

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FLOATPLANE ACCIDENT TUTKA BAY

* Accident No.: ANC19FA035

NEAR HOMER, ALASKA, JULY 19, 2019

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Interview of: ENGJELL BERISHA

Pilot, Rust's Flying Service

Monday,
July 22, 2019

APPEARANCES:

BRICE BANNING, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

CLINT JOHNSON, Chief, Alaska Regional Office
National Transportation Safety Board

TODD RUST
Rust's Flying Service

BOB RICHMOND, Attorney
(On behalf of Engjell Berisha)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. BANNING: My name is Brice Banning. I'm a senior aircraft accident investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the Department of Transportation or the FAA and we have no regulatory or enforcement powers.

We are here today with regard to accident number ANC19FA035. Today we will be using the services of a digital recorder. The recording will be sent out for transcription and will likely be made a part of the public docket.

The purpose of the investigation is safety to determine probable cause and prevent reoccurrence. Our role is not to assign fault, blame or liability. The interview is part of the fact-finding phase of the investigation. We cannot, however, offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity.

Each of the group members will have a chance to ask questions. We will ask the questions one at a time and everyone has been instructed to not interrupt the person who is asking questions at the time. There will be the opportunity for each group member to ask follow-up questions after each person has had a turn.

Please answer all the questions to the best of your recollection. If you don't understand a question, just ask to

1 have it explained or restated. If you realize you misstated or
2 need to modify an answer, just do so.

3 You are entitled to have on representative with you of your
4 choosing. Is there someone you'd like to have with you Engjell?

5 MR. BERISHA: Yeah. Bob L. Richmond.

6 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you.

7 Bob, you may direct the interviewee, Engjell, to not answer a
8 question or to request a short break to confer, but please refrain
9 from answering a question on his behalf.

10 And is there any questions?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. BANNING: Okay. And so, what I'd like to do is go around
13 the room now and have each individual introduce themselves.

14 Once again, Brice Banning with the National Transportation
15 Safety Board.

16 MR. BERISHA: Engjell Berisha, pilot with Rust's Flying
17 Service and Horizon Air.

18 MR. RICHMOND: So, my name is Bob Richmond and I'm an
19 attorney here in Anchorage.

20 MR. RUST: Todd Rust. I'm the party representative for
21 Rust's Flying Service.

22 MR. JOHNSON: And Clint Johnson. I'm the chief of the Alaska
23 Regional Office of the NTSB.

24 THE INTERVIEW OF ENGJELL BERISHA

25 BY MR. BANNING:

1 Q. And what I'd like to do, Engjell, is just have you tell us
2 what transpired on the accident flight from the time -- maybe
3 start from time you began loading for the accident flight.

4 A. Okay. I arrived at Tutka Bay approximately 9:55 a.m. local
5 time. I greeted Gus and several of the staff. Pulled up to the
6 beach just left of the dock there. They put a plank on the
7 aircraft and turned it around so that people could board. They
8 also put a tarp down because that's kind of slippery there, so
9 that people wouldn't slip. And then we began loading some luggage
10 in the rear of the aircraft. We were having casual conversations
11 while doing so.

12 We loaded the luggage. I put the cargo net up. And then the
13 passengers began boarding: First of whom was a younger kid, mid-
14 teens, blond hair, and I instructed him to take the co-pilot seat.
15 Next of which was a slightly older kid, male; he sat in the right
16 side of the bench. Two younger children approximately 10 years
17 old each sat in the two rear seats behind the bench. An older
18 gentleman sat in the middle seat of the bench. Before he boarded,
19 he introduced himself and I introduced myself and we shook hands.
20 And then lastly, an older female, blonde, sat left side of the
21 bench.

22 The lodge staff pulled the plank. I asked them to keep the
23 plank on because I had to use the facilities. So I stepped off
24 for a moment as they held the aircraft. It was up against the
25 beach and I used the facilities.

1 Back on the airplane, I got in my seat and I wrote the time
2 down. I just -- normally what I do is I write the local time, so
3 10:05 local time. And I turned to the passengers, most of whom
4 had their headsets on, and I informed them that they should take
5 their headsets off so I could give them a safety briefing. I then
6 gave them my normal safety briefing. I can state that if you'd
7 like.

8 Q. If you don't mind covering what you covered on the safety
9 briefing, I'd be grateful.

10 A. My name is Engjell. This is a de Havilland Beaver. There
11 are four exits inside the aircraft, two on each side. They are
12 operated by turning the handle, pushing the door out sideways and
13 pulling the handle in the back, pushing the door out sideways.

14 There are life jackets underneath every seat. Pull them out.
15 Tear the bag over your head. Pull the tabs to inflate. Do not
16 inflate the life vest inside the aircraft.

17 I need you to stay seated with your seatbelts fastened the
18 entire time. There is a satellite phone upfront. It looks like a
19 brick-style cell phone with an antenna. At this point I would add
20 some kind of joke about calling Domino's or something, but I'd
21 make sure to mention the SOS button on the top of the cell phone.

22 In the rear of the aircraft there's an orange bag with
23 survival gear in it. And normally on a floatplane takeoff,
24 because we abort, I also tell people that if I don't like the
25 conditions or how the aircraft feels for whatever reason, I might

1 about the takeoff. And that was part of my briefing that day.

2 After that, they all put their headsets on and nodded. And
3 then I taxied out, put my headset on, configured the aircraft.
4 And within a minute or two of leaving the outlet there, I took off
5 almost completely perpendicular from the lodge, which by my
6 estimation would have put me virtually parallel to what little
7 swell I expected to be out there. I had the takeoff power and
8 began the takeoff run.

9 The takeoff run was normal. I felt a little bit of swell,
10 just normal swell, as the aircraft motioned. As we continued to
11 ride the swell, it came on step fairly quickly, and I remember
12 looking at the GPS and seeing the airspeed in the low 30 knots
13 roughly. A moment later, there was a side load from what I
14 imagine was a swell. I felt the floats lose rigidity. And this
15 was a feeling. At the moment I didn't see anything, but it just
16 felt like the bottom of the airplane was not rigid anymore, I
17 wasn't riding on a rigid surface, and a yawing motion to the left.

18 I then saw the left float come up towards me out of the left
19 window. The left wing began to bank, the aircraft began to roll
20 to the left, and I had right aileron correction but no
21 effectiveness. Shortly after, the left wing impacted the water
22 and the aircraft pulled forward and began to nose down.

23 I had the throttle and the prop in my hand and I pulled them
24 both back as this happened, and I felt and saw the right wing
25 almost detach. It bent, is what I saw, and then the aircraft

1 flipped over.

2 Q. Take your time. We'd like to hear about the evacuation if
3 you're able, and like I said take your time. If you need a break,
4 that's fine.

5 A. Immediately the aircraft was filled with water. There was no
6 moment as it filled with water; it was kind of an immediate thing,
7 though none of the windows broke. And I remember seeing green and
8 then darkness. I took my seatbelt off and started to feel around
9 because I couldn't actually see anything apart from dark shades.

10 Eventually I found the mag compass and I felt my way forward
11 from the windshield to my door, unlocked my door, and made it out
12 of the airplane.

13 Once I reached the surface, I took a deep breath and I saw
14 two of the older boys, the teenage boys who had both boarded first
15 and second, on top of the float. I took a deep breath and I went
16 underneath. I opened the left rear door, left main cabin door and
17 I pulled out one of the younger children. I brought him to the
18 surface, placed him on the forward spreader bar -- the aircraft
19 was upside down at this time -- and began administering CPR.
20 Within a few moments he started breathing. I yelled to the other
21 two boys who were kind of frantic in the moment and I told them to
22 take the boy. And they took him and kept him breathing on the
23 float.

24 I took another deep breath and I went underneath. I grabbed
25 the next younger child, brought him up to the spreader bar and

1 administered CPR as well. He began breathing shortly. I handed
2 him off.

3 I went underneath and grabbed the mother, put her on the
4 spreader bar, gave her CPR. This took a little longer, but she
5 started breathing also, coughed up a lot of water. And then I
6 handed her off and I went down for what I knew to be the last
7 person. I knew there was six total. We had five out of the water
8 and myself would be six, so seven total occupants.

9 The father was in the middle of the bench just where he had
10 sat. I removed him from the aircraft, but his feet were stuck on
11 something. But I was able to get his head out, and his head was
12 barely breaking the surface of the water, and I had to take
13 another breath and go down and free his legs. I freed his legs,
14 grabbed his body up, and we broke the surface together, at which
15 point someone helped me pull him out of the water. There were
16 several small boats around us, at least one at the time where we
17 handed the father up to the boat.

18 I looked around to see that everybody was out and then I got
19 out of the water and I hopped on the boat and then we began
20 administering CPR to the father. We did this for some time until
21 the Coast Guard arrived and we transferred him to the Coast Guard
22 boat. I worked with some of the Coast Guard folks to continue
23 administering CPR until we arrived to the shore.

24 Q. When you arrived to the shore did you get on board with the
25 Coast Guard? Was everybody on -- and when you say shore, was it

1 the beach there at the lodge or was it --

2 A. No. They took us straight to Homer, Homer (indiscernible).
3 We had an AED with the Coast Guard and somebody from the lodge had
4 also brought an AED on that first boat, and we used the AED on
5 him, but to no effect. When the Coast Guard boat came into Homer
6 and then pulled up to the dock, I specifically remember the Coast
7 Guard guy telling me to tell the guy driving the boat -- because
8 we came into the no-wake zone in Homer, and he said go as fast as
9 you can, you know, as long as you're comfortable. And I screamed
10 it to the guy driving the boat because there was other boats and
11 we were putting out wake.

12 We pulled up, tied off, and there were ambulances. And we
13 got everybody off. We put the father on a stretcher. I helped
14 secure him to the stretcher. We handed him off to the Coast
15 Guard. I do recall seeing them put a machine on him that
16 continued to administer CPR, the machine itself did the CPR. And
17 then they slowly got all the other folks off of the boat as well.

18 Q. You mentioned that there were two people that when you came
19 out of the water initially, when you egressed there was two people
20 that were already out.

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. Did anybody have a life vest on?

23 A. No.

24 Q. And did you have a life vest on, Engjell?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. Can you describe the weather conditions when you
2 taxied out and then the sea conditions when you started your water
3 run?

4 A. I'll start actually before arriving to Tutka Bay. I flew
5 overhead at roughly 1,000 feet and did a nice long overhead. Made
6 a left downwind along the mountains and then landed with the
7 mountains at my side towards the lodge and then -- to assess the
8 sea conditions for the landing but also for the takeoff as well.
9 And in that assessment, between what I saw in the water, the flag
10 poles at the lodge, my ground speed on the GPS and the airspeed in
11 the aircraft, from what I saw there was virtually no wind and
12 virtually no swell on the ocean.

13 I landed, and the touchdown and rollout were smooth. Again,
14 indicating to me that what I was seeing was accurate. I remember
15 the lodge saying hello to me on the radio as I flew overhead. And
16 they pointed out to me a set of kayakers that were in the bay that
17 I had saw. You know, they -- like, watch out for the kayakers.
18 Again, I landed and then slowly taxied in.

19 Then in about 10 minutes on the ground, we pulled away and I
20 pulled around the corner of Tutka Bay so I could look out and see
21 if the conditions had changed. I didn't feel like they had
22 changed any. Again, I had pulled the water rudders up in the
23 aircraft track the way I had left it, so indicating no wind to me.
24 And that's when I began the takeoff roll in parallel what I
25 believed the swells would be coming in from, so --

1 The ceiling and visibility were virtually unlimited. Some
2 haze from the fire in the Kenai area. There was no defined
3 ceiling and I could see Homer clearly from Tutka Bay.

4 Q. Did you -- just so I understand. Did you take off the same
5 way you landed or did you --

6 A. I took off parallel to the swell. I landed almost
7 perpendicular to what the swell would have been. So slight
8 difference maybe.

9 Q. Is it possible that you can draw me the bay and the lodge and
10 show me the direction you landed and the direction you took off?

11 A. Okay.

12 MR. BERISHA: Do you think that would be okay, Bob?

13 MR. RUST: Yeah.

14 BY MR. BANNING:

15 Q. Help give me a better perspective.

16 A. Yes, of course.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 A. And so if I'm the aircraft here, I flew kind of a wide
19 pattern like this. The lodge is right here.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Downwind I'm assessing this ocean area here. I touched down
22 roughly in this area.

23 Q. On your landing?

24 A. Yep. For a short run.

25 Q. And do you mind just marking that with maybe a dashed line

1 and landing, if you don't mind. Thank you. Okay.

2 A. And this is the open ocean so I perceived the swell, which,
3 again, to my eyes and what I felt out there it was virtually
4 nothing, but is -- normally how it comes is this way.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So we pulled into this area of the beach here at the lodge
7 where you taxied out this way, and I took off essentially parallel
8 to the swells in that direction.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So I rounded this corner taxiing, out and this is kind of
11 where I looked to see around the corner because you can't see from
12 here.

13 Q. Sure.

14 A. So it's common for us to taxi out here and take off in that
15 direction. So virtually parallel.

16 Q. Okay. And you indicated when you felt the lack of rigidity
17 in the airplane, how far -- do you have a rough estimate -- it
18 sounded like you were on the step when that happened?

19 A. Correct. Correct.

20 Q. Okay. And do you know how far into your run -- a rough
21 estimate of how far into your run you might have been?

22 A. It wasn't long.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I don't have a distance or a time.

25 Q. No problem. Yeah, okay. Yeah. And was there any -- you

1 mentioned the weather conditions clear but hazy. Was -- I'm not
2 -- which way is north, Engjell, on the map?

3 A. Sorry.

4 Q. No, you don't have to -- I appreciate it.

5 A. That would be north, I believe.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Homer would be about here.

8 Q. Okay. And was the sun visible?

9 A. The sun was visible in the upper atmosphere, if you will.

10 But, again, there was no defined ceiling but it was hazy, so --

11 Q. Okay. Was it causing -- was the sun or its glare at all
12 causing any issues?

13 A. None whatsoever.

14 Q. Okay.

15 MR. BANNING: I think what I'd like to do is, we'll go ahead
16 and go around the room if you're --

17 MR. BERISHA: Of course.

18 MR. BANNING: -- and let people ask questions, and then I
19 have some additional questions I'll have, but we will go around
20 the room.

21 Todd?

22 BY MR. RUST:

23 Q. I have a question, a couple questions here. Engjell, I
24 understand that you are originally from New York, and where in New
25 York is --

1 A. Well, actually I was born in Kosovo.

2 Q. Uh-huh.

3 A. I was a few years old when I moved to New York City, Staten
4 Island, New York specifically. It's a borough of New York City.
5 I grew up there and I got my pilot licenses out there.

6 Q. Okay. So you've done flying in New York area?

7 A. I flew a Caravan line amphib in New York City's East River,
8 up in the Adirondack Mountains, in New York City, Boston, Rhode
9 Island, and in the Caribbean as well.

10 Q. How long did you do that that Caribbean flying and off the
11 East River?

12 A. It was a contractual season. So approximately 5 to 6 months.

13 Q. Okay. And could you describe the type of water conditions
14 you encountered on the East River?

15 A. The East River was particularly challenging because of the
16 amount of boat -- and by boat activity I mean there are massive
17 ferries and tanker ships in the East River that would cause great
18 wakes and, as you guys know, we don't have the right-of-way, so we
19 would often get cut off by these boats and there would be a
20 massive wake. It's a fairly wide river. There's plenty of room
21 to operate, but sometimes you're on your takeoff run and you'd
22 have a big boat come cut you off, mega yachts and stuff like that.

23 Q. So, if I understand you correctly. there's -- the East River
24 has a lot of wake activity, generally maybe less than ideal
25 conditions for takeoff and landing?

1 A. Correct. Okay.

2 Q. Okay. With your experience there, did you learn how to read
3 those conditions from both the surface and the air?

4 A. I believe I did. There are many occasions where we aborted a
5 takeoff because of the wake out there. There were many times
6 where we didn't even attempt to take off until we had that wake
7 clear, so we -- and this is -- these boats are so bit that this
8 wake was many feet high, you know, 5, 10 feet high wake. So it
9 was very serious to the aircraft.

10 Q. So I'm gathering that you're well aware of the hazards of
11 rough water conditions in a floatplane?

12 A. I consider myself to be, yes.

13 Q. Okay. Would you consider yourself pretty expert at that?

14 A. I believe so.

15 Q. Okay. And you said you had on occasion both aborted a
16 takeoff and a landing?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. And in your estimation how would you characterize the
19 conditions on Tutka Bay compared to the East River, for instance,
20 a normal day on the East River?

21 A. Ideal.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. It was an ideal day at Tutka Bay that morning.

24 MR. RUST: Okay. Thanks.

25 MR. BANNING: Anything else, Todd?

1 MR. RUST: (No audible response.)

2 MR. BANNING: I'll give you another opportunity too.

3 MR. RUST: Okay. Thanks.

4 MR. BANNING: Clint?

5 BY MR. JOHNSON:

6 Q. Just a couple of things there, Engjell. And just to make
7 sure, this airplane's on Aerocets; is that correct?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. So during the takeoff run, and I don't want to put words in
10 your mouth but just to make sure I'm clear, before the airplane
11 actually started to roll and came to a stop, you indicated that
12 you saw the float out of the corner of your eye; is that what I --

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. Okay. So it's safe to assume that it was liberated; it was
15 no longer attached to it? Is that -- I just want to be clear?

16 A. That was my sense of things, and seeing it made me think
17 that, and I don't understand how the float could have come towards
18 me unless it was free from the fuselage itself. There was -- and
19 I will use this word again, I felt the floats lose their rigidity,
20 as if they were --

21 Q. I see what you mean.

22 A. -- loose.

23 Q. You can feel it?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. I got you. I got you. So any noises, bangs, scrapes,

1 anything out of the norm during the takeoff run?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. And when you actually -- if you recall back as far as
4 the sequence of events, when you saw that, that was before the
5 left wing hit and the right wing hit? So that was, in essence,
6 the initiating --

7 A. That was my first indication that anything was wrong in that
8 takeoff run.

9 Q. Okay. Great. Thank you. So when you went back in for the
10 older gentleman, the dad, was he still restrained? Did you have
11 to undo his belt; do you recall?

12 A. I do not recall.

13 Q. Okay. And you indicated maybe his feet were stuck or there
14 was some --

15 A. His feet were stuck. I do not know what on. It took me a
16 moment to --

17 Q. Sure.

18 A. I couldn't see underneath.

19 Q. I understand.

20 A. So I was moving my arms around to clear whatever was around
21 his feet.

22 Q. Okay. Got you. Got you. How many times before this had you
23 been into Tutka Bay?

24 A. Dozens, maybe hundreds.

25 Q. It's a common run then?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. All right. Any other times where the swells were to
3 the point where you had to abort a takeoff in that area, in maybe
4 that same area where you were taking off from; do you recall?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And just to be clear. I know I didn't have to abort at any
8 time.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. We've had rough swells in there, but typically if it's very
11 rough we don't go in there. We go into Beluga Lake.

12 Q. Got you.

13 A. And they'll bring them with a boat out there.

14 Q. And these are the big rollers --

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. -- that are coming in there off the inlet or off the ocean
17 there?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. So, okay, great. Thank you very much.

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 BY MR. BANNING:

22 Q. Just a little more follow-up here. You indicated, and
23 correct me if I'm wrong, but that you were on the step, you saw
24 the -- you felt the airplane lose some rigidity, and you saw the
25 left float. And did you abort the takeoff at any point?

1 A. At this point, the floats lost rigidity, the aircraft yawed
2 left, and that left wing dipped.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. This is, by my account, about 2 seconds worth of time.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. As that left wing started coming left and caught the water, I
7 pulled the throttle and the prop back.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. That was my only attempt at an abort.

10 Q. Okay. And then the left wing impacted the water?

11 A. I wouldn't say "and then." As the left wing impacted, that's
12 when I pulled the throttle back.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And the left wing caught and I knew the aircraft -- I felt it
15 lurching forward, so I pulled the power back as not to pull myself
16 into the water.

17 Q. Okay. Do you mind telling me a little bit more about your
18 background, when you got your pilot's license, about how many
19 hours you have, your -- just a little bit about your experience?

20 A. Yes, sir. I'll start at the beginning. I flew my first
21 airplane at 11 years old on a tour of New York City with a friend
22 of my father's. It was a Cessna 182. From that moment on, I've
23 kind of been engrained in aviation. I was part of the Civil Air
24 Patrol in RFC in New York, during which time I spent a lot of time
25 on military bases and I received instruction from a former

1 military instructor pilot who trained on T-38s, who is a good
2 friend of mine to this day.

3 I, at 16, started a software development company creating
4 computer-based trainers on Microsoft Flight Simulator for the sake
5 of training pilots on instrument and procedural trainers, and I
6 had that until my early 20s. We made small software for Boeing
7 Aircraft universal FMSs autopilot systems so that people could
8 train on computers and be familiar with these systems.

9 I also began at that time working towards my private pilot's
10 license, which I got at either 18 or just after I had turned 19,
11 somewhere around my birthday there. And I got this with Mid
12 Island Air Service and a gentleman, Brian Younquist, who is still
13 a good friend of mine and a Bombardier Global captain.

14 From there I transferred to Farmingdale State, where I began
15 working on an aviation management degree. A good friend of mine
16 Peter Maduwicz (ph.), who is a captain at Envoy now for about 10
17 years, he got me my instrument and commercial ratings. I had
18 already a job offer to fly the Caravan on floats before I got
19 those two ratings, so this kind of inspired me to get -- this was
20 an airplane I washed and I had flown 91 legs on, and I had flown a
21 helicopter for that same gentleman on 91 legs, and they liked me
22 and they offered me a job to fly right seat with an older
23 gentleman who had a lot more experience in it. So I got my
24 instrument commercial and seaplane rating within about 6 months.
25 And went down to Florida and began training on the Caravan and the

1 206 on amphibians. I took a 135 check ride in that Caravan and I
2 flew it in the Caribbean, the Bahamas, Florida Keys, in that area.
3 And then we flew the airplane from there up to New York.

4 We operated in New York for several months in New York's East
5 River, Long Island, Lakes of Long Island and Upper New York in the
6 Adirondack Mountains, New Port Harbor. So we did some open ocean
7 stuff in it as well.

8 At the end of the season I was asked to continue. I decided
9 not to. I finished my degree. I applied for several jobs in the
10 state of Alaska. I was offered two or three, and I took a job
11 with Grant Aviation. My best friend and I packed everything I
12 owned into my car. We drove to Alaska. Saw all the National
13 Parks on the way. I began flying with Grant. I was there for
14 about a year, between Bethel, Emmonak, Dillingham and King Salmon,
15 flying a 207.

16 And then I was offered a job to fly for Royal Wolf Lodge in
17 Katmai National Park. I flew there for an entire season, roughly
18 6 months. I was offered to continue the next year, but I declined
19 in favor of taking a job with Rust's Flying Service. I flew for
20 Rust's for one season and then I took a job with Horizon Air
21 flying the Dash-8. I was given the choice between the Dash-8 and
22 the Embry-Riddle 175, and I chose the Dash-8. I moved to
23 Portland, Oregon and I've flown that for the last 2 years. And
24 I've come back in the summertime on occasion to fly for Rust's
25 when my time has allowed, my schedule has allowed, and it's been

1 convenient for all parties involved. I would say that probably
2 sums up my aviation background.

3 Q. Wow. I feel inadequate.

4 A. I feel lucky.

5 Q. Give me a sense of your total time, your Alaska time, your --

6 A. I have somewhere over 3,000 hours, the majority of which is
7 in Alaska.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Roughly 1,000 hours in the Dash-8. Probably half of that is
10 floatplane time.

11 Q. Okay. So, roughly about 1500 hours of seaplane time?

12 A. Roughly, yes.

13 Q. Okay. And do you have a sense of how much of that would be
14 in the Beaver roughly?

15 A. 100 to 200 hours.

16 Q. Okay. Did you fly any other airplanes for Rust's, or was
17 it --

18 A. 206.

19 Q. On floats also?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. And when -- back to the accident run. When you saw that
22 float come off, where was it in your field of vision? Do you have
23 any sense of where it --

24 A. Just off my left, my pilot window. And, you know, usually
25 can see the float, but in this moment it appeared to be coming

1 towards me and I could see much more of it than -- you can just
2 see a glimpse of it, you know, out of that pilot window, and this
3 time it was as if it was bending in towards me.

4 Q. Okay. And was that looking out the window in the door of the
5 Beaver?

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It was in my periphery.

9 Q. Okay.

10 MR. BANNING: Todd, do you have any additional questions?

11 MR. RUST: I don't.

12 MR. BANNING: Clint?

13 MR. JOHNSON: Just one. Maybe just a clarification.

14 BY MR. JOHNSON:

15 Q. The young man that was sitting next to you, which one is he
16 age wise?

17 A. They were both roughly the same age. I believe he was
18 younger. The distinction I make is he was blonde with curly hair.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. The other was dark haired and short.

21 Q. And is he the one that's at the hospital now or -- the one
22 that was next to you?

23 A. I do not know.

24 Q. Okay.

25 MR. RICHMOND: The littlest one. The youngest one is in the

1 hospital.

2 MR. BERISHA: Oh, okay.

3 BY MR. JOHNSON:

4 Q. So, but that's not the --

5 A. No, that's not him. Those two kids were in the rear behind
6 everyone in the two smallest --

7 MR. JOHNSON: Got you. Thank you very much. That's it.
8 Thank you.

9 BY MR. BANNING:

10 Q. And just to add on to Clint's question there. When you were
11 helping with the evacuation was there any passenger that you
12 remember having to unbuckle their seatbelt in particular?

13 A. I do remember unbuckling seatbelts.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I do not remember who or when.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And to specify someone else's other than mine.

18 Q. Great.

19 A. And that was something when I grabbed them I would check, but
20 most of them I would say had their seatbelts off.

21 Q. Okay. And is there anything, Engjell, that you think we need
22 to be aware of that we didn't ask, anything at all that you think
23 we missed?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay.

1 MR. BANNING: Okay. And I'll go around the room one last
2 time. Todd?

3 MR. RUST: I just don't have anything else.

4 MR. BANNING: Okay.

5 MR. JOHNSON: I'm good. Thanks.

6 MR. BANNING: Okay. With that we will end the recording at
7 12:57.

8 (Whereupon, 12:57 p.m., 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: FLOATPLANE ACCIDENT TUTKA BAY
NEAR HOMER, ALASKA, JULY 19, 2019

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC19FA035

PLACE:

DATE: July 22, 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.



Letha Wheeler
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FLOATPLANE ACCIDENT TUTKA BAY

* Accident No.: ANC19FA035

NEAR HOMER, ALASKA, JULY 19, 2019

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Interview of: JAMES ENNIS

Passenger

Monday,
July 22, 2019

APPEARANCES:

BRICE BANNING, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

CLINT JOHNSON, Chief, Alaska Regional Office
National Transportation Safety Board

PHILIP SMITH
(On behalf of Mr. Ennis)

Also Present:

DANIEL ENNIS

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By Mr. Johnson		10

I N T E R V I E W

(3:23 p.m.)

MR. BANNING: Okay. We are recording, and it is July 22nd at about 3:23 in the afternoon, and we're conducting interviews for the accident involving a de Havilland Beaver, accident number ANC19FA035.

My name is Brice Banning. I'm the investigator in charge and a senior aircraft accident investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

MR. JOHNSON: Clint Johnson, chief of the Alaska Regional Office of the NTSB.

MR. SMITH: Phillip Smith.

MR. D. ENNIS: Daniel Ennis.

MR. J. ENNIS: James Ennis.

INTERVIEW OF JAMES ENNIS

BY MR. BANNING:

Q. So, James, would you just recount the events that happened from the time you boarded the de Havilland Beaver for --

A. Yeah. So we got on the plane to leave Tutka Bay Lodge, and I was on the right side of the plane at a window seat. And our pilot was Engjell, and he kind of -- we all got in and he went over how it was a little choppy out there. And he said that he's going to try to takeoff and get past the choppiness and if it's not something that he thinks is safe for us to do, he'll stop and try to find another place to take off.

1 He went over safety procedures. It was a little fast. It
2 was -- you know, in that situation I think a lot of it is just
3 another flight and everybody is so used to flying and he is so
4 used to giving those, but I do remember he was a little bit speedy
5 on that. And another thing to point out about taking off was the
6 microphones in our headsets weren't working, the intercom system.
7 We all had, you know, headphones with the intercoms the whole
8 trip. And those weren't working, and I had mentioned to him they
9 weren't and, you know, there wasn't much he could do about that.

10 So then we started the takeoff and we started -- we went away
11 and got up to speed, and it was pretty choppy. I mean noticeably
12 choppy. And I do remember thinking like should I say something
13 right now, because it was like -- you know, we were getting up to
14 speed and it was a little scary. But obviously there wasn't -- I
15 would have had to like go up and tap him and stuff, and I knew
16 that wasn't necessarily something I should be doing.

17 And then just pretty quickly we started going up on the wakes
18 and it was almost like we were on a jet ski for a bit. And then
19 we got off, and like right when we got air, it just quickly went
20 to the right and just went underwater. Just did a complete flip.
21 Yeah, it happened very fast.

22 And I know I read on the news article that we didn't catch
23 flight, but I mean I'm positive that we got air because we weren't
24 -- we didn't just flip over in a wake or something. We took off
25 and it just went sideways.

1 And at that point everything just happened so fast. but I,
2 being in the window seat, just punched and punched and punched
3 away at the door and the window to try to get that open, and
4 eventually it came out. And then I tried getting out and then I
5 realized I was still buckled in my seatbelt. So I got --
6 everything just seemed to take forever, and then finally I got
7 out, and that's when I made it up to the surface.

8 Q. When you did make it to the surface, do you remember who was
9 -- was there anybody else out?

10 A. No. So I was the first one out.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And I spent a few seconds looking around and trying to like
13 regain what was happening. And in that time I was trying to get
14 air back to go back under because the process of trying to get the
15 window open and everything, I didn't swallow a ton of water during
16 that, and so it was just pretty tolling on the lungs. And so
17 finally I started to go under and Max came up, the one that you
18 guys just talked to. And we looked at each other in just complete
19 shock of what was going on. And I, you know, I was telling Max we
20 need to go find a way into the plane.

21 And we went down a few times and, between not having any air
22 and not being able to find an entrance into the plane -- it was --
23 I don't understand, but there was no way to get to the plane -- to
24 get to where a window was. And so Max and I both were above water
25 trying to get help. There were boats all around us in the

1 distance and we were just screaming, waving. And it took a while,
2 but eventually we saw a boat start to come, turn and look like
3 they were coming towards us. So at that point Engjell, the pilot,
4 had come up and he was, you know, he was losing his mind. He was,
5 you know, he was just totally shocked at what was happening. He
6 was freaking out a good bit.

7 We started telling Engjell like we need to find a way to the
8 plane, like how? And he just kept saying, I don't know, I don't
9 know, like I don't know what's going on. You know, he was all
10 just a mess.

11 And so, finally, I think Max and I just like started
12 screaming we can't find a way to get to the window; can you get to
13 the window? And I think he just went down and from there on out,
14 bodies just started -- I mean, I know Dominick came up first after
15 us three. And at that time there was a boat pulling up and so I
16 grabbed Dominick and was just trying to get his -- he was out, and
17 I was just trying to get him onto the boat. And at that point
18 people were just coming up and we were trying the get them onto
19 boats.

20 Q. Can you mention where everybody was seated?

21 A. So Joe was next to me. And I believe Aimee was on the other
22 side.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And that's right.

1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you. When you -- you mentioned the waves.

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. Do you have any estimation of wave height and was the takeoff
7 -- was there swells or does that --

8 A. Honestly the best thing I can compare it to was riding a boat
9 or jet ski at like a pretty fast speed, and you're just like umm,
10 umm, you know.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And then, but eventually that stopped because we -- but the
13 wind was crazy. I mean, it was like that's what took us. I mean
14 I think. I don't know, but -- and it was choppy. Like the water
15 itself was choppy.

16 Q. Do you remember if there were whitecaps on the water; do you
17 recall?

18 A. I just can't be certain.

19 Q. No, that's okay, and that's fine. And you mentioned it was
20 windy. Was it windy at the beach when you got on; do you recall?

21 A. I don't know.

22 Q. Okay. No problem. Yeah, no problem.

23 A. I remember, you know, like the things that happened leading
24 up to the flight was we got on the plane and Joe and I started
25 noticing how old the plane was and, you know, like we had been on

1 old planes the whole trip. And some people were like, you know,
2 it's an oldie but a goodie. And so we were finding comfort in
3 that. Even though this one was definitely older, Joe, Amiee and I
4 were all saying like, yikes, this is not a seventies plane like we
5 were in the other day; this is like a sixties plane. And that --
6 we were trying to find humor in that.

7 So leading up to the flight, that was that conversation was
8 happening, and then just the pilot got on and he was so confident
9 and he was so quick. And he's like a younger guy. So he was like
10 cool. You know, he was sounding super sweet with his words and
11 just -- but he was like, yeah, it's pretty choppy out there, so
12 I'm going to try to takeoff, but if I don't feel like it's safe
13 we're not going to.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And I know like he means well. And I know he was having a
16 really hard time after he got out of the plane. He was having a
17 horrible time just -- was just so upset and he was panicking. I
18 mean, we were all panicking, but he was definitely panicking.

19 Q. Do you remember any -- other than the choppiness, do you
20 remember any unusual sounds in the airplane, any thunk or --

21 A. One thing that had been happening on a couple different
22 flights -- I don't know if it was just this flight, but it did
23 happen on this flight, is there was a beep happening. And it
24 happened on a flight before this too, when we went to go see the
25 bears. We left from an actual airport to go to a beach and check

1 out bears and there's this beeping that was occurring. I would
2 have freaked out if it hadn't happened again, but it happened the
3 first time and we took flight and I was like, I don't know, I was
4 just fine with it. But then it happened again and, you know, I
5 thought maybe there was just something that those planes do. I
6 don't really know. But there was a beeping of some sort, like a
7 buzzing.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And I do know that when we were taking off it wasn't
10 straight. Like we weren't just like going riding the waves
11 straight. We were going like this, like we were turning left.
12 And then when we took off, it really turned left before it like
13 flopped completely.

14 Q. And so the entire water run from when he applied full power,
15 was it in a left turn for the majority of that run; do you recall?

16 A. I'm not sure that it was right from the start, but at some
17 point once we started picking up speed it was going left.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And I would imagine maybe he was trying to avoid something
20 like, you know, a tail -- a wind of -- I don't know what he was
21 doing, but I would imagine there was some sort of reason for that.

22 MR. BANNING: Okay. Clint?

23 BY MR. JOHNSON:

24 Q. So just -- if these are the waves, was it like this? Was it
25 like this? I guess I'm just trying to --

1 A. Yeah. Well, it would have been more like this.

2 Q. Like this?

3 A. Let me just try to -- yeah, I mean I think it was like that.

4 Q. Okay. And once Engjell came up and you were on the surface,
5 did he say anything about what happened? I know he's upset, but
6 was anything that he said?

7 A. No, he didn't say anything. He was just like, oh, my God.

8 Oh, my God. And I think, you know, he was just cussing, just
9 like, shit.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. Just panicking. And then I do remember yelling at him, like
12 I can't find a way down here; I don't know where the -- I can't
13 find the windows; go help, help out. And it took a while for me
14 to like try to break that panic out of him for him to just kind of
15 like go. And I don't know from there on what happened, if Joe was
16 down there just pushing people out of the plane and he stayed in,
17 or what was happening. Or if Engjell went down there and started
18 pulling people out, I don't know. I just have no idea. But he
19 came up, Engjell did, and was just trying to process everything
20 like we were, you know.

21 Q. Were you using a cell phone, by chance, taking any videos or
22 anything like that?

23 A. No. And I was just saying to PJ, I don't remember anybody
24 was. I can't be sure, but there was a lot of that on the trip.
25 So I don't know.

1 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. That's all I have. Thank you very much.

2 MR. BANNING: I don't think I have any more questions.

3 BY MR. JOHNSON:

4 Q. Is there anything that we're not asking that you think is
5 pertinent that would help us?

6 A. No. No.

7 Q. Okay. If something does come up, you know --

8 A. Yeah, you know, in these situations it was such a blur, and I
9 didn't lose consciousness and it's even such a blur for me. Like
10 after landing and -- I don't even remember how I got -- I think
11 about how I broke open a window and I don't understand how that's
12 possible with the water pressure. So there's so much confusion
13 there, you know. But it is -- I definitely didn't lose
14 consciousness so it's easier for me to remember things like that.

15 Q. Well, thank you so much.

16 A. Uh-huh.

17 MR. BANNING: Thank you. We will go off the record at 3:39.

18 (Whereupon, at 3:39 p.m., 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: FLOATPLANE ACCIDENT TUTKA BAY
NEAR HOMER, ALASKA, JULY 19, 2019

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC19FA035

PLACE:

DATE: July 22, 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.



Letha Wheeler
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FLOATPLANE ACCIDENT TUTKA BAY

* Accident No.: ANC19FA035

NEAR HOMER, ALASKA, JULY 19, 2019

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Interview of: AIMEE PATENELLA

Passenger

Monday,
July 22, 2019

APPEARANCES:

BRICE BANNING, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

CLINT JOHNSON, Chief, Alaska Regional Office
National Transportation Safety Board

PHILIP SMITH
(On behalf of Ms. Patenella)

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By Mr. Banning		9

I N T E R V I E W

(2:45 p.m.)

MR. BANNING: And we are recording.

MS. PATENELLA: Okay.

MR. BANNING: And if you don't mind -- it is July 22nd, at about 2:45, and I am Brice Banning with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm a senior aircraft accident investigator. And in the room we have --

Go ahead, Clint.

MR. JOHNSON: Clint Johnson, NTSB, chief for the Alaska Region.

MR. SMITH: Philip Smith, representing Aimee.

MS. PATENELLA: And Aimee Patenella.

MR. BANNING: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF AIMEE PATENELLA

BY MR. BANNING:

Q. And we are doing an interview for the accident involving the de Havilland Beaver and the accident number is ANC19FA035.

A. The morning of Friday -- Friday morning we were told that our departure time would be close to 10 maybe. I'm trying to think of what time it was. I know it was 9 or 10. We all boarded the plane. They had already -- were putting our bags on. They were wearing waders, getting into the water to get all the luggage in, and we all boarded the plane. My son was in the front seat. I know that Joe was next to me because he reached over and he -- he

1 could tell my anxiety, so he held my hand a little bit, gave me a
2 squeeze. My kids were behind me. I don't remember where James
3 was. I don't remember the layout in the plane that way. But my
4 nephew James was with us.

5 Then the pilot, Engjell -- I remember his name, Engjell. I
6 remember thinking he was very young. Everyone looks young to me
7 now, but he seemed very young. He hopped in and he explained that
8 the conditions were such that there were some swells. He was very
9 careful to say to us that -- to make us comfortable, that he was
10 going to attempt to go out, that if he felt the swells got too
11 big, he would abandon that flight pattern and would go -- I think
12 he said I will go out a different way. And in my head I remember
13 thinking I don't know what that means, if that means waiting. And
14 I didn't -- but I started the logistics of us going later in the
15 day or whatever. But he kept, and we all agreed, okay, you know,
16 that -- okay. So I didn't know what -- how big swells meant or
17 anything, but I could see the water had some swells to it.

18 So we started to go and we kept going. And I was waiting to
19 see if this was what he meant by too much. It was a little rocky.
20 It was a little rough compared to the other takeoffs we had had on
21 the water. And then I guess it was just maybe that one moment
22 where he decided that I can do this, and he went to take off and I
23 guess it was just the perfect storm, a big swell. And all of a
24 sudden the plane just kind of flipped and just cracked.

25 I remember quickly trying to get my seatbelt off. My kids

1 are screaming. And my little Joey was yelling, Mom, I love you.
2 And I said we're going to be okay, and I started praying a
3 Catholic prayer, the Memorare. And we were all reaching for
4 pockets of water, but then then it got very discombobulated. I
5 don't know if we were just going down so fast because water was
6 coming in so fast. I personally remember thinking I don't know
7 how long a person can hold their breath and I didn't see how
8 anyone could rescue us from where they were from the shore. And I
9 just remember being gone, and that's all I can tell you.

10 Q. Do you remember when the swells, when you -- when he started
11 and added power, do you have any idea of how big those swells were
12 or --

13 A. I was not in the front seat.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. My son probably would be able to say.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. They were definitely bigger than I had -- again, I've only
18 had two or three of these. They were -- I don't know.

19 Q. That's okay.

20 A. I don't know. It was significant enough that I remember
21 thinking I don't think this is a good idea.

22 Q. Okay. Which son was upfront?

23 A. Max. Max was upfront; always has to be first.

24 Q. And can I ask you which side of the airplane you were seated?

25 A. I was behind Engjell.

1 Q. Behind Engjell. Okay.

2 A. But let me say this. It is possible that there -- and maybe
3 you know, if there had to have been three rows for us to be in
4 this plane, it is possible that James could have been in front of
5 me and then I was one behind. I just know I was behind Engjell
6 and I was next to Joe.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. James will be able to tell you where he was, and I had the
9 children behind me.

10 Q. Okay. When you boarded the airplane was there -- do you
11 remember if there was a passenger briefing or anything about the
12 safety features of the airplane?

13 A. Yes. He did point out very quickly. He did. And I remember
14 thinking that it wasn't as detailed as the first one, but I
15 remember thinking that people here in Alaska do this all the time
16 and they kind of know the drill. He did give some of the standard
17 information pointing to where things were. So there was that.
18 But, again, and it's possible that Max -- my son is a very
19 detailed person. I don't know where he is with the trauma of
20 things; however, it's possible he might have that information.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I was focused on getting through it because I don't like --
23 don't like that part of it.

24 MR. JOHNSON: My turn?

25 MR. BANNING: Yeah.

1 BY MR. JOHNSON:

2 Q. So, you indicated that the airplane was rocking and I think
3 Brice touched on this, but I guess was it a -- was it like rolling
4 or --

5 A. It was just not smooth. It was like we were taking it on
6 like you would a boat, you know, that way. And I was thinking how
7 do you -- and then when that sound happened, I recognized just,
8 no, you can't.

9 Q. And was there any -- I mean, obviously, the airplane going
10 over the -- but, before that, was there any noises that you heard,
11 any annunciations, anything like that?

12 A. Oh, it was -- that was -- it was eerie how fast it went from
13 normal to crash.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay. Anybody on board using cell phones or taking videos,
17 do you recall?

18 A. Not to my knowledge. By that point in the trip it was not as
19 new to us. We had been taking video for so many of the flights
20 and I think everyone was a little tense because he had kind of
21 prepped us that this might not be our takeoff. He didn't seem
22 panicked or anything. He just was letting us know that there are
23 swells and I might not take this. And then, like I said, I just
24 think he made that call.

25 Q. And just one last question. I guess I'm a little fuzzy, when

1 you were able to get out of the airplane, did somebody go in after
2 you? Do you recall anything about that?

3 A. I'm telling you, I believe I was dead. I don't know how I'm
4 here and I haven't asked those questions yet. I haven't looked
5 through how we got out. I know my son told me that he was --
6 because he was in the front and I guess he got out right away and
7 he has like a gash on his arm. I have been told that Engjell was
8 helping pull people out. My next conscious recollection was utter
9 shock that I was alive and wondering was I alive, and hearing Gus
10 from Tutka Bay, he's the manger there, calling my name and my son
11 yelling my name, "Mom, Mom, stay with me," trying to revive me.

12 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Thanks, Aimee.

13 MS. PATENELLA: Um-hum.

14 BY MR. BANNING:

15 Q. And if I could -- I'm sorry -- but --

16 A. That's okay.

17 Q. -- you mentioned a sound. Was the sound the impact of the
18 airplane hitting the water or was the sound -- or do you know if
19 the sound was a swell or something hitting the --

20 A. I'm pretty sure it was the sound of the plane hitting the
21 water.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Yeah, the immediate crash sound --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- was pretty significant.

1 MR. BANNING: Okay. I'm going to shut this off. And we are
2 off the record at about 2:56.

3 (Whereupon, at 2:56 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FLOATPLANE ACCIDENT TUTKA BAY
NEAR HOMER, ALASKA, JULY 19, 2019

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC19FA035

PLACE:

DATE: July 22, 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.


Letha Wheeler
Transcriber



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

David B Banning
Senior Aircraft Accident Investigator
Alaskan Region

Date: July 24, 2019
Person Contacted: Minor Child
Location: Anchorage, Alaska
NTSB Accident Number: ANC19FA035

Narrative:

A minor child was seated in the right front seat located of a Rust's Flying Service, float-equipped, de Havilland DHC-2 airplane that impacted the water shortly after takeoff from Tatku Bay near Homer, Alaska. During a hospital room interview on July 22, with an adult representative present the minor child stated the following:

He stated that prior to departure, they were asked to remove their headsets, due to an inoperable airplane intercom, so the pilot could provide a safety briefing. He said the pilot provided a brief "10 second" safety briefing that was difficult to hear, due to the airplane's engine noise. In addition, the pilot informed them that it was going to be "choppy" and if the water was too rough, he would stop the takeoff and select another location to depart from. He said during the takeoff the airplane hit a wave and flipped over on its right side and water immediately entered the airplane's cabin. He exited the airplane through the broken plexiglass right-side windscreen. He stated that there was nothing wrong with the airplane, and he did not hear any unusual sounds; however, it was "bumpy".

END



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

David B Banning
Senior Aircraft Accident Investigator
Alaskan Region

Date: July 24, 2019
Person Contacted: Trooper Kumfer
Location: Telephone
NTSB Accident Number: ANC19FA035

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation conducted on July 24, Trooper Kumfer stated the following:

Trooper Kumfer responded in the Augustine patrol vessel, to the scene of an aircraft accident near Tatku Bay Lodge that involved a Rust's Flying Service, float-equipped, de Havilland DHC-2 airplane.

Trooper Kumfer described the conditions at the accident site as seas less than 1 ft with a long swell length, variable wind at less than 10 knots, a high cloud ceiling and sunny skies.

He said that during a hospital room interview - the pilot stated that he was taking off parallel to the swells. During the takeoff run he impacted a swell became airborne, the left broke and the airplane cartwheeled.

END



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

David B Banning
Senior Aircraft Accident Investigator
Alaskan Region

Date: July 20, 2019
Person Contacted: Ms. Mandy Dixon
Location: Homer, Alaska
NTSB Accident Number: ANC19FA035

Narrative:

Ms. Mandy Dixon was present at the dock when the Alaska State Trooper patrol boat, the Augustine arrived in Homer, Alaska with the pilot and passengers from a Rust's Flying Service, float-equipped, de Havilland DHC-2 airplane that impacted the water shortly after takeoff from Tatku Bay near Homer, Alaska. During a conversation in Homer, Ms. Dixon stated the following:

She was notified of an airplane accident by her father Mr. Carl Dixon at Tatku Bay. The occupants from the airplane were being transported to Homer via boat and her father asked her to meet the boat and provide support. She stated that when the boat arrived, she introduced herself to the pilot who was emotionally distraught. She asked him what happened and if it was on takeoff, he said "yes" and responded that "he thought a wave hit the left float".

END



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

David B Banning
Senior Aircraft Accident Investigator
Alaskan Region

Date: July 24, 2019
Person Contacted: Mr. Brad Mahood
Location: Telephone
NTSB Accident Number: ANC19FA035

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation conducted on July 24, Mr. Mahood stated the following:

Mr. Mahood was located at a cabin that was directly across from the accident site that involved a Rust's Flying Service, float-equipped, de Havilland DHC-2 airplane. The cabin was outfitted with a large picture window and Mr. Mahood was standing at the window when he observed the accident sequence.

He observed the airplane as it accelerated on the water for takeoff and stated that the engine sounded normal. He said the airplane accelerated slowly and seemed to struggle into the air. The airplane climbed to an altitude of about 50 -100 ft and level off briefly, prior to beginning a gradual descent. He said the airplane was airborne for about 200 yards, before the left float impacted the water and the airplane cartwheeled to the left and came to rest inverted. He dialed 911 and jumped in a rubber raft, so he could access the skiff to render aid. On his way to the accident site, he observed two additional skiffs responding to the scene, one from Homer and one from Tatku Bay Lodge, he arrived about 2 minutes after the Tatku Bay Lodge skiff and assisted with the rescue. He described the conditions as seas less than 1 ft and said it was not windy.

END