

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: PEYTON BASS, 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

(11:13 a.m.)

MR. STEIN: Stephen Stein with the NTSB. It's 11:13 on October 22nd in Covelo, California.

I'm just going to go around the, around the horn here. Who else is on, on the call?

MR. BASILE: This is Peter Basile, Air Safety Investigator at Textron Aviation.

MR. STEIN: Can you spell your name?

MR. BASILE: Peter, P-e-t-e-r, Basile, B-a-s-i-l-e.

MR. DESEELHORST: Matthew DeSeelhorst with the Federal Aviation Administration. Matthew, M-a-t-t-h-e-w, last name DeSeelhorst, D-e-s-e-e-l-h-o-r-s-t.

MR. HERSHBERGER: Anthony Hershberger Air Safety Investigator at Textron Aviation. A-n-t-h-o-n-y H-e-r-s-h-b-e-r-g-e-r.

MS. BASS: Peyton Bass, property owner at crash site. P-e-y-t-o-n B-a-s-s.

MR. STEIN: Excellent. Thank you, Peyton. So Peyton, we're, as you may or may not know, the NTSB is a federal investigative agency. We're independent.

MS. BASS: Um-hmm.

MR. STEIN: So we'll be -- the plan is to interview you now. Do you consent to being recorded?

MS. BASS: Yeah, absolutely.

MR. STEIN: Thank you very much for that. What we'll

1 probably end up doing is I'll probably end up sending the
2 recording out for transcription. And then so I'll collect your
3 e-mail address at the end of this --

4 MS. BASS: Okay.

5 MR. STEIN: -- so I can send you a copy. You can review it
6 for errors, accuracies. And then that transcript will very likely
7 go into our public docket --

8 MS. BASS: Got it.

9 MR. STEIN: -- as background information on the accident
10 flight. Anyway, for now I'm going to go ahead, and hand it over
11 to you.

12 INTERVIEW OF PEYTON BASS

13 BY MR. STEIN:

14 Q. Go ahead and give me a little bit of background about what
15 you were doing at the time and --

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. -- then you can use the little airplane to kind of walk us
18 through what you observed.

19 A. So I was preparing dinner. So I was in the kitchen here, and
20 he was out here when he called me out to show me how low a plane
21 was flying. He spotted it at the gate. When I came out it was
22 around the gate. We're used to planes flying over because,
23 obviously, we're so close to the airport. And our -- the owner
24 that sold us the property originally has a plane. So we have seen
25 them fly low before. It's nothing new. But this one was

1 unusually low.

2 Do you want me to show you now or --

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. -- would that be for later?

5 Q. Go ahead.

6 A. So I would say it was definitely clearing the trees. It was
7 just clearing the trees, yeah, by maybe these trees back there.

8 Q. These big trees that are --

9 A. Yeah. It was --

10 Q. -- right here?

11 A. -- beyond those by maybe like 20 feet-ish.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And I'm not the best with feet, but about 20 feet past, and
14 about 20 feet above.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And as it flew this way, it was pretty steady. It wasn't
17 going too fast. We didn't notice anything wrong. We weren't
18 anticipating a crash at all. It seemed normal. It was just very
19 low. So we were like, wow, we can see the plane really well. So
20 no indicators that something was wrong. It came across. It
21 started to bank left. So it went back over by these, these two
22 oak trees here. It was between those above them, and back again
23 about 20 feet, and it started to bank left. As it was banking, it
24 started coming lower. So it was like here, and then it started to
25 bank. And then when it got over just before our barn is when we

1 noticed or felt like something was wrong. So as it was banking it
2 was close enough for us to see into the windows. It was close as
3 we've ever been to a plane in the sky before. And it just went
4 over. We thought it was turning back towards the airport, and it
5 lost a lot of altitude between there and there, and crashed into
6 the mountain.

7 Q. Between the barn and the accident site is --

8 A. So between the time when it was going this way when it
9 started to turn, and I believe it was turning to go around, is
10 banking quite, like, I would say it was like that.

11 Q. Really?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. That steep? Okay.

14 A. Yeah. And between -- when it started that it lost a lot of
15 altitude from that to when it hit the mountain.

16 MR. STEIN: The witness showed us an approximate 80-degree
17 bank angle, 70- to 80-degree bank angle.

18 BY MR. STEIN:

19 Q. What was the -- what were the weather conditions at the time?

20 A. It was sunny and clear.

21 Q. Sunny and clear?

22 A. Um-hmm.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Not windy, no.

25 Q. And you said you didn't have any concerns about the airplane

1 when it was flying overhead.

2 A. No.

3 Q. Did you happen to hear the engine?

4 A. Yes. You could hear the engine, but nothing noticeable.
5 Like at the time I wasn't thinking that I would have to remember.
6 So I'm just going based off of how I was feeling at the time, and
7 we just figured it was normal.

8 Q. So no unusual noises?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Nothing loud or soft suddenly --

11 A. No.

12 Q. -- no abrupt changes in like a harmonic sound coming --

13 A. No. The first indicator that something was wrong was when it
14 really got very low from that point to that point. Then we
15 understood that something was wrong, and then it crashed. So --

16 Q. When you normally see air traffic coming, coming this way --
17 this is northwest, right?

18 A. Um-hmm.

19 Q. What is the normal flight path? You want to show us with the
20 airplane that you usually see.

21 A. Honestly --

22 Q. Or do you --

23 A. -- when, when planes are landing we see them come through, I
24 don't normally see planes over here my property.

25 Q. So you don't normally see them taking off into this

1 Direction --

2 A. No.

3 Q. -- this northwestern direction?

4 A. No.

5 Q. They're usually they're --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- coming from the northwest? Okay.

8 A. Yeah. And much higher --

9 Q. Much higher.

10 A. -- over our property. We've never had planes that low other

11 than the property owner before. He will sometimes take his

12 friends to show them around, and, you know, they get a little bit

13 lower, yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Great. Okay. Fantastic. Let's see. About how tall

15 are these trees would you estimate?

16 A. I'm really not very good --

17 Q. Neither am I. That's why I'm asking.

18 A. Maybe like some of them 40, 40 feet.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 40, 50,

20 MS. BASS: 40 or 50, yeah.

21 BY MR. STEIN:

22 Q. Excellent. And did -- when you said you could see into the

23 window --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- did you see anything --

1 A. I, you know --

2 Q. -- or what did you see?

3 A. -- I couldn't really -- I wasn't in that mindset. I was
4 trying to see if it was the -- our property, the man that sold us
5 the property. So it was right there, and you could look into the
6 window. You could see people, but you couldn't really tell what
7 was going on.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Again, nothing alarming. Nothing that triggered any like
10 thoughts that anything was wrong.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yeah.

13 MR. STEIN: All right. I'll open it up to the floor.

14 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

15 Q. Yeah, the sound, you know, the sound of the aircraft would
16 have been the one curiosity to satisfy the other, you know, the
17 other person we heard --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right.

19 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

20 Q. -- you know potential. But it makes sense. But typically
21 when people depart or they take off they're going out the other
22 direction, right?

23 A. Yeah. I don't pay much attention to it to be honest with
24 you.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. We're not here full-time, and we haven't had the property for
2 -- only two years?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

4 MS. BASS: But, yeah, I've never noticed any planes taking
5 off this way or being so low.

6 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Not windy or anything that day? You said it was a clear day.

10 A. No, no significant wind, no significant weather. It was warm
11 and clear.

12 Q. Nice.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. It happened around six o'clock, six o'clock the crash.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So it was the evening time.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you -- sorry. Go ahead.

19 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

20 Q. I was just going to -- the data on this airplane shows that
21 it came in before it departed. Did you see the landing earlier?

22 A. No, no. Again, it's something we're kind of used to hearing
23 the planes, and it's -- we don't really pay attention to that
24 unless it's something like it was flying so low.

25 Q. Would you say that maybe you've heard other airplanes fly

1 over the house taking off maybe before where you didn't see them
2 visually but --

3 A. Coming in --

4 Q. -- just the landings?

5 A. -- the land over the house sometimes, but never close, yeah.

6 Q. All right.

7 A. Usually it's not directly over the property either. That's
8 for sure. Like it, it would be rare for us to have an airplane go
9 directly over the house.

10 Q. So usually it's in this corridor right here?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. But I've never seen one so low.

14 MR. STEIN: Okay. I think that's all unless anybody has
15 anything else. I'll go ahead and stop the recording.

16 (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: BEECHCRAFT A-36 CRASH NEAR ROUND
 VALLEY AIRPORT IN COVELO, CALIFORNIA
 ON OCTOBER 20, 2023
 Interview of Peyton Bass

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