, 2023, 12:15 p.m.

And, sir, would you mind saying your name, and then spelling your name?

MR. WANT: Okay. Armstead Want, Junior, A-r-m-s-t-e-a-d W-a-n-t, and a J-r.

MR. STEIN: Perfect. Thank you.

And then I'll fill in for everybody else again.

Okay. So Armstead would you mind -- so a couple things. So we're a federal agency. We're an independent agency. So a lot of this is fact-finding and background information for the investigation. So what we'll do is I'll, I'll audiotape you. We'll send the audiotape out for transcription. Then what I'll do is I'll come back to you, and send you a copy of that so you can look at it and review it for errors and accuracy.

MR. WANT: Um-hmm.

MR. STEIN: Then we'll probably -- we'll publish it on our, on our -- in our docket when the final case is published.

MR. WANT: Um-hmm.

MR. STEIN: Is that okay with you? Are you good with that? Okay.

MR. WANT: Yeah, that's fine with me. Anything to help out.

MR. STEIN: I really appreciate it.

1 MR. WANT: Yeah.

2 INTERVIEW OF ARMSTEAD WANT, JR.

3 BY MR. STEIN:

4 Q. So go ahead and take the airplane, and just go ahead, and
5 kind of walk us through.

6 A. Yeah. Well, we just heard the airplane coming. We come
7 running out, me and the two kids. And time we got out here
8 because I said kids, the plane, the plane, you could see the
9 plane. And time we come he was coming right here. And he got
10 right here, and the girls all waved, we all waved, and the
11 (indiscernible) and waved at us whoever was flying, and then the
12 plane started cutting out as it got right here. So I didn't think
13 nothing much of it, but I noticed he was low, you know. And so we
14 went back in the house, and then I heard it boom after we sat down
15 then it boomed. And then that's I guess he hit back there.

16 Q. So when it was cutting out what -- can you imitate the sound
17 you heard?

18 A. The motor was a little smoother then it just started going
19 (indiscernible). It started popping.

20 Q. It started --

21 A. The motor --

22 Q. -- popping?

23 A. -- it started popping, yeah.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And sounded like no power. I'm (indiscernible) from a car

1 motor to -- but I don't know airplanes as much, but I noticed the
2 motor was way different sounding than when he was back here.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yeah. He flew straight through here, and he was low. He was
5 low right there. And then we went on in the house, and then we
6 heard the boom.

7 Q. Okay. That's helpful. So you heard the boom later.

8 A. Yeah. After we went in and sat down. Because in my mind I
9 was thinking he's kind of low, you know, but I didn't think
10 nothing of it until the boom.

11 Q. And you remember hearing the put-put-put --

12 A. Yeah, right --

13 Q. -- when it was here?

14 A. -- as he went -- I couldn't see him no more I could hear, I
15 could hear it go put-put-put-put-put.

16 Q. As you couldn't -- so, so as it's flying --

17 A. Yeah, as it's flying. And then it went and passed the house
18 right there, and then but he was low when he came through right
19 here. He was -- it was pointed like this. He was like this was
20 straight up. The front end of the plane was just like that when
21 he went by, just like that.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And he was -- I don't, I don't know what he was doing, but he
24 did turn and look at us, and waved at the kids. I know he did
25 that because we could see it plain as day. Like he was right

1 there. So --

2 Q. How was the, how was the weather then?

3 A. It was clear. It was a nice day. It was perfect I believe.

4 Q. Wind?

5 A. There wasn't --

6 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Little bit.

7 MR. WANT: Was a little bit but --

8 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Not much.

9 BY MR. STEIN:

10 Q. Out of the north, south?

11 A. Well, I really don't know --

12 Q. Yeah, it's hard to --

13 A. -- the wind. But I know my dad always told me, he's an older
14 man, that they always from that canyon it was hard -- never fly in
15 that way. He knew about it or something because of the drafts,
16 you know. Sorry about the smoke.

17 Q. No, no, that's okay.

18 A. He knew because the drafts there ain't, you know, cold air
19 and hot air hits right there. So the planes -- so I asked him
20 about when I was little why they always came in this way, and
21 that's what he told me. So I don't know. I don't know nothing
22 about airplanes.

23 Q. So how long have you lived here for?

24 A. All my life.

25 Q. All your life. So seeing airplanes take off from here when

1 they take off this way where do they -- do you normally see them
2 go?

3 A. They go out that way. They take off and go out over that
4 route and go out that way. I never seen them come this way.

5 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Or they rarely come this way.

6 MR. WANT: Yeah, they usually take off that way --

7 (Crosstalk)

8 MR. WANT: -- turn around and go that way.

9 MR. STEIN: Really?

10 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: We rarely see them come this
11 way --

12 (Crosstalk)

13 MR. WANT: -- that's why I come running out because we never
14 get to see them probably like that unless they come flying in this
15 way --

16 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah.

17 MR. WANT: -- never get to see them.

18 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Usually seen them land.

19 They'll come around and down in, but we hardly rarely see -- see
20 them come up like that.

21 MR. WANT: Yeah.

22 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: That fence down there it was
23 barely coming over. Like it was barely coming up. Like it was
24 slow, slow --

25 MR. WANT: Yeah, it was --

1 (Crosstalk)

2 MR. WANT: -- I didn't think nothing of it until we heard the
3 boom, you know, but I knew the motors were sounding different too
4 as he got past there. You could hear it popping and all. It was
5 way different than what it was when it was back that way.

6 BY MR. STEIN:

7 Q. Interesting. Did you hear it after it was popping?

8 A. No. Because he went around the house.

9 Q. He went around the house. Okay.

10 A. And he went around the house, and I went on in, you know. I
11 didn't think nothing of it. But just thinking in my mind he's
12 pretty low, you know. I sat down -- heard the boom, and then
13 running out. We seen it. And so I jumped in and hauled ass down
14 to the fire department to get somebody.

15 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: And I was trying -- three of us
16 were trying to call 911 and nothing -- wouldn't go through.

17 MR. STEIN: Oh, boy.

18 All right. Does anybody have any questions?

19 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

20 Q. Yeah. When you first came out here with the kids, and you
21 heard the airplane coming, did you, did you see him like -- did
22 you first see him over here or did you see him like right here?

23 A. I seen him back there. He was back -- just taking off --

24 (Crosstalk)

25 Q. Just off the end of the runway.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. How high was he off of like the end of the runway?

3 A. He was pretty low, man. He was like he used the whole runway
4 to my eyes that used most of the whole runway to take off.

5 Q. Sounded like he was above the trees --

6 (Crosstalk)

7 A. -- he was even with our eyes right here. When he got right
8 there he was even with our eyes when he flew by here.

9 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: I didn't notice -- did you
10 notice the wheels were up yet?

11 MR. WANT: I didn't even notice.

12 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: I didn't come out, but I was
13 sitting on the couch, and that's the first thing I noticed. I
14 said, look, airplane, and I go look how low it is, and they all
15 jumped up and ran out, but I didn't, but it was low like it was
16 barely coming --

17 MR. WANT: Yeah. But his front end was up. He had his front
18 end up, like, and sound like to me he was trying to power up, but
19 I don't know man. Then like I said he went around and it was
20 popping, and another motor was popping way different than some
21 back here. You know what I mean? So --

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Go ahead.

23 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: I thought maybe he was trying
24 to turn around and come back after it started -- when he said
25 that. Maybe he was trying to turn around and come back, and try

1 to turn right there in that gulley instead of going that way. I
2 don't know, but because the neighbor over there called me seeing
3 we were all right over here. She said her little girl seen it
4 too. They were outside playing, and they -- she said she heard
5 it. She goes I heard the airplane, but it didn't sound right
6 either. She said it sounded different like not like a regular,
7 you know?

8 (Crosstalk)

9 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: -- try and call everybody back
10 because we went up there, and I just -- my phone was -- it was on
11 my phone. Everyone was calling.

12 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

13 Q. How about speed-wise?

14 A. It was barely going.

15 Q. Barely going.

16 A. Slow, yeah. He was trying to climb. I believe he was trying
17 to climb because his nose was up. Like I said when it started
18 popping then he went on around, and I never seen no more.

19 Q. How about for like the sound or video? Any idea? Anybody
20 have any cameras around here that you might know of? Any
21 neighbors with the cameras, security system?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Ring doorbells?

24 A. No, I don't think so

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That would have been cool.

1 MR. WANT: Yeah, that would have helped out, yeah.

2 MR. STEIN: Does anybody else have questions? No.

3 Okay. We're going to stop it.

4 (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: BEEHCRAFT A-36 CRASH NEAR ROUND
 VALLEY AIRPORT IN COVELO, CALIFORNIA
 ON OCTOBER 20, 2023
 Interview of Armstead Want, Jr.

ACCIDENT NO.: WPR24FA018

PLACE: Covelo, California

DATE: October 22, 2023

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.



Katherine Motley
Transcriber