

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*

*

FATAL CRASH OF A MAULE M-6-235

*

AIRPLANE DURING A VFR FLIGHT

*

IN MOOSE PASS, ALASKA,

*

ON JUNE 28, 2019

*

*

* * * * *

Interview of: ANDREA JOY COOPER

Crash survivor

Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday,
July 10, 2019

APPEARANCES:

CLINT JOHNSON, Alaska Division Chief
National Transportation Safety Board

NOREEN PRICE, Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Andrea Joy Cooper:		
By Mr. Johnson		4

I N T E R V I E W

MR. JOHNSON: So, first of all, I'm sorry that we have to talk under these circumstances. I can't believe, you know, the situation you've been through, so --

MS. COOPER: Yeah.

MR. JOHNSON: The one question I have, kind of before we get started, do you mind if we record this?

MS. COOPER: Yeah, no problem. It's easier.

MR. JOHNSON: It keeps me from having to write and then just keep it conversational. And basically what I'm going to do here, Joy, is once we get going, I'm just going to ask you to kind of tell us the story, you know, in as much detail as you can. Obviously what we're trying to do is trying to figure out what happened --

MS. COOPER: Right.

MR. JOHNSON: -- and keep it from happening again. I mean, that's the long and the short of what the NTSB does.

MS. COOPER: Yeah.

INTERVIEW OF ANDREA JOY COOPER

BY MR. JOHNSON:

Q. So let me do this, your full name is -- Joy is your first name?

A. No, it's Andrea.

Q. Andrea?

A. Um-hmm.

1



11

11

11

110

114

11

11

1

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

BY MR. JOHNSON:

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Q. So let me kind of tell you what the -- what we're -- our part in this is, and you probably already know it, but for your Mom's purposes as well. So NTSB, all we are is accident investigators. We determine probable cause and then we make recommendations, if there are any recommendations, to keep it from happening again. We're not the FAA. We're the good guys, white hat. FAA is more the regulators. So in a nutshell that's kind of what we do.

So I'm the Chief of the office. Noreen's one of our investigators down here. The gentleman that is actually running this investigation is a guy named Brice Banning. He's one of my senior investigators, been around for a long time, knows what he's

1 doing, flown a number of airplanes up here in this area and all
2 around.

3 A. Um-hmm.

4 Q. So very well versed in general aviation and corporate
5 aviation as well. So he lives and responds out of Fairbanks, so
6 since we're down here and you wanted to talk with us now, we want
7 to make it happen pretty quick, all of this information, and what
8 we're going to do is send this up to Brice. We'll have the
9 recordings transcribed. We can definitely get you a copy of those
10 if you want.

11 A. Sure, yeah.

12 Q. You know, yeah, that's probably for later on, it might be
13 worthwhile, so --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. So the long and the short of it is, what I'd like to do is
16 maybe just have you kind of tell us the story of how this whole
17 thing came about.

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. How you came to Alaska and then, unfortunately, you know, the
20 accident, as much as you can remember.

21 A. Okay. So I came out here with my roommate, Suzanne. We were
22 living with her uncle, who was Scott, and Aunt Jean. So we was
23 planning on coming out here. He said he had some property out in
24 the wilderness that he wanted to take us to, and then we were
25 going to come back and spend some time in Anchorage again. So got

1 out here on Tuesday the -- I guess the 25th?

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I think. We didn't leave until the 26th, that Wednesday, and
4 when we got at Big Johnstone Lake, that's where he'd gotten.

5 Q. And that was the Big Johnstone Lake?

6 A. Big Johnstone Lake, yeah. That's where he has his cabin.
7 And we stayed out there for -- until Friday morning. So, let me
8 see, so Friday we went and did some hiking and stuff, and then
9 came back and loaded everything up and left. I'm trying to think
10 if there was anything else. There wasn't much remarkable about
11 that. When we flew in, we flew over the ice glacier, and when we
12 were flying out, we wanted to go see whales, so we took the ocean
13 route.

14 Q. Got you.

15 A. So -- which we did see whales, did a few circles, watched
16 them and everything, and then continued the same path that he had
17 gone up through, I guess, by Seward, up through Anchorage. I
18 didn't really see the map or anything like that. And then -- so
19 you have -- we were able to let me fly for a little bit and it was
20 pretty clear, but then I turned it over to him because it was
21 getting a little bit cloudy -- or smoky, I guess, not cloudy. And
22 he was able to see the road that he was just trying to follow the
23 highway to get through.

24 And then, like everything else happened pretty quickly, so
25 I'm not really sure exactly what happened, but my door popped

1 open, so I had to hold the door shut. And that kind of freaked
2 everybody out a little bit, but I'm like, hey, we're going to land
3 here in a little bit anyways, so I can hold the door shut; it's
4 not a big deal. And then we just went into a really irregular
5 attitude, and it was definitely a stall of some sort, and so we
6 kind of stalled, and his wife was yelling at him to pull-up,
7 pull-up, and of course he was like, I got this. And he didn't
8 really, obviously, but -- so that's really kind of the last thing
9 I remember.

10 Then, when I woke up, we were like nose into the mountain, I
11 guess, and there was some scrub brush and pieces of planes
12 everywhere. So and then I believe the back two, they were
13 probably dead on impact, Jean and Suzanne. And then I know Scott
14 wasn't because we were trying to get out if we could, but he
15 couldn't move at all because he had a head injury and probably
16 broke his neck too. So I didn't know I had broke my back at that
17 time either, so I kept trying to sit up like an idiot, but -- I
18 sat up multiple times, but that's about it.

19 And then eventually I let myself, I guess, pass out or go to
20 sleep or something. And then I heard the helicopters come, and
21 the guys dragged the two out of the back and then cut the bolts on
22 our seats and drug us out and I guess took me here, so --

23 Q. So at the time of the accident, Scott was manipulating the
24 controls? He was flying the --

25 A. Yes, we had traded controls a few minutes -- like maybe 10

1 minutes even before that.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Because it had -- and the wind and everything had been calm.
4 I don't know, like, the helicopter para-rescuers mentioned
5 something about the wind being kind of swirly and making the
6 helicopter pilots a little nervous. So I don't know if we hit
7 mountain wind -- gusts up the mountain or something, and --
8 everything was fine, and all of the sudden it just caught our wing
9 and messed it up. I'm not sure. That's just speculation.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. But I do know he was definitely the pilot because he -- it
12 was starting to get a little bit smokier, and so it was his
13 controls. And then he was trying to follow the highway, which he
14 said he had it in vision. I couldn't see, you know, on that side
15 of the plane. And then me and Jean were keeping an eye out on the
16 landscape next to us to make sure that we didn't get too close.

17 Q. Okay. And just the seating arrangement, obviously, Scott is
18 in the left seat, left front?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And you were in the right front?

21 A. Um-hmm.

22 Q. And --

23 A. Jean was right behind me.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And Suzanne was behind him.

1 Q. Okay. So you don't -- where did your door pop open? How
2 soon before the accident?

3 A. It popped open basically right when it felt like we lost
4 control.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So it popped open, and then everything kind of went wonky,
7 and then I realized we were in a stall, and I'm like, oh, this is
8 not good. But then after that, I don't really remember what
9 happened; I just woke up.

10 Q. So the door popped open, in essence, just before the impact,
11 not when you were manipulating --

12 A. Yeah, I would say probably within a minute or two. No, no,
13 no, I wasn't flying. It was like right before --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- everything kind of fell apart.

16 Q. Okay. And, as far as engine noise, as far as any
17 enunciators, any like stall warnings, anything like that?

18 A. There were -- I think the stall warning did go off. He did
19 have a GPS and the ADS-B, and that was keeping him comprised of
20 all the terrain, but he did kind of keep disregarding because he
21 could see the terrain next to us. So like, we knew that there was
22 terrain there, but he was following the road and trying to, you
23 know, stay as far away -- I think there was, there was other
24 traffic at some point, but I believe we had found out they were
25 not a factor. I'm pretty sure, so --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I don't know if he was trying to, like, stay on his side of
3 the lane while there was this other traffic and that's what maybe
4 put us too close to the mountain and the wind, but yeah.

5 Q. Okay. And so he has a GPS.

6 A. Yeah, he had a GPS.

7 Q. And where was that mounted? Was that up on the dash?

8 A. It was in the middle, so from my perspective it was like
9 right here.

10 Q. Okay. So on the yoke -- down by the yoke then?

11 A. Yeah, kind of.

12 Q. In that area?

13 A. In the middle pretty much.

14 Q. And the ADS-B was on an iPad?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. And could you see, was he -- could you -- were you watching
17 the ADS-B at all?

18 A. Not so much. At that point I was watching terrain.

19 Q. Terrain.

20 A. And trying to keep an eye on everything else, but mostly was
21 watching the terrain.

22 Q. Could you sense any kind of a turn when you turned the
23 controls back over to him? Could you sense a --

24 A. No, there wasn't any. It was a smooth transition.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Because like I said, he flew for a while after then, and then
2 crash.

3 Q. Okay, and you said maybe there was some other traffic?
4 Did -- was he talking to somebody on the comms --

5 A. Yeah. There was some other traffic that we were talking to.
6 I believe they had popped up on his ADS-B, and he was trying to
7 locate where they were at.

8 Q. Okay, so he did see them on the ADS-B?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. That's good to know.

11 A. But at the same time, that was kind of around the same time
12 where the smoke had increased and it was more like IMC conditions.
13 But the smoke was increasing, and we were having a hard time
14 seeing where we were at, and we were definitely below the
15 mountains just flying in the channel. I don't know if -- like, we
16 were pretty heavy, but he flies people often, all the time, so I
17 don't think weight would have made much of a difference because
18 he's used to flying people to here and stuff, so -- but yeah, no,
19 we were calling for -- trying to figure out where this guy was at
20 as we were going through this one pass. And then, like, his -- I
21 do remember he became no-factor, but I don't remember --

22 Q. The other traffic, you mean?

23 A. Right, the other traffic was like way lower than us. I think
24 he was buzzing the highway.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Probably what we should have been doing, but --

2 Q. Okay. All right. That's good information. We didn't know
3 that.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. So, just to let you know, we -- once Brice was at the scene
6 down there, he did recover an iPad --

7 A. Um-hmm.

8 Q. -- which most likely was being used for ADS-B. And ADS-B --
9 are you familiar?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. You know what it is. All right. So you know that's all
12 tracked data that we can use --

13 A. Right, yeah. No, I'm sure -- hopefully you guys can.

14 Q. The second thing is, is the 496 GPS. Those are kind of like
15 poor man's flight data recorders for the most part.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. It's proved pretty rudimentary, but it gives us track and
18 ground speed, and --

19 A. Um-hmm.

20 Q. -- and not pitch and roll, but altitude and differences, so
21 it gives us some basic information. We have those. Actually
22 Noreen was able to download it. She's kind of our techie for
23 those types of things and was able to download them.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. So --

1 A. Because I would like to see exactly, like, where everything
2 went because I can kind of remember the map in my mind, but at the
3 same time, like, it's not super dependable.

4 Q. So we don't have the ADS-B data yet. That's a little more
5 challenging -- not challenging to get, but since it's in the iPad,
6 and what's stored in (indiscernible) if they ask, it takes us a
7 while to get that, but we do have the GPS data.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. And we'll share that with you as well. Just for the freedom
10 of --

11 A. Sure.

12 Q. -- information. So you made one comment that the door was --
13 popped open --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. -- and you made a comment about, we're going to land soon.
16 Did he plan on landing someplace other than Anchorage? In between
17 Anchorage and --

18 A. I'm not sure because I'm not familiar with the area.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But it seemed like the smoke was getting bad, and so he was
21 trying to find a place to land.

22 Q. Got you.

23 A. I don't know where exactly the crash site was -- how far it
24 was from where he flies out of --

25 Q. Lake Hood?

1 A. Yeah, Lake Hood. So I don't know how far it was from Lake
2 Hood. But I think, even if we were continuing to fly to Lake
3 Hood, it would still be only, like, 20 minutes, if that. So --

4 Q. No, it would be a little bit longer than that. But it's not
5 too terribly far. But there's a number of (indiscernible) --

6 A. Yeah, because I think they were talking about trying to find
7 a place just because it was getting a little bit much, and so they
8 were going to go land somewhere, eat dinner or something, and then
9 fly back. But I don't know where they were planning on going
10 because I'm not familiar with the area.

11 Q. Got you. Did -- you indicated when you went down there, you
12 went up and over the top of the ice field, or --

13 A. Right, yeah. Down, we went over the ice field, and coming
14 back was when we cut through --

15 Q. Got you.

16 A. -- around (indiscernible).

17 Q. So any mechanical issues, do you think, that may have played
18 a part in this? I mean, like we talked about before, the
19 enunciator, anything on the panel? Any comments? Any noises that
20 you heard?

21 A. Not that I can remember. Everything was -- the stall was
22 going off when we were in a stall, but I knew we were in a stall.
23 It was pretty obvious. But that was after the fact and probably
24 too late by then anyway.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. But, yeah, everything seemed to be working fine.

2 Q. Okay. Again, you have my card, so I mean, if something else
3 comes up that you think about, and -- of anything that you think
4 that is pertinent, you know, give us a call, give me a call. And
5 I'd be more than happy to share anything we can with you. So
6 timeline-wise, we are going to be releasing a prelim tomorrow.
7 We're required -- we have basically three stages to our reporting
8 process.

9 A. Um-hmm.

10 Q. The preliminary, which comes out tomorrow, which is just as
11 the name implies, the preliminary information, subject to change.
12 We're not going to -- I'm not going to put anything in here, or
13 Brice isn't going to put anything in here, about what we talked
14 about today. That will be later on.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. It's not like we come over and kiss and tell. That's not
17 what we're going to do. So we're just going to give just the
18 basic information that he has right now. The -- probably the most
19 important part from you and the family is we do have the GPS data.
20 We will put a plot in that.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. I don't know if you've ever looked at our reports, but we
23 have the ability to put photos in there and graphs.

24 A. What --

25 Q. There's not going to be any photos of the accident site

1 itself, but there will be that ground track of the GPS.

2 A. Okay, yeah.

3 Q. So you'll be able to see -- I don't mind telling you, because
4 you'll know tomorrow, but basically it's got the 496 and the
5 coordinates, you know, right up the valley, and then there's a
6 wide spot basically out there where the road turns to the right,
7 and the track goes to the left and makes a pretty good --

8 A. Like a U?

9 Q. -- a 180 degree, and then goes back up through the valley
10 there where the accident was. So --

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm confused.

12 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, you know --

13 MS. COOPER: Well I don't know, that might have been around
14 the time -- because I do remember there was -- and it's hard to
15 tell exactly what it was because we were -- it looked like we were
16 in like a big valley, but there was some sort of mountain in
17 between? But it was kind of big enough, like if we wanted to do a
18 U, we could've.

19 MR. JOHNSON: Sure.

20 MS. COOPER: So that could have been the same spot. And then
21 that was also around the time it was getting smokier, and we were
22 having to look outside to make sure we didn't nick the mountains.
23 And Jean was basically like, we need to put this plane down
24 somewhere. And that's probably where they decided to turn and I
25 don't know what made it --like they should have been able to do a

1 normal turn just fine, but --

2 BY MR. JOHNSON:

3 Q. Was -- did you have headsets on?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And headsets in the back as well?

6 A. Yes, because --

7 Q. And so like everybody was able to converse back and forth?

8 A. Um-hmm.

9 Q. Were there any comments? Anything you remember Scott
10 mentioning? I know Jean maybe mentioned some things. I mean,
11 anything that would be pertinent there?

12 A. He was more -- I could tell he was stressed just because
13 everything kind of got a little bit more -- before it was, the
14 visibility was way, way less, and then he was thrown off of his
15 original track, what he was doing. So he was trying to, like,
16 figure stuff out, I guess. But he was definitely perturbed about
17 something, but he was quieter, trying to figure it out. So --

18 Q. And visibility straight-ahead-wise?

19 A. It was not very good at all.

20 Q. Okay. Could you see any of the mountains out there at all?

21 A. Straight ahead? Not really.

22 Q. But you could see straight down.

23 A. I could see the mountains, and I could see mostly down, and
24 he could see the highway.

25 Q. Okay. And that's indicative of smoke.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. You know, forward, looking through more material basically,
3 but straight down, so --

4 A. Um-hmm.

5 Q. Noreen?

6 MS. PRICE: No.

7 MR. JOHNSON: I think we got everything.

8 MS. COOPER: Okay.

9 MR. JOHNSON: So if you would like, I will be happy to send
10 you a copy of the prelim.

11 MS. COOPER: Yeah.

12 MR. JOHNSON: It will be on our website tomorrow. Typically
13 how we do that, we release them in batches. So 10 o'clock in the
14 morning is typically -- 2 o'clock D.C. time, 10 o'clock Anchorage
15 time --

16 MS. COOPER: Got you.

17 MR. JOHNSON: -- is when they come out. I got to tell you,
18 there probably will be some press coverage on this. I mean,
19 they've been waiting. I think we've been getting calls wanting,
20 you know, the -- wanting to know when the prelim's coming out. I
21 don't expect a big hoo-ha over it, but I just wanted to give you
22 the heads up that --

23 MS. COOPER: Okay.

24 MR. JOHNSON: -- you know, most likely there will be some
25 press coverage on this.

1

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

11

4

100

10

_____, _____, _____



[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

114

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

12

21

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

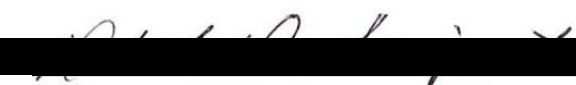
IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL CRASH OF A MAULE M-6-235
AIRPLANE DURING A VFR FLIGHT
IN MOOSE PASS, ALASKA,
ON JUNE 28, 2019
Interview of Andrea Joy Cooper

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC19FA029

PLACE: Anchorage, Alaska

DATE: July 10, 2019

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.


Deborah Dowling Sweigart
Transcriber

STATEMENT OF WITNESS, KEVIN NOTAK

KEVIN NOTAK
[REDACTED]

KEVIN was interviewed telephonically on July 1, 2019. I had received his name and number from Andrew Noble, another FAA Inspector.

KEVIN said that he lives at about the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The valley there is less than ½ mile wide, with steep mountains on both sides that go up almost vertically. The first ridge is over 1200' and then it angles up from there in steppes, with the peaks at about 5000'.

On Friday evening, he was on the evening shift of the Swan Lake Fire Detail, and was getting ready to leave his house just about 4pm. He was loading his car a few minutes after 4. The smoke from the fire was very thick in the valley, and he was unable to see more than about 100' up the mountains on both sides of the valley. Looking straight up, all he could see was "white", and there was no blue sky visible.

He heard an airplane flying by at that time. He said it did not sound like it was at 5000', nor did it sound like it was transiting through the valley. It sounded like it was going west-to-east. The airplane sounded like someone was "working the throttle", going from near idle to full power, and back. This went on for about 15 seconds, and then the sound stopped.

Respectively Submitted,

Mathew Dahl
Aviation Safety Inspector
Juneau FSDO
Juneau, Alaska



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

David B Banning
Senior Aircraft Accident Investigator
Alaskan Region

Date: July 2019
Person Contacted: Mr. Kevin Notak
Location: Telephone
NTSB Accident Number: ANC19FA029

Narrative:

Mr. Notak stated the following:

He was outside shortly after 1600 at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] when he heard an airplane fly over. He stated that it sounded like the airplane was
“maneuvering under power.” He said the smoke from a nearby wildfire was very thick in the
valley which measured about ½ mile wide at his location. He estimated the vertical visibility at
about 100 ft, and the horizontal visibility at about 1/4 mile.

END