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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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EMERGENCY LANDING OF N97HA *

CESSNA 208 IN FAIRBANKS, * Accident No.: ANC21LA073

ALASKA ON AUGUST 16, 2021 *

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Interview of: HEATHER ZULKANYCZ, Pilot
Cessna 208 (Caravan)

Fairbanks, Alaska/
Via telephone

Friday,
August 27, 2021

APPEARANCES:

BRICE BANNING, Senior Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CRAIG KENMONTH, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

EVERETT (RETT) LEAF, Director of Safety
Wright Air Service

BRENT COLE, Representative for Ms. Zulkanycz)

PAUL SUFFERN, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board

ADAM HURAY, Systems Specialist
National Transportation Safety Board

CASEY LOVE, Air Safety Investigator
Textron Aviation

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:08 a.m.)

MR. BANNING: We are on the record at 10:08, Alaska Time. My name is Bryce Banning. I'm a Senior Aviation 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 Federal Aviation Administration, and we have no regulatory or enforcement powers.

At this time, I'd like to go around the room and the telephone for those who are attending virtually, and have everybody introduce themselves for the record.

Craig.

MR. KENMONTH: Good morning. My name is Craig Kenmonth. I'm an Aviation Safety Inspector for the Fairbanks Flight Standards District Office. I am participating as an FAA representative for the NTSB safety investigation. So I don't have to repeat questions, please take Mr. Banning's questions as my questions as well. If you do not want me present, I will adjourn. In which case, I request to meet separately with you and your representative following the meeting to fulfill my FAA responsibilities.

MR. BANNING: Rett.

1 MR. LEAF: Everett Leaf, and I go by Rett. I'm the Director
2 of Safety at Wright Air Service.

3 MR. BANNING: Heather.

4 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Heather. I'm the pilot in this incident.

5 MR. COLE: And I'm Brent Cole. I'm here as Heather's
6 representative.

7 MR. BANNING: Okay. And Paul on the phone.

8 MR. SUFFERN: Hi. Good morning. My name is Paul Suffern.
9 I'm a meteorologist with the National Transportation Safety Board.

10 MR. BANNING: And Adam on the phone.

11 MR. HURAY: Yes. Hello. Good morning. My name is Adam
12 Huray. I am a systems specialist with the National Transportation
13 Safety Board.

14 MR. BANNING: And then Casey on the phone.

15 MR. LOVE: Hi. Good morning guys. My name is Casey Love.
16 I'm an air safety investigator with Textron Aviation.

17 MR. BANNING: Do you have any objection to anyone that is
18 present in the room or attending virtually on the phone
19 participating in an interview, Heather?

20 MS. ZULKANYCZ: No.

21 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you.

22 Today we will be using a digital recorder to record the
23 interview, which will then be sent for transcription. The
24 transcript, not the audio recording, will be made part of the
25 public docket. Do you have any objection to the recording?

1 MS. ZULKANYCZ: No.

2 MR. BANNING: Okay. Does anybody on the phone or in the room
3 have any objection to the recording?

4 All right. Thank you.

5 The purpose of the investigation is safety, to determine
6 probable cause, and prevent recurrence. Our role is not to assign
7 fault, blame or liability. This interview is part of the fact-
8 finding phase of this investigation. We cannot, however, offer
9 any guarantees of confidentiality or immunity. Each of the group
10 members will have a chance to ask questions. We will ask
11 questions one at a time, and everyone has been instructed to not
12 interrupt the person who is asking questions at that time. There
13 will be the opportunity for each group member to ask follow-up
14 questions after each person has had a turn.

15 Heather, if you could please answer all questions to the best
16 of your recollection. If you don't understand a question, just
17 let me know. I'll explain it; restate it. And if you realize you
18 misstated or needed to modify a previous answer, it's no problem.
19 Please do so.

20 You are entitled to one representative of your choosing. Is
21 there someone you would like to have as a representative? And
22 would you state their name for the record, please?

23 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Yes. Brent Cole here.

24 MR. BANNING: Thank you. And do you have any questions,
25 Heather, before we --

1 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Not at this time.

2 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you. And once again, as
3 previously stated, if you need a break, just let us know, if you
4 need to go off the record.

5 And, Brent, I know you've been here before, but you can
6 direct Heather to not answer a question or you can let us know you
7 need a short break and confer with her. Our request is that you
8 please don't answer questions on her behalf.

9 MR. COLE: Sure.

10 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you.

11 INTERVIEW OF HEATHER ZULKANYCZ

12 BY MR. BANNING:

13 Q. So could you, Heather, tell us just a little bit about your
14 background, how you got into aviation, your flight time, things of
15 that nature?

16 A. Could you be a little bit more specific?

17 Q. Sure. Yeah, absolutely. When did you get -- when did you
18 start flying?

19 A. I started flying the summer between my high school junior and
20 senior year.

21 Q. Okay. Very nice. And about how much time, flight time, do
22 you have now? Just an estimate is fine.

23 A. Approximately 10,000 hours.

24 Q. And is it all Alaska time or primarily Alaska time?

25 A. Primarily Alaska time.

1 Q. And how long have you been with Wright's?

2 A. About two years now.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Little over two years.

5 Q. And did you fly for -- commercially for any other companies
6 prior to that?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And can you give me a little bit about that background? Who
9 they were and --

10 A. I worked for Warbelows Air Ventures for awhile, and I also
11 worked for Raven Frontier Hagland, that conglomerate for many
12 years as well.

13 Q. Okay. and do you have an idea of how much time you have in
14 the Caravan?

15 A. Approximately 2,000 hours.

16 Q. Okay. And do you fly any other of the aircraft that Wright's
17 has?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And what are those?

20 A. I also fly the Navajo.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. PA-31.

23 Q. Okay. And what is your position in those two aircraft?
24 Pilot-in-command? That's what I'm --

25 A. Yeah. I'm -- yeah, PIC.

1 Q. Okay. PIC qualified in both --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- the Caravan and the Navajo?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. And as pilot-in-command, can you just briefly tell me
6 a little about your duties and responsibilities in that role?

7 A. Can you be again more specific?

8 Q. Sure. What's your primary -- can you tell me a little bit
9 about your primary job function? I mean, what's it entail? Does
10 it entail -- I'll come back to it. How's that?

11 A. Oh, okay.

12 Q. Yeah. It's not problem. I'm not phrasing the question very
13 well. I can come back to it.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What's your job description?

15 MS. ZULKANYCZ: I'm a line pilot.

16 BY MR. BANNING:

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I mean a 135 line pilot.

19 Q. Okay. Perfect.

20 A. Is that what you're looking for?

21 Q. Thank you. No, you're just fine. Thank you. And what I'd
22 like to do is just have you tell us about the day of the event.
23 Just maybe starting from when you showed up for work what you did
24 leading up to the event itself. And I'll not interrupt, and just
25 let you tell the story, if you would.

1 A. Starting from when I showed up to work that day?

2 Q. If you would, please.

3 A. Okay. I showed up to work, and checked weather for my first
4 flight of the day -- you have someone on your phone.

5 Q. Yeah. We'll ignore it.

6 A. Sorry.

7 Q. Nope, you're fine. I'm sorry for the interruption. We'll
8 just decline, and we are still on with the folks on the phone.

9 So --

10 A. Okay. I showed up for work. I checked weather for my first
11 flight of the day, and went out and did a full preflight of the
12 aircraft, got the airplane ready go to, fueled it, loaded baggage,
13 and went out on my first flight, departed. I went Fairbanks,
14 Galena, Koyukuk, Huslia, Koyukuk, back to Fairbanks. It was
15 (indiscernible). I was IFR flight plan. I mean, I was, well, at
16 some point, like I was also VFR, and I was on a VFR flight plan as
17 well during parts of that flight as well as multi-legs, multi-
18 village stops flight. And I don't really know what else I should
19 really say about that.

20 Q. Oh, okay.

21 A. I mean, I came back and -- came back in. Was turning in my
22 paperwork for my first flight. Gave information. They said, hey,
23 your next flight is going to Huslia. And I gave information
24 associated with that flight to the appropriate people. Checked
25 weather. Went out and fueled my airplane. Verified, you know,

1 verified weather again. Kind of did a modified, shortened
2 preflight. I had just flown that airplane. And kind of walk
3 around. Verified load is strapped down and such, and came in and
4 kind of took off on the flight.

5 Q. You're doing fine. I appreciate it. You're doing just
6 fine.

7 A. Nothing was unusual. Climb out, level off at 10,000 feet. I
8 noticed I was started to get some light rime and ice. Temperature
9 was about minus one degree Celsius. In the clouds I noticed kind
10 of a brightening of the clouds, and kind of thought to myself I
11 was getting pretty close to the top of the clouds, and thought I'd
12 be able to climb out of this condition. I heard another person on
13 company on center, but (indiscernible) for the block 10 to 12, and
14 they were climbing out of it, and they thought they were getting
15 pretty close to the tops as well. I requested and I got that
16 block altitudes. Started to climb up. I heard other people
17 conferring and other people getting the same block. I mean, this
18 was a common thing on company frequency. We were all talking
19 about this, you know, what the weather was doing, and kind of
20 where was a good altitude. I noticed the head wind was increasing
21 as I climbed. And it didn't appear -- I talked to somebody else,
22 who then kind of suggested the heights of the clouds were
23 significantly higher maybe. And so I began looking around, and
24 kind of observing everything. Decided maybe I wasn't going to
25 find the tops. I wasn't. So I found somebody else that was

1 talking about being a 8,000 feet, and that was working out pretty
2 -- it was, it was working out better. It wasn't -- so I was
3 thinking I was going to come down.

4 So I started my descent back down to 10,000. I've got all my
5 deicing equipment on. It seems -- every indication I have it's
6 working properly.

7 And I don't know. I was, like I said, leveling off at 10,000
8 feet or so. And I get the autopilot disconnect tone, and the
9 airplane enters the turn and the descent. Required both hands on
10 the yoke. Couple moments. I don't know. My sense of time gets a
11 little warped here. I eventually bring the power back. I regain
12 control of the aircraft, and turn back towards Fairbanks after
13 declaring emergency, and get priority handling into Fairbanks,
14 land.

15 Q. Thank you. I really appreciate that. Do you recall what
16 your fuel load was prior? You indicated that you had a flight,
17 and then came back, fueled the airplane. Do you know what your
18 fuel load was for the flight that the event happened on?

19 A. About 1900 pounds of fuel.

20 Q. Okay. And I'm not very familiar with the Caravan. I've only
21 flown it a very small amount. What is the max fuel load? Do you
22 know off the top of your head for the Caravan?

23 A. I can put as a max useful load 2,224 pounds of fuel.

24 Q. Okay. Do you recall, and if you don't, it's not a problem,
25 do you -- but do you recall what the gross -- what your gross

1 weight was when you departed Fairbanks?

2 A. I was using the 9,062 pounds as my max gross.

3 Q. Okay. And do you remember -- and I'd like to, if possible --
4 do you remember where people were seated on the flight?

5 A. Not 100 percent. I couldn't tell you which passenger was in
6 which seat 100 percent, no.

7 Q. Okay. No problem. Do you know if there was any -- do you
8 recall if there was anybody seated beside you in the copilot seat?

9 A. There was nobody in the copilot seat.

10 Q. Okay. Copilot seat was empty. And back to the event, the --
11 when you departed Fairbanks, do you recall about time you -- or
12 what altitude you entered the clouds climbing out of Fairbanks?

13 A. Maybe around 5,000.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I can't be 100 percent sure, but that's about roughly.

16 Q. An estimate.

17 A. And I was in and out of clouds for awhile too.

18 Q. Okay. And do you recall when you entered icing conditions?

19 A. It was around nine five.

20 Q. Okay. And when that happened, you may have already stated,
21 and so I apologize if it's redundant, but when that -- when you
22 started picking up that ice at 9,500, do you recall what kind of
23 ice it was, the accumulation rate, anything of that nature?

24 A. I would have classified it as light rime.

25 Q. Okay. And your initial assigned altitude from ATC was?

1 A. 10.

2 Q. 10,000. And you continued to accumulate ice at 10? And is
3 that why you requested the block? Or can you elaborate on that
4 just a little bit?

5 A. Yeah. I was accumulating some ice, but it wasn't a lot. It
6 was not anything beyond -- I mean, the deicing capabilities of the
7 aircraft.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. The boots were inflating. I could see it was shedding off
10 the boots, I mean.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. On the wings.

13 Q. Okay. And so the request from 10 to 12 was to get out of the
14 clouds?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. Do you recall when you, for the accident flight, do
17 you recall when you engaged the autopilot?

18 A. I engaged the autopilot probably around two to three thousand
19 feet -- was in the climb. I also disengaged it, and checked trim
20 multiple times in the climb. And even in -- once leveled off at
21 10,000, I, again, I disengaged it, and checked it.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Again the trim.

24 Q. And for the deice equipment that you had on, can you go over
25 the equipment again for me that was on the -- that you had turned

1 on?

2 A. I had PetoHeat on.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I had stall heat on. I had prop heat on. I had -- inflating
5 the boots as I needed.

6 Q. And the boots on the Caravan, I'm not familiar. So I'm not
7 -- it's not a truck question at all. I'm not familiar. Are they
8 -- do you turn them on and leave them on or do you wait for ice to
9 accumulate, and then you cycle them one at a time or --

10 A. It does not have -- they're momentary switches. You have to
11 manually --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- like it returns -- you can't just turn them on and leave
14 them on. It's not a turn it on and forget it situation. You have
15 to manually -- there's two positions, but you still have to
16 manually every time it returns to the neutral or off position.

17 Q. Okay. I understand. Thank you. Do you recall if there was
18 a low -- my understanding is the Caravan is equipped with a low
19 air speed warning light.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And horn.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Do you recall if either of those came on for this flight?

24 A. I do not recall them coming on.

25 Q. Okay. And prior, just prior to the loss of control, Heather,

1 the auto -- it sounds the autopilot was engaged, correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Do you recall what settings the autopilot -- once
4 again, I'm not familiar with this autopilot, but others I've flown
5 have had altitude, hold, speed, different settings. Do you recall
6 what you had set?

7 A. I was in map mode of holding my GPS track.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And I had 10,000 set as the altitude for leveling off. I
10 don't recall as to whether it actually leveled off there or not
11 before the event exactly. But I also had a vertical speed mode
12 because I was descending back down to 10,000.

13 Q. Okay. And directly after the recovery did you feel that the
14 airplane was out of trim at all?

15 A. I throughout the recovery couldn't -- I was, I, I was having
16 control issues throughout the recovery to recover it.

17 Q. Okay. And then once it was recovered, once you had regained
18 control, and turned around, and headed back to Fairbanks, do you
19 recall if -- what the trim was like?

20 A. I was fighting everything.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I -- super strength to hold the airplane, and I tried
23 adjusting trims and stuff, but I --

24 Q. Okay. Yeah. No problem. Did you on the flight after the
25 recovery, and on the return to Fairbanks, did you ever reengage

1 the autopilot?

2 A. I pulled the circuit breaker for the autopilot, pushed it
3 back in. I tried running the self test. I don't think it ever
4 made it through the self test. I don't -- I never got it. It
5 never worked.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I don't -- I couldn't even pull up the flight director that I
8 can remember. There was nothing. I think it, yeah.

9 Q. Okay. And so you did not reengage it then. It sounds like
10 --

11 A. It was impossible.

12 Q. Okay. I want to step back, if I could, and talk to you a
13 little bit about your job here. For the sake of -- I'd like to
14 understand when you come into work, and you pick up a flight, what
15 that process looks like. How is the flight released? How do you,
16 you know, the -- do you check -- how is the weather checked? Is
17 there a flight risk assessment? If you could describe the whole
18 process generically for me from you coming to work and getting a
19 flight and starting the engine.

20 A. I, yeah, I come to work. I verify -- I understand what my
21 flight assignment is for the day because it may have changed from
22 what I think it was from the day before or something like that.
23 And verify the aircraft that I'm going to be taking on the flight.
24 I check weather. I give load information, like how much weight I
25 can take and stuff. And, of course, figure out my fuel load for

1 the day with the weather conditions. I fill out a risk assessment
2 form. Go out to the aircraft. I preflight it. I fuel. I assist
3 or observe the loading process, and verify everything is strapped
4 down and such, and verify chairs are properly installed, and get
5 the aircraft ready to go for the flight. I just generically get
6 my paperwork for the flight, and kind of go up front, give my
7 times for roughly where I'm going to be when, you know, kind of
8 delays and stuff or winds or whatever anticipated, you know, where
9 in the wind I'm going to be in each village. And gather the
10 passengers and load -- walk them onto the airplane, load them up,
11 verify everybody's got their seatbelts on, give a passenger
12 briefing, close up all the doors, and start the engine, get going
13 on the flight.

14 Q. Okay. Thank you. And how do you know what your -- who --
15 how do you know what airplane you have when you walk in the door?
16 How do you know which airplane you'll be flying?

17 A. I verify it when I verify where I'm going, I guess. Either I
18 look on the computer or I just talk to somebody who is looking at
19 the computer.

20 Q. Okay. So it's posted on a computer where you are assigned a
21 certain airplane?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And then is that the same for your flight route? Is
24 it posted on the computer your schedule for the day?

25 A. Yeah. It's all on the computer.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But I, I mean, it can be assigned the night before, and just
3 aircraft availability changes --

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. -- day-to-day stuff.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. Things happen. Somebody can't do a certain flight or things
8 get moved around.

9 Q. Sure. No. I appreciate that. And when you're evaluating
10 the weather, are you making all the go, no-go decisions on a
11 particular flight or how does that work?

12 A. Well, I, when I'm evaluating the weather, I'm filling out my
13 risk assessment, and if I get to a certain risk, I then have to go
14 talk to the -- somebody who holds operational control if I get
15 like an RA or like a, like a, I think what's it called, a three or
16 I don't remember exactly. Yeah. When I get to a category three,
17 I need to go find somebody who holds operational control, and get
18 their initial sign-off for doing the flight. Otherwise, I fill
19 out a one and, like, a category one or two. I fill them out, and
20 I just file it in the box.

21 Q. Okay. So it's not 'till you get to a three that you are --
22 have management involvement. Would that be accurate?

23 A. Operational control involvement.

24 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you. Thank you. I'm going to
25 take a break and let -- I'll go around the room, and see if

1 anybody else has any questions, and then give me a chance to sit.

2 Craig, do you have any questions at this time?

3 MR. KENMONTH: If nobody else has anything, I'd like to go
4 off the record, and talk to a bit before continuing.

5 MR. BANNING: Okay. Well, let's go around the room first.

6 Rett, do you have any additional questions at this time
7 for Heather?

8 MR. LEAF: I have no, no additional questions.

9 MR. BANNING: On the phone, Paul Suffern, do you have any
10 questions for Heather?

11 MR. SUFFERN: Yeah. I've got a couple of questions here.

12 MR. SUFFERN: First of all, Heather, I appreciate your time
13 today. And just briefly going back to the accident day and the
14 accident flight, could you step me through, if you recall, what
15 weather product you used prior to the accident flight?

16 MR. BANNING: Hey, hey, Paul. Let's hold on one second.

17 MR. SUFFERN: Yep.

18 MR. BANNING: Heather is having a hard time hearing over the
19 phone. I'm going to move -- we're social distancing here, and I'm
20 going to move you closer to Heather. How's that? Okay. Go
21 ahead, please.

22 BY MR. SUFFERN:

23 Q. Okay. All right. Yeah. So first of all, Heather, I
24 appreciate your time today. And I just wanted to briefly go back
25 to the accident day, and then the accident flight. Just a couple

1 of follow-up questions there. You had mentioned earlier prior to
2 the accident flight that you reviewed the weather, then I believe
3 you did several other tasks, and then you went back to just
4 double-check the weather. Do you recall what weather information
5 you reviewed prior to the accident flight?

6 A. I reviewed multiple pages on the last aviation weather unit
7 page, and I checked METARs and TAFs and area forecasts. I checked
8 winds aloft. I checked the graphical products. I kind of clicked
9 through multiple tabs on that page. I can't per se exactly if I
10 remember every single page I clicked on, but multiple tabs.

11 Q. Okay. Yeah, I know. I'm familiar with that website. I know
12 what you're speaking of. Do you recall hearing any FAA weather
13 camera or any other weather information sites?

14 A. I did look, you're right. Yes. I did look at the aviation
15 weather cams website.

16 Q. Okay. And then are those kind of the two main websites? Are
17 there any other weather information sites that you use prior to a
18 flight?

19 A. Those are the primary ones, and that I use.

20 Q. Okay. And as far as the weather information just
21 generically. I'm not speaking of the accident flight per se, but
22 just generically. What weather information do you as a pilot find
23 most useful?

24 A. METARs are pretty useful. TAFs are pretty useful. Winds
25 Aloft are very useful. The radar for a little bit. Don't have

1 very good coverage but --

2 Q. Okay. And --

3 A. -- area forecasts are --

4 (Crosstalk)

5 Q. Go ahead.

6 A. Sorry. The area forecasts I do -- they're helpful, but
7 they're also kind of vague. They're big areas, but they are
8 somewhat helpful. I also check PIREPs as well. That is also on
9 the -- that front page there with the weather unit.

10 Q. Okay. That's helpful. So briefly turning to the accident
11 flight there. You had mentioned earlier about accumulating what
12 you described as light rime, icing. Do you recall where on the
13 airplane you observed those icing conditions?

14 A. It was on the boots on the leading edge of the wings.

15 Q. Okay. And if you can recall other flights, have you
16 encountered icing conditions similar to the accident flight
17 before?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And if you can recall during those other similar icing
20 conditions, how often did you have to -- it sounds like you have
21 to manually inflate the boots. Do you recall how often in those
22 other flights you had to inflate or manually inflate the boots?

23 A. I can't say a specific timeframe. I just would say as
24 required as I notice the need to inflate them.

25 Q. Okay. And is there a specific -- not being familiar with the

1 Caravan and the airplane there, is there a specific amount of ice
2 that you're looking for before you inflate the boots?

3 A. It's hard to say. It's really a judgment thing.

4 Q. Okay. So while you were on -- I believe you were talking
5 with air traffic control, listening to the tapes, and I heard
6 about six or seven minutes prior to the upset loss of control, I
7 believe there is another flight that gave PIREP about icing
8 conditions. Do you recall hearing of that PIREP while you were on
9 frequency?

10 A. Not specifically. I do recall a lot of chatter on air
11 traffic control, and I do remember -- I heard icing PIREPs, but I
12 can't recall exactly if I heard that specific one or not. I --
13 center is talking to people in Kotzebue and all across the state in
14 Barrow and --

15 Q. Understood. Understood. Okay. And then so moving on from
16 the accident flight, and Brice had a discussion or a question
17 earlier about the risk assessment there, and able to get a copy of
18 that. And under category number two, it mentions known icing.
19 What would be a situation for you where you were still in the
20 circle for known icing?

21 A. If I see PIREPs or if I was in the area previous to that, and
22 I knew I encountered icing earlier in the day potentially.

23 Q. Okay. Would there be any condition where there was a
24 forecast out there for icing for any level, let's just say,
25 whether it's light or moderate, they put out an AIRMET or even a

1 SIGMET for icing, would any of those forecasts for you be a
2 condition, you know, just absent of PIREPs and all of those
3 things, would any of those conditions be where you would consider
4 that known icing?

5 A. Yes. If -- well, so, if you see it on a METAR or a TAF where
6 it's kind of -- well, specifically a METAR, if you see icing
7 conditions there ground icing conditions, those would definitely
8 be scenarios where you've got known icing.

9 Q. Okay. And then so the METAR is out there, and it's showing
10 freezing drizzle or something like that, that would
11 (indiscernible)?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. What about like an AIRMET or a SIGMET for icing at any
14 particular category and level? Would those be known icing for you
15 or just strictly observations like a PIREP or METAR?

16 A. They're useful in guidance. Unfortunately, with the AIRMET
17 and SIGMET they're for such a wide area usually, and they kind of
18 usually span like half the State. I mean, it's hard to
19 justifiably say that that's specifically known icing. Nobody
20 has been there to confirm it. It's a forecast or it's a
21 suspectful (verbatim) case that there could be icing there.

22 Q. Okay. That's very helpful. So I've just got two more
23 questions here. Just from your general -- flying and 2,000 hours
24 there in the Caravan, can you recall a time where you were in
25 icing conditions and lost some air speed while you're flying at

1 cruise, if you can recall any time?

2 A. I don't understand what you're asking.

3 Q. So, yeah, I'll try to rephrase. I'm sorry. So you had
4 mentioned earlier you had flown in icing conditions before,
5 obviously, you know, with the boots and everything there. Do you
6 recall any other flight where you're flying in those icing
7 conditions, you're operating the boots, and you notice as you're
8 reviewing, you know, you're going around and being situational
9 aware, you notice any point in time where you lost air speed?
10 Have you encountered that before?

11 A. Yes. I was actively trying to get out of the icing, but,
12 yeah, I have encountered that before.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's talking about other flights. You
14 understand that, right?

15 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Yes. Yes.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I didn't mean to interrupt, but I just
17 wanted to make sure it's clear there. It seemed confusing to me.

18 MR. BANNING: So you're -- Paul, you're talking about any
19 other flight she may have been on where she encountered icing
20 conditions, and the air speed, she noticed the air speed
21 decreasing? Is that not, not this particular flight, but any
22 other flight, correct?

23 MR. SUFFERN: Correct, yes.

24 MR. BANNING: Yeah.

25 MR. SUFFERN: Thank you. I'm sorry. I was, yeah.

1 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Yeah. Yeah, I have noticed subtle air speed
2 losses, 1, 2, 3 knots in icing conditions, yes, in the past.

3 BY MR. SUFFERN:

4 Q. Okay. Thank you. Sorry. I'm not a pilot myself, so I'm
5 poorly phrasing some of these questions. I appreciate your
6 patience here. And then just the last question I had here was
7 just an open-ended question. Is there anything weather-wise that
8 you wish you had before your flights out there? If there's any
9 kind of a resource, is there anything missing that you believe
10 that would be helpful weather-wise?

11 A. Oh, I could give you a dream list.

12 Q. Go for it.

13 A. Ground weather stations multiple places would be great.
14 We've lost, you know, more cameras in the system, more radar in
15 the system. Just more of everything really. It would be
16 wonderful to have more information to make decisions.

17 Q. Okay. And would you prefer that information kind of in a
18 desktop format? It sounds like you have a dedicated computer
19 there you're able to review things in there. Would there be
20 another format that --

21 A. I would love it in every format I could get. The desktop
22 works in between flights because we're -- we do have a dedicated
23 computer that we go to and look at for that. But it would be
24 great to have it as Fisbe (ph.) weather, ABSB upload. But we
25 don't have the ABSB coverage up here either. So, I mean, you --

1 it's an infrastructure thing. It would be nice to have more
2 information available not just on the ground, but in flight as
3 well.

4 MR. SUFFERN: Okay. Thank you. That's very helpful. I
5 appreciate your time this morning, Heather.

6 Brice, that's all the questions I have for right now. Thank
7 you so much.

8 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you, Paul.

9 Adam, do you have any questions for Heather?

10 MR. HURAY: Hi. Yes, I do.

11 BY MR. HURAY:

12 Q. Heather, first of all, again, thank you for being here to
13 answer questions for us today. I'm going to pull up my list. And
14 how long do you, do you remember being in icing conditions before
15 you decided to try to climb out of them?

16 A. Maybe a minute or two. I encountered them, and I was
17 actively thinking about ways of how to get out of them. I needed
18 to talk to air traffic control to get the block. It was a very
19 busy frequency.

20 Q. And you said once you reached the top of your climb
21 (indiscernible) one and two. You said for one or two minutes that
22 you were (indiscernible) you said you did attempt to disconnect
23 and just make sure that the airplane didn't feel out of trim
24 during that time?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And do you recall your flap setting at the time of the
2 incident?

3 A. Zero.

4 Q. When you decided to climb, were you using autopilot?

5 A. I was.

6 Q. And do you recall did you dial in an altitude or how were you
7 using autopilot to climb at that time?

8 A. Yes. I received the block 10 to 12, and I put in maybe 11 5
9 as just a target on climbing up, and I initiated the climb with an
10 altitude to stop at.

11 Q. Okay. So then as you were climbing, you decided to descend
12 back down based on the reports you were hearing. And at that time
13 did you just dial in -- that's when you dialed in the 10,000 feet?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. To start bringing you back --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And you stayed in the Nav mode the whole time, you said, as
18 well?

19 A. Yes. I was in Nav mode the whole time.

20 Q. Okay. Do you recall what your air speed was while you were
21 descending?

22 A. I was -- while I was descending?

23 Q. Yes. Around the time of the event, do you recall what your
24 air speed was?

25 A. Not 100 percent.

1 MR. HURAY: Okay. All right. Thank you very much. That's
2 all I have. So thank you for answering those questions.

3 MR. BANNING: Casey, do you have any questions for Heather?

4 MR. LOVE: Oh, yeah.

5 BY MR. LOVE:

6 Q. Hey, Heather. So in the seconds or minutes leading up to the
7 autopilot disconnect, you were in the descent. Was it turbulent
8 at that altitude at all or how would you describe the turbulence?

9 A. I would have described it as light turbulence. I had a
10 significant headwind, approximately 60 knots on the nose. As I
11 climbed it, the headwind got stiffer. It got stronger.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And I wasn't -- yeah, there were some bumps. There was some
14 turbulence there. Occasional maybe stronger bumps, but there was
15 definitely turbulence.

16 Q. Yeah. You wouldn't say that it was moderate or severe
17 though? And then at the instant that the autopilot disconnected,
18 what did the airplane do?

19 A. It entered a descending right-hand turn.

20 Q. How much bank angle would you estimate?

21 A. I don't remember.

22 Q. Did it -- was it pretty abrupt? I mean, did it --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- it rolled like hard right?

25 A. Yes. It was very abrupt.

1 Q. And then the descent was it steep also and abrupt?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. If you -- I don't want you to like guess, but I mean 20
4 degrees nose down, 45 degrees nose down?

5 A. I don't know.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I was in the clouds. I was IMC.

8 Q. Yeah. Did it -- was it abrupt enough to pick you up out of
9 your seat or you have negative Gs or?

10 A. I don't remember.

11 Q. And then you said that you, you know, it was kind of a
12 struggle to get it to recover or, you know, that you had to fight
13 it to get it to recover?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Did you feel like it was the autopilot that was fighting you
16 at the time or did it feel like the controls were jammed or?

17 A. I would have -- yeah. The controls felt jammed. I was not
18 really clear why the controls were jammed at the moment. I just,
19 it was the controls were jammed. I could not -- I was fighting
20 it.

21 Q. Was it just pitch control that was jammed or roll control
22 feel jammed?

23 A. It was the roll control was jammed; not the pitch control.

24 Q. Did it feel like it was jammed like as soon as it started to
25 turn and descend and you put your hands back on the yoke -- or I

1 guess that's another question too. When you fly with autopilot do
2 you still have your hands on the yoke?

3 A. I do, yes.

4 Q. Just in case or do you --

5 A. Yes, I do. Well, I have one hand on the yoke and one hand on
6 the boots to blow the -- to inflate the boots, but, yes.

7 Q. Okay. So the seconds before the incident happened, you've
8 got one hand on the yoke, one hand you're running the boots. You
9 hear the autopilot disconnect. An abrupt descent and roll to the
10 right. And at that point when you tried to correct the roll, did
11 the controls still jam or --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- did they feel jammed a little bit later on?

14 A. No. They felt jammed immediately.

15 MR. LOVE: Okay. I can't think of anything else, but, again,
16 like everybody else, I appreciate your time.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You want to go off the record here for
18 a sec. You guys wanted to talk before you started.

19 MR. BANNING: Yeah. It's been a little while. Why don't we
20 take a short break, and get a drink of water. Let's -- I'm going
21 to leave my phone on, guys, but I'm going to mute the -- you so we
22 don't have to call back in. And we are now officially --

23 (Off the record.)

24 (On the record at 11:15 a.m.)

25 MR. BANNING: This is Brice Banning, and we're back on the

1 record at about 11:15.

2 Go ahead, Heather. Thank you.

3 MS. ZULKANYCZ: I was asked a question regarding my speed
4 during the descent with the autopilot on there. I don't remember
5 exactly. But so when I -- after I kind of climbed up to 10 5 and
6 I started my descent back down to 10,000, I was targeting an air
7 speed of 125. That was one clarification. I was targeting that.
8 The other question with regards to my judgment, and how often I
9 use the boots, I'm still a little unclear on the question. But I
10 use things a little bit, I, I mentioned it was a judgment call.
11 It's as the conditions need. It's as ice accumulates, as the
12 conditions need, I will blow the boots more often or I will -- I'm
13 actively trying to get out of the icing, but as it accumulates
14 appropriately I am engaging the boots, and as such -- so as the
15 conditions increase or as the accumulation increases more I'm --
16 I'm increasing my remove -- I'm blowing the boots more often.

17 MR. BANNING: That's good. No. We appreciate the clarity.
18 Yeah.

19 MS. ZULKANYCZ: That's kind of what I meant by judgment, I
20 guess.

21 MR. BANNING: Sure. Yeah, no. we appreciate the clarity.

22 MS. ZULKANYCZ: And so, yeah, again, as it increases or
23 accumulation increases I'm actively blowing the boots more often.
24 I'm doing things more often as I need to, to get out of the icing.
25 I'm actively working trying to exit the ice as quickly as I can.

1 The weight -- earlier, Brice, you were asking me about how
2 much fuel I had.

3 MR. BANNING: Right.

4 MS. ZULKANYCZ: And such. I just kind of want to expand upon
5 that a little bit here.

6 MR. BANNING: Please.

7 MS. ZULKANYCZ: So when I came back from my first flight, I
8 gave available payload to company personnel. I checked weather,
9 NOTAMs and such. I decided I needed more fuel for the flight. I
10 amended that weight available, and I verified that they were
11 bumping bags. I saw somebody bumping bags off the flight. Bags
12 were bumped. I went out, and I was fueling the airplane getting
13 it again ready to go. When loading was completed and things were
14 strapping down, I verbally verified with the crew loading the
15 plane that bags were bumped. They verbally agreed, yes, the bags
16 were bumped. That change may not have been reflected on my
17 manifest because that was printed prior to that.

18 MR. BANNING: Okay.

19 BY MR. BANNING:

20 Q. And do you recall then what -- you indicated is -- do you
21 recall what the fuel load was you had for the flight?

22 A. It's the -- I put 19.

23 Q. 19. Okay.

24 A. That was what I took.

25 Q. Okay. I understand. Okay. So you had 1900 pounds of fuel

1 onboard when you departed Fairbanks?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And bags were bumped from the flight so that you could
4 carry the extra fuel? To the best of your knowledge. Was that
5 not an accurate?

6 A. I -- to my knowledge, the bags were bumped, yes.

7 Q. Okay. Do you, Heather, do you know how much weight you asked
8 to be bumped? Do you remember?

9 A. I asked for an additional 600 pounds to be bumped off the
10 flight.

11 Q. Okay. And you indicated earlier that you were using a gross
12 weight of -- or a max takeoff weight, if you will, of 9,062
13 pounds; is that correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. I appreciate that. And is there any other questions
16 that you wanted to provide a little more clarity? I really
17 appreciate you adding it. It is very helpful.

18 A. I believe at this time that's what I have.

19 Q. Okay. No. Thank you. That's terrific. I really appreciate
20 it. And if something else comes up, just say, hey, you know.

21 It's no problem. We want the most accurate record, and I know
22 it's been awhile, and we appreciate that this is not comfortable,
23 but we appreciate your time. Quick question. It's kind of on
24 company policy, but who makes decisions on whether the flight is
25 conducted VFR or IFR?

1 A. The pilot.

2 Q. Okay. So management doesn't -- or operational control
3 doesn't have any involvement in that until you reach potentially
4 that level three on the risk assessment. Is that accurate? I
5 guess I was just -- let me rephrase.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Do you make the decision as the pilot-in-command whether the
8 flight is operated under visual flight rules or instrument flight
9 rules?

10 A. I feel like I don't know how to answer that. The weather --
11 if the weather is such that's the way you go.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. If it is IMC you go with an IFR flight plan, and that's --

14 Q. Perfect. Okay. I guess what I'm trying to understand -- I'm
15 not trying to make it difficult. So please forgive me if I -- but
16 so when you come in, you look at the weather. You as the pilot
17 make the decision based on the weather whether you're going to go
18 VFR or IFR; is that correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Some other factors that might also be at play though is if
22 the aircraft has something MEL'd and it's limited to VFR only or
23 something of that nature, but that's not the case -- yeah, yeah.
24 There's other factors involved as well.

25 Q. Okay. I understand. And for clarity, there were no open

1 MELS on this airplane for this flight?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. Thank you. I'm going to jump around a little bit
4 here. I apologize. You talked about the accident flight, and
5 when the loss of control happened you were in IMC conditions.
6 Through the descent and the recovery did you -- were you
7 continuously in instrument meteorological conditions through the
8 entire descent and recovery or did you break out of the clouds at
9 any point for -- in the VMC conditions?

10 A. I was IMC the entire time. I did not have ground contact. I
11 did not. I may have been in and out of layers, but I didn't, I
12 didn't have ground contact. I didn't -- I was IMC.

13 Q. And you did not break out the bottom? You recovered in IMC
14 conditions?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. A couple of questions about icing. I know you're
17 familiar, but I'd like to get it on the record. I know you're
18 familiar by your previous answers, but I'd like to get it on the
19 record if I could. The Caravan has a flight into icing
20 supplement; is that correct?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. You're familiar with that document?

23 A. Yes, most definitely, yes.

24 Q. Okay. And I know you've already mentioned some -- in the
25 discussion some of the limitations for autopilot use in icing

1 conditions of 10 minutes. You already mentioned you were doing.
2 Is there any other limitations that you're aware of for autopilot
3 use in icing conditions?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Does the airplane, and I -- does the airplane have,
6 and I know it does, and I know you are aware that it does, but for
7 the record what's the minimum icing air speed for the airplane,
8 the accident airplane?

9 A. The minimum -- okay, so that's a tricky, well, not a tricky.
10 It's a multiple part answer.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Minimum icing speed depends upon if you're in straight and
13 level. If you're in a climb it changes. It also changes if you
14 have flaps or not associated with it.

15 Q. Can you tell me what those are for this airplane?

16 A. So if you're climbing with flaps 10 you can go all the way
17 down to 95 indicative, and then 110 -- no, yeah, 110 for climbing.
18 The Black Hawk conversion on this airplane states in straight
19 level flight a minimum icing state of 130.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. But that's in straight, that's -- yeah, sorry, yeah.

22 Q. Okay. So just for my own clarity, it would be 95 degrees in
23 a climb with 10 degrees flaps. It would be 110, 110 knots
24 indicated in a climb with zero flaps.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. And then a 130 for straight and level due to the Black Hawk
2 conversion?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. Can you -- if you recall, do you recall during your
5 training at Wright's Air Service, you went through basic indoc,
6 aircraft specific training, numerous training modules. Was the S1
7 supplement, that's the icing supplement, right? I'm getting that
8 correct? Was that covered during the training do you recall? Did
9 you have training on that supplement?

10 A. Yeah. In aircraft specific training we went over the
11 supplements.

12 Q. Okay. Thank you. I wanted to go back to the weight and
13 balance just briefly. Do you know where the center of gravity was
14 for the accident flight, for this flight?

15 A. I, when I was -- before I departed on the flight when I was
16 gathering my paperwork, I used our CG wheels, and I spun the
17 center of gravity. I don't recall exactly where it was. I do
18 remember it was within limits of the 9,062 max gross weight.

19 Q. Okay. And so just for clarity, you did compute the weight
20 and balance prior to departure via the CG wheel?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. Thank you. I think I know the answer to this,
23 Heather, but I'd still like to ask the question. The trim during
24 the examination that they did on the airplane after the event, the
25 trim was found in a full down position. Do you have any

1 recollection of putting the trim in that through --

2 A. Which trim are you talking about?

3 Q. I believe it was a fix trim was found in the full down
4 position. Do you have any recollection of -- do you have any idea
5 how it got there if -- did you move it there? Do you know?

6 A. I moved all three trims multiple times. I --

7 Q. No problem. Yep. I understand. Thank you. What was -- I
8 know you indicated that you had a flight the day before -- I'm
9 sorry, before, the same day before this flight.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do you know, remember what time you came in to work?

12 A. I was here at 6:45.

13 Q. In the morning?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And do you have a normal work schedule at Wright's?

16 A. I have an assigned duty day.

17 Q. Okay. And would you share that with me?

18 A. It's 6:45 'till 8:45.

19 Q. Okay. And do you have regular days off? What's your
20 schedule look like?

21 A. I do not have a regular day off or anything like that.

22 Q. Okay. And can you tell me do you recall what your schedule
23 looked like the three days before the event? Were you working?
24 Were you off? Do you recall?

25 A. I was working. I believe you have my flight and duty record

1 there.

2 Q. I don't have it yet.

3 A. Oh, you don't?

4 Q. No. I don't have it yet. I will ask for a copy of it yet,
5 but I'll get it. But you were working the three days prior to the
6 event?

7 A. To be 100 percent clear, I don't remember exactly --

8 Q. No problem.

9 A. -- which days I was working and not working, but it is all
10 listed on my flight and duty record.

11 Q. Sounds good. No problem. I appreciate it. And were you --
12 did you feel well rested when you came into work the day of the
13 event?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. No sleep problems or anything?

16 MR. BANNING: Thank you. Okay. I think that that about
17 finishes my questions. So what I'd like to do, Heather, is I'd
18 like to go around the room again; see if anybody has any follow-up
19 questions. We're getting close to the end I promise.

20 Craig.

21 BY MR. KENMONTH:

22 Q. Well, thank you, Heather. End is in sight. My list of
23 questions was pretty much crossed off between Brice and Paul. I
24 had some slight variations on some similar questions. So bear
25 with me. I'm not asking you to repeat the answers, but there's

1 some slight variances. I'm going to be talking training,
2 preflight and event. So chronologically on the training category
3 Brice touched on operational memory items or Cessna ops values.
4 Came up with the minimum air speed for the Black Hawk conversion
5 of 130 knots for the level flight for known icing and --

6 A. Yes. That's for known icing, yes.

7 Q. And does gross weight of the aircraft vary from no ice to
8 known icing?

9 A. Yes. If I'm going to depart into known icing, I would depart
10 at a weight of 8,550 pounds.

11 Q. And I want to get out of that known icing versus unknown
12 icing. But on the training issue so you gave us some various
13 speeds in climb with flaps, without flaps for minimum icing
14 speeds. Did the company recommend a specific escape ice
15 configuration in your aircraft specific training?

16 A. It was just what is in the Cessna book.

17 Q. Well, so it was nothing more specific than either 95 or 110
18 either zero flaps or flaps?

19 A. Right.

20 Q. On the preflight portion, you say you got to 80 WU in weather
21 cams. Oh, back up. How much time was between that morning flight
22 and the afternoon flight roughly? I can check, but I --

23 A. About an hour.

24 Q. I'm just trying to establish if you were rushed or had time
25 to thoroughly perform preflight duties. About an hour from

1 landing to takeoff?

2 A. Approximately. You can look at my flight logs.

3 Q. Yeah. Were you feeling rushed?

4 A. I feel like it's a fast-paced environment. We're trying to
5 get flights out on time.

6 Q. It is a fast-paced environment. On the previous flight you
7 flew back on a similar route of flight.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. In the opposite direction. Do you recall that altitude or
10 altitude block on the eastbound earlier flight?

11 A. I believe I was a 9,000.

12 Q. Did you experience any icing at 9,000?

13 A. No.

14 Q. None at all?

15 A. No.

16 Q. No trace, no light?

17 A. Right.

18 Q. So you said you checked, I think Paul asked you about, the
19 forecast products. Do you specifically remember looking at
20 forecast ice products with 3, 6, 9 or 12-hour charts?

21 A. You're talking about the graphical?

22 Q. Yes, the graphical charts.

23 A. Yeah. I clicked through them. I remember looking at them.

24 Q. Had asked for forecast ice. And this is not a gotcha
25 question, but I'm just really curious as to the risk assessment

1 process. And why wasn't the ice box checked on the risk
2 assessment, the preflight risk assessment?

3 A. I --

4 Q. If you want to see it, Brice has a copy.

5 A. Yeah. I've seen it. I did not have any icing when I came
6 back in. I didn't anticipate any icing on the way back out. I
7 did read forecast for it, but it didn't seem at my altitudes that
8 it was --

9 Q. So as to the company process, and I noticed the absence of
10 forecast ice on the risk assessment column.

11 A. Yeah. It says known icing.

12 Q. I know. So is that, that's the normal company risk
13 assessment process to exclude forecast icing and only include
14 known icing?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not sure how she would know that.

16 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Yeah. I'm not sure I know how to answer your
17 question.

18 BY MR. KENMONTH:

19 Q. Okay. That's fair.

20 A. I don't -- I mean, it's what the risk assessment says.

21 Q. On the risk assessment, does anybody check or concur with
22 your risk assessment prior to the flight?

23 A. If I'm a three, I get operational approval.

24 Q. But not one or two? There's no concurrence or second set of
25 eyes or point, counterpoint or validation? Not a trap.

1 A. No. I mean, if I'm a one or two, I just file it. I put it
2 in the box to be filed.

3 Q. Okay. Also on the preflight, we've gone through the fuel,
4 about 1900 pounds. Is there any -- is your company process of
5 fueling, are there any fuel records? Do you log fuel taken on at
6 any time?

7 A. No.

8 Q. How do you know there's 1900 pounds onboard?

9 A. Because when I went to fuel it, I flipped on the master
10 switch. I looked at the gauges as to how much fuel was onboard,
11 and then I, I put the fuel in the airplane, and I used the
12 totalizer on the hose to verify that's how much fuel I put in the
13 airplane. And then before takeoff on the checklist we verify we
14 have enough fuel for the route, the flight that we're doing.

15 Q. Not to be repetitive, but it was after you fueled sounds like
16 there might have been a revision on the load onboard.

17 A. I revised it right before I walked out to go fuel.

18 Q. Before you went to go fuel you revised the load available --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- because you calculated how much fuel you put on?

21 A. I was going to put on. Yes.

22 Q. And for clarity's sake, was the load manifest attached to the
23 flight incorrect? Was the load manifest -- did it reflect the
24 modified load available or did it reflect the load before you had
25 adjusted it? And if you don't remember, you can say so.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, I mean, don't you have to show
2 her what you're talking about?

3 MR. KENMONTH: And that may be, and like I said if you don't
4 know --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't mean to interrupt. I'm sorry.

6 MR. KENMONTH: No. That's a fair question, and because I'm
7 not trying to make a trap, I just -- I have the load manifest and
8 --

9 MR. BANNING: I don't have a copy in front of me. So I
10 didn't bring a copy. So I don't have --

11 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Okay.

12 MR. KENMONTH: I can follow-up --

13 MS. ZULKANYCZ: I do know the copy you received reflects --
14 so my original weight that I gave reflects the manifest that you
15 have a copy of. It does not reflect the adjusted weight.

16 BY MR. KENMONTH:

17 Q. And which you adjusted downward around 600 pounds to carry
18 fuel. Okay. Then, and I really apologize for some of these
19 questions because they're very similar. And this would be on the
20 event itself. Did the event, the upset, the loss of control, I
21 just missed it, but did it occur while you were in level flight or
22 when you were pitched down descending? And if you don't remember,
23 you don't remember.

24 A. It was all at once. I don't --

25 Q. I can totally relate to that. Expanding on that maybe to

- 1 help the memory, you put 10,000 in altitude --
- 2 A. Select. Sorry. Yes. To --
- 3 Q. And then selected vertical speed.
- 4 A. Um-hmm.
- 5 Q. At that time you were up above 10,000, you were vertically
- 6 speeding down to 10,000 or that was your intent?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. And do you think the upset occurred simultaneous or after --
- 9 engaged autopilot to descend speed?
- 10 A. Well, it was descending on autopilot down to 10,000. I --
- 11 Q. Fair enough. And then on the event, I think Casey was asking
- 12 detail about the pitch, which you (indiscernible) and don't
- 13 recall. I'm just going to add on to it. Do you remember what the
- 14 air speed was at the time of the event? Was it like a low air
- 15 speed that (indiscernible) in spin or was it a high air speed, you
- 16 know, roll, yaw, pitch down?
- 17 A. Exactly as it started to break?
- 18 Q. Yeah. And immediately following. Was it a high air speed
- 19 condition or low? Because I can relate you not remembering the
- 20 pitch, but air speed --
- 21 A. As soon as --
- 22 (Crosstalk)
- 23 Q. -- when the plane --
- 24 A. -- we were pointed down, I remember it rising rapidly.
- 25 Q. And how high up do you think it -- give me a clock on the air

1 speed or a color coding.

2 A. Well, in the descent, I definitely exceeded red line. I
3 don't --

4 Q. Scary flight, Heather. As the situation progressed, did the
5 aircraft attitude and flight path tendencies, were they stable,
6 were the continuing the same or did they change? Did we get pitch
7 ups and pitch downs or is it just a constant pitch down, a
8 spiraling to the right?

9 A. It was a constant descent turn to the right.

10 Q. Do you recall roughly what altitude and heading you recovered
11 at?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Excellent job recovering, by the way, if I haven't said that.
14 Excellent job bringing it back home too. It's been awhile since
15 I'm in the Caravan. So I'm going to ask you that nose trim --
16 trim down, it was full trim down on the hangar in the hangar.
17 Your experience as a Caravan pilot, could you fly that plane
18 straight and level with a full elevator trim nose down?

19 A. No. I don't have the strength to overpower that.

20 MR. KENMONTH: And I think that's all the follow-up questions
21 I have.

22 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you.

23 On the phone, Paul, do you have any more questions for
24 Heather as we wrap up?

25 MR. SUFFERN: Yeah. I just have one more question.

1 MR. SUFFERN: And, again, I appreciate your time, Heather. I
2 just wanted to follow-up briefly on one of the questions that Adam
3 had. Once you entered the icing conditions on the accident
4 flight, do you recall how many times you cycled the boots before
5 the upset?

6 MS. ZULKANYCZ: No. I, no.

7 MR. SUFFERN: Okay. That's all the questions I have.
8 Heather, I really appreciate your time this morning. Thank you.

9 MR. BANNING: Adam.

10 MR. HURAY: Yes. I have a couple of follow-up questions.

11 BY MR. HURAY:

12 Q. The first is there was mention that you had a vertical speed,
13 you're in vertical speed mode. Do you remember what the vertical
14 speed target was set at?

15 A. One to 200 feet per minute. I was targeting an air speed of
16 125.

17 Q. Is that -- when you say that, is that a manual target, like,
18 are you manually trying to pick 125 or?

19 A. Yeah. I'm adjusting the vertical speed mode to hold that.

20 Q. Okay. All right. And during the ascent, the brief ascent
21 that you had to try to get out of icing, did you adjust the flaps
22 for that ascent or were flaps at zero?

23 A. Flaps were at zero.

24 Q. And then, finally, my last question here. When you were
25 returning back after the event, do you remember if you were having

1 to push or pull on the column to maintain level flight?

2 A. I was holding extreme pressure on the yoke. I was having to
3 hold it back.

4 Q. Do you recall pulling it to you or pushing it away from you?

5 A. Pulling it towards me. And I had a jammed aileron. I
6 couldn't turn the yoke into, like, I was holding as much pressure
7 as I can to hold level flight. And I was standing on the rudder,
8 again, just trying to maintain level flight.

9 MR. HURAY: Okay. Thank you again very much. That's all I
10 had, and I really appreciate your time today.

11 MR. BANNING: Casey.

12 BY MR. LOVE:

13 Q. Hopefully, we're really, really close to the end now. Does
14 the autopilot system on this airplane, the (indiscernible) system,
15 is that equipped with ESP, do you know?

16 A. It is, yes.

17 Q. And in training flights in the past when you guys have, you
18 know, have caused ESP to activate, do you get an indication that
19 the ESP is activated or is it obvious to you as a pilot that the
20 ESP is trying to take over?

21 A. You get an audible tone that says autopilot engaging, and you
22 get -- you can feel it on the controls as well.

23 Q. Was there an audible tone that the ESP was engaged on this
24 (indiscernible) at all?

25 A. No, not that I remember.

1 MR. LOVE: Okay. That's all I've got.

2 MR. BANNING: Thank you, Casey.

3 I think that I am about done, Heather.

4 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Okay. There's -- sorry. I feel like there's
5 something I feel like I probably need to clarify.

6 MR. BANNING: Please.

7 MS. ZULKANYCZ: Hang on. Who was asking that question? Can
8 I take a 10-minute break?

9 MR. BANNING: Yeah, absolutely.

10 We're going to take 10 minutes.

11 (Off the record.)

12 (On the record.)

13 MR. BANNING: Here we go. We are recording. And thank you,
14 Heather.

15 MS. ZULKANYCZ: You guys, multiple people have referenced the
16 elevator trim being in the full down position when it was here in
17 the hangar. I don't know how it got there. I was in -- in the
18 flight I definitely manipulated the trim up and down, elevator
19 trim specifically up and down throughout the flight to help hold
20 pressures and stuff. Again, I was having to hold back pressure
21 to, to again, kind of climb and get back towards, towards town,
22 and again bring the airplane back.

23 And, again, I brought it back into town and landed. After I
24 got -- after the airplane got pulled into the hangar before NTSB
25 kind of even talked to anybody or whatnot, the mechanics were

1 looking at the airplane. The mechanics ran an auto -- they were,
2 they were physically up on ladders adjusting, you know, playing
3 with the aileron, trying to adjust it just to see -- there was a
4 lot of awe, like, what just happened? And, again, the curiosity
5 of the situation. They were up there. They also turned the power
6 on, and they had tried running an autopilot test as well and such.
7 Again, I don't know, again, what you found the situation in, and
8 where I may have left it may not be the same.

9 BY MR. BANNING:

10 Q. I appreciate that. That's very helpful. Yeah. I appreciate
11 that. Do you know who was -- was it the Director of Maintenance
12 that was out there? Do you have --

13 A. He was not around.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. It was a couple other mechanics.

16 Q. Okay. All right. I really appreciate that.

17 A. And that was, again, before they got word.

18 Q. Sure.

19 A. I mean, they just pulled it into the airplane (verbatim) like
20 huh.

21 Q. Right. Yeah. Okay. We really appreciate that. Is there
22 anything else you'd like to clarify or?

23 A. I believe that's it.

24 Q. Okay. Well, that sounds terrific. Well, I have, I believe,
25 reached the end, and my -- I think my last question for you,

1 Heather, is, is there anything that you think we need to know
2 about that we haven't asked or that you think is important? Just
3 anything at all that you think is important that we should know?

4 A. Nothing comes to mind at this time.

5 MR. BANNING: Okay. Once again, I'd like to -- before we --
6 I'll go around the room one more time very briefly. I think we're
7 done.

8 Craig, any more questions?

9 MR. KENMONTH: No more questions. Thank you.

10 MR. BANNING: Paul, any more questions?

11 MR. SUFFERN: No more questions. Thank you again, Heather.

12 MR. BANNING: Adam?

13 MR. HURAY: No more questions. Thank you.

14 MR. BANNING: Casey?

15 MR. LOVE: No more questions. Thank you, Heather.

16 MR. BANNING: And so with that, I want to say thank you very
17 much. I know these things are very uncomfortable. We appreciate
18 you taking the time to visit with us.

19 And with that, we are off the record at 11:57.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

21

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: EMERGENCY LANDING OF N97HA
 CESSNA 208 IN FAIRBANKS, ALASKA
 ON AUGUST 16, 2021
 Interview of Heather Zulkanycz

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC21LA073

PLACE: Fairbanks, Alaska/Via telephone

DATE: August 27, 2021

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
FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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EMERGENCY LANDING OF N97HA *

CESSNA 208 IN FAIRBANKS, * Accident No.: ANC21LA073

ALASKA ON AUGUST 16, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: MICHAEL MORAN, Passenger
Cessna 208 (Caravan)

Via telephone

Thursday,
August 26, 2021

APPEARANCES:

BRICE BANNING, Senior Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CRAIG KENMONTH, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

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By Mr. Banning

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By Mr. Kenmonth

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:06 a.m.)

MR. BANNING: We are on the record at 10:06 a.m., Alaska Time. My name is Brice Banning, and I'm a Senior Aviation 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 Federal Aviation Administration. It has no regulatory or enforcement powers.

At this time if we could go around the phone and introduce ourselves. Craig.

MR. KENMONTH: Good morning. Craig Kenmonth. I'm an Aviation Safety Inspector with the FAA. I work out of Fairbanks Flight Standards District Office, and I've participated in a concurrent investigation with the NTSB, and I've identified myself as such.

MR. BANNING: And Mike.

MR. MORAN: My name is Michael Moran. I was a passenger on the plane that is the topic of this incident.

MR. BANNING: And, Mike, do you have any objection to anyone that is participating in this interview?

MR. MORAN: I do not.

1 MR. BANNING: Thank you.

2 Today we'll be using the services of a -- we'll be using a
3 digital recorder to record the interview, which will then be sent
4 for transcription. The transcript, not the audio recording, will
5 be made a part of the public docket for this accident. Do you
6 have any objection to the recording, Mike?

7 MR. MORAN: I do not.

8 MR. BANNING: And, Craig, do you have any objection to the
9 recording?

10 MR. KENMONTH: No, I don't.

11 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you. The purpose of the
12 investigation is safety, to determine probable cause, and prevent
13 recurrence. Our role is not to assign fault, blame or liability.
14 This interview is part of the fact-finding phase of this
15 investigation. We cannot, however, offer any guarantee of
16 confidentiality or immunity.

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

23 Mike, if you could please answer all questions to the best of
24 your recollection. If you don't understand a question, just let
25 us know. We can repeat or try to explain the question. And if

1 you realize you misstated or need to modify an answer, it's no
2 problem. Please do so.

3 MR. MORAN: Okay.

4 MR. BANNING: You are entitled to have one representative of
5 your choosing with you on this -- during this interview. Is there
6 someone you would like to have as your representative?

7 MR. MORAN: No, not today.

8 MR. BANNING: Okay. And are you fine to proceed without a
9 representative?

10 MR. MORAN: I am

11 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you, Mike. And before we get
12 started, do you have any questions, Mike?

13 MR. MORAN: No, I don't.

14 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL MORAN

15 BY MR. BANNING:

16 Q. So, first, Mike, I just wondered if you could tell us just a
17 little bit about yourself. Meaning, are you a pilot? Do you fly
18 regularly as a passenger on small airlines in Alaska? Things of
19 that nature.

20 A. Yeah. I am not currently a pilot, but I do fly quite
21 regularly for work. I work for a contractor that has a lot of
22 different projects in various villages around the state. Yeah. I
23 would say I fly probably a lot more than the average person does,
24 specifically in small aircraft.

25 Q. Okay. And out of curiosity, Mike, about how often do you

1 take a trip? Once a week? Once a month?

2 A. A few. Several times a month.

3 Q. Okay. Sounds good. And are you familiar with the Caravan?

4 A. I am.

5 Q. Okay. All right. Well, I appreciate that background. And
6 what I'd like to do now, Mike, is just kind of turn it over to
7 you, and you can tell us what happened. Maybe starting from
8 wherever you think is appropriate, but maybe from where you
9 boarded the airplane potentially. But whatever you think is
10 appropriate would be terrific. And I'm just going to listen to
11 what you have to say.

12 A. Sure.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 A. Is it possible for you to pause the recording briefly?

15 Q. Absolutely.

16 MR. BANNING: One second. And we are off the record at 10:12
17 a.m.

18 (Off the record at 10:12 a.m.)

19 (On the record at 10:14 a.m.)

20 MR. BANNING: And this is Brice Banning with the National
21 Transportation Safety Board, and we are back on the record at
22 10:14 a.m., with Mike.

23 BY MR. BANNING:

24 Q. Go ahead, Mike.

25 A. Yes. So I was on the flight from Fairbanks to Huslia,

1 Monday, the 16th. We were supposed to leave approximately 2 p.m.
2 I think we were a slight bit delayed getting out of there. But
3 business as usual. The weather was pretty crappy, low ceiling, a
4 little bit windy, a lot of moisture in the air. I was actually
5 kind of surprised. I had driven up from the valley that morning,
6 and the weather was pretty bad. I was kind of wondering if we
7 were going to fly or not. But we boarded the plane, and the pilot
8 went through a safety briefing. She made mention of it's going to
9 be bumpy, and then we're going to get up above the weather. It's
10 going to smooth out, and then it will be bumpy again on our
11 descent into Huslia. I mean, pretty standard.

12 I had -- yeah. I had flown up just a few times now, but some
13 of the pilots will fly at 9,000 feet, 9500 feet. Some pilots will
14 come back at 3500 feet, 4,000 feet. So I'm not sure what they're
15 basing those elevations on. I'm assuming it's the weather or
16 turbulence of what have you. But so it was pretty uneventful for
17 the first 15 almost 20 minutes. There had been some reasonable
18 turbulence associated, I think, with a pretty substantial
19 headwind. I think it was, like, approximately 50 knots or
20 something.

21 But as we were taking off, I had been texting with my father,
22 who lives out on the East Coast, and he's a pilot. And he had
23 sent me some photos from his ForeFlight app, and he says, oh, it
24 looks like you guys are flying into some, some crap weather. And
25 I just said to him, yeah, the pilot says we're going to fly up

1 above it. No big deal. But I just thought that was kind of
2 interesting that he had made that observation from 6,000 miles
3 away or 5,000 miles away.

4 So, yeah, we were climbing. About 20 minutes into the climb,
5 you could feel the plane was kind of -- it was kind of struggling
6 in my -- that's the sensation I got. It was -- the plane was kind
7 of shuddering. Not like bouncing around from turbulence, but it
8 was kind of like it was -- there was a shudder to it. And when
9 you look at the log chart that I looked at after the fact that the
10 speed of the plane once we were kind of at altitude is really a
11 clear description of what the sensation was in the plane. It felt
12 like we were kind of on a slow deceleration with brief periods of
13 acceleration. But the overall effect was the plane felt like it
14 was continuing to struggle.

15 And another guy in the plane had mentioned there was ice on
16 the windshield. I'm kind of under the impression that the
17 sensation was that possibly ice was building up on the aircraft,
18 which was causing a shudder. Then as deicing were done by the
19 pilot that there was a bit or short period of relief. But it felt
20 to me like whatever she was doing to counteract the issue wasn't
21 overcoming the problem.

22 And so after about not very long, maybe five or so minutes of
23 that, I think she was trying to maybe climb up a little higher.
24 The turbulence was more than normal, but it wasn't uncomfortable.
25 I know that's a pretty subjective description. Some people are

1 more sensitive than others. But, yeah, then out of nowhere the
2 plane just made an extremely hard bank to the right, and was
3 pointed straight down at the same time. And, I mean, you could
4 tell we obviously went from bucking this headwind, and struggling
5 to kind of maintain altitude to pretty hard acceleration straight
6 towards the ground. And the whole time this is going on we're in
7 complete clouded out conditions, IFR conditions.

8 And as we were accelerating downward, we did two complete
9 spins. They weren't -- I would say they weren't continuous. I
10 think there was one big spin, and then a brief pause followed by
11 another spin. And I mean that scared the daylights out of
12 everybody on the plane. And kind of all the women were praying.
13 Somebody on the plane was yelling, it's not our time or it's not
14 our time or no it's going to be -- everything is going to be okay,
15 everything is going to be okay. I'm not sure if the pilot was
16 yelling that or another passenger was yelling that. Somebody on
17 the plane was yelling that really loud.

18 Are you guys still there? I'm sorry.

19 Q. Yep, I'm here. We're here, Mike. Thank you. And if you
20 need a pause, you need a pause or a break at any time, just let us
21 know. It's no problem.

22 A. No. I'm quite all right.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So we did these two spins going straight down, and I was
25 quite sure that that plane was going to go right into the ground.

1 And it's a pretty scary feeling to go from -- a pretty unique
2 feeling to go from kind of sheer terror thinking that you're going
3 to die to just being at peace with the fact that you are going to
4 die.

5 And I hope that whatever the findings of this investigation
6 are that hopefully they can help either change the behavior that
7 puts people in that situation or help identify whatever the
8 problem may be to prevent that from happening to someone else.
9 So, yeah, we were -- what it felt like to me in an uncontrolled
10 just freefall out of the sky. Apparently it looks like we lost
11 almost 8,000 feet in about 40 seconds. At which point, the pilot
12 or the aircraft itself somehow reversed direction, was able to
13 find level, pull out of this extreme descent, and reverse
14 direction and go into immediate what felt like anyway full power
15 climb. And I'm not a pilot. I've spent a little bit of time in
16 airplanes, probably more than the average person, and I have never
17 in my life experienced G forces like that in any situation. I
18 mean, it literally felt like we just changed directions in the
19 blink of an eye. And I mean it's a real testament to that
20 aircraft, to be honest with you. I am just amazed that those
21 planes can withstand that kind of force. And it was strong enough
22 to the effect where I don't think I blacked out. Memory is a tiny
23 bit vague because my body was coursing with adrenaline at the
24 time, but it was strong enough where it was pulling the checks
25 right off your face.

1 And somebody in the plane started yelling, we're going up,
2 we're going up, we're going up. And as we're doing this, I'm
3 looking out the window kind of taking an assessment trying to keep
4 my bearings. It made no difference because I had zero control
5 over the outcome of this plane. But when I looked out the window
6 to my right, I could see that there was some damage to the
7 aileron. And I'm relatively observant. I didn't recognize any
8 damage to that part of the plane before our uncontrolled roll
9 there. So I'm assuming that that damage was incurred either
10 during the recovery process or during the spin process or
11 somewhere between where we descended, if you want to call it that.
12 From where we fell out of the sky until we were recovering and
13 climb, there was damage to the aileron.

14 And it felt like to me like the plane was really hard to
15 control. But we maintained this full power climb. I mean, the
16 plane was absolutely screaming coming out of that descent. And
17 when she leveled off after the fact, I mean, there was probably --
18 felt like forever, but there was probably 5 to 10 seconds of
19 almost absolute weightlessness. At least that's what the
20 sensation was. I'm sure it was probably just the reversal of the
21 G force in the climb.

22 But everybody was pretty frantic on the plane at this point.
23 It appeared to me that the pilot had somehow managed to regain
24 some mode of control over the plane. It wasn't made exactly clear
25 on what our -- what was going to happen next. But I got the

1 attention of a gentleman sitting in the front seat, and I said,
2 hey, man, I'm looking out the window here, and there's some damage
3 to the aileron. Can you please let the pilot know? Well, I mean,
4 apparently she -- either he told her or she already knew, but I
5 did see her looking back to try an assessment of what was going on
6 back there. I'm sure she could probably feel it in the stick of
7 the plane.

8 But then somebody on the plane said we're returning to
9 Fairbanks, and we -- I mean, apparently we turned around. Again,
10 we're in the clouds in the entire time. And the pilot was able to
11 bring us back to Fairbanks. Again, the plane was all over the
12 place. And it wasn't like a plane that was bouncing around in
13 turbulent air. This was more like a plane that was having issues
14 controlling itself. Whether that meant -- whether it's because
15 the damage to the aileron or there's other damage that wasn't
16 visible. I don't know. But I do know that the plane looked like
17 it was kind of -- I don't know the pilots terms for it, but kind
18 of just was -- looked like it was difficult to control. And so
19 kudos to the pilot for everything she did from that point, that
20 point on to get the plane back on the ground.

21 And, yeah, we came in for an emergency landing. She landed
22 pretty fast, relatively hard, harder than normal, but I think she
23 was just eager to get the plane down on the ground, and I think --
24 we were greeted by all the emergency personnel were there. And
25 that was about the extent of the flight aspect of the incident,

1 Craig and Brice.

2 Q. Thank you, Mike. I appreciate it. I just have some
3 questions here I'd like to go over with you. Can you describe to
4 me, and this may be difficult over the phone, but where were you
5 seated?

6 A. I was seated, I think, in the second to back right rear seat.
7 I don't know what they're numbered. If I looked out the window, I
8 was looking right down at the flap of the right wing.

9 Q. Okay. And do you recall if you were -- if the co-pilot's
10 seat was seat number one on the right side of the airplane, how
11 many seats back were you counting backwards down the airplane?
12 That might help me.

13 A. So if the passenger seat next to the pilot is number one, the
14 seat immediately behind that is two?

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Okay. I would have been, I think, in number four.

17 Q. Number four. Okay. And were you seated in that seat? Was
18 that seat a bench seat, Mike? Could that seat hold --

19 A. I'm not sure if it was a bench seat. There was another seat.
20 There was an ability for somebody to sit next to me, but there was
21 not another person next to me.

22 Q. Okay. That's what I -- that answers my question. Thank you.
23 Was there anybody seated in the co-pilot seat?

24 A. I do not believe there was, but I could be mistaken.

25 Q. Okay. And I'm going to work through this a little bit with

1 you. So if you'd bear with me, I'd be grateful. The seat in
2 front of you, was it occupied?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. By one or two people?

5 A. I believe it was occupied by two people.

6 Q. Okay. And then according to my diagram that I'm looking at,
7 there is one more seat in front of the two people that were in
8 front of you. Do you recall if it was occupied?

9 A. It was occupied.

10 Q. And do you recall by how many people?

11 A. Yes. It was occupied by a man and a woman.

12 Q. Okay. And then I presume, and I'd appreciate it if you could
13 tell me for the record, that the pilot was seated in the left
14 front pilot seat. Would that be accurate?

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. Okay. And then I believe that there were three single seats
17 behind the pilot seat. If we work backwards so the seat directly
18 behind the pilot, do you know if it was occupied?

19 A. I don't know if that seat was occupied.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I know the seat immediately across the aisle from me was
22 occupied, and the seat in front of her was also occupied. But I'm
23 not sure if somebody was sitting directly behind the pilot.

24 Q. Okay. Sounds good. I appreciate that. It's a little
25 tedious over the phone. Thank you for bearing with me.

1 A. That's okay.

2 Q. I wanted to ask you a little bit about the check-in process
3 when you checked in there at the airline. Were you weighed for
4 your weight? Were you asked to give your weight? And could you
5 also tell me about what you know about your baggage? Was it
6 weighed in that process?

7 A. Sure. To answer your questions, yes, yes, to all, but I'll
8 go into a little bit more detail. It was pretty chaotic there.
9 It's typically chaotic when you go to Wright's as far as it's
10 busy. It's bustling. And it seems to me like the staff is doing
11 everything they can do to keep up with the passenger load. I had
12 a bunch of extra bags because of a project that I'm working on out
13 in Huslia. Actually, they're boxes. And I had actually called in
14 in the morning to try to get a seat block so that I could ensure
15 that they would all fly out there with me.

16 So when I got there, we weighed all my baggage; weighed
17 myself. And then they charged me for the additional weight. And
18 I paid something like \$500. And so I then left. I went to park
19 the vehicle. I came back, and they told me that you're going to
20 have to lose 60 pounds, I think it was. Yeah. We're going to
21 have to lose 60 pounds. You're 60 pounds over weight. And so I
22 went in the back with Kelly, a staff member from Wright's, and we
23 identified my cart. Went to go remove 60 pounds. While we were
24 doing that, I pushed the whole cart back onto the scale just to
25 see how much it weighed, and the weight that they had charged me

1 for was approximately, I want to say like 160 pounds more than
2 what the actual weight of my baggage was, my boxes, my cargo
3 actually was. And for me personally I was -- I wasn't only upset
4 that I had paid an extra couple hundred bucks or whatever the
5 charges were, but I was kind of concerned that they weren't
6 necessarily doing their job when it comes to being accurate on the
7 weights of what they're putting on the plane. And, I mean,
8 obviously, it's easy to say that now in hindsight since there was
9 an incident. But, regardless, if there hadn't been an incident,
10 every time you get on one of these planes, how much do you weight,
11 how much do you have? And they try to make -- anyway. Whoever's
12 responsibility it was to transfer the weight of the items to the
13 manifest so the pilot is informed on what their plane weighs, that
14 concerned me that maybe that person doesn't really know how
15 important their job is.

16 So once we identified that there was a discrepancy between
17 what they had charged me, and what the actual weight was, they
18 refunded my money, and then charged me for the actual weight.
19 Yeah. So anyway that was kind of the extent of the check-in
20 process.

21 I would say that, I would say it's a pretty bustling little
22 air carrier. Every time I've been in there it's busy, busy, busy.

23 Q. Okay. No, I appreciate that. And so just for my clarity,
24 Mike, you physically stood on a scale for your personal body
25 weight; is that correct?

1 A. I stood on the scale for my personal body weight, yes, at the
2 front counter.

3 Q. And then the issue was with your bags was that they were more
4 -- they had calculated a higher weight than the bags were
5 actually. And so there was no need to lose the 60 pounds. Is
6 that correct?

7 A. That is correct.

8 Q. Okay. Thank you. I'd like to go back a little bit to the
9 flight, Mike. You mentioned -- first, let me ask have you seen
10 -- it sounds like you fly pretty regularly. Have you seen ice
11 accumulate on an airplane before?

12 A. No, I have not.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Not in a small aircraft, I have not.

15 Q. Okay. Yeah. No problem. I appreciate that. You indicated
16 that somebody seated in front of you indicated or said that there
17 was ice on the windshield. Is that -- did I understand that
18 correctly?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Did you see any ice or a white or a clear substance on any
21 parts, structure of the airplane or even the tires, the wing lift
22 strut? I know you were seated it sounds like towards the back of
23 the airplane. Did you see anything of that nature on the
24 structure of the airplane?

25 A. No, I did not.

1 Q. Okay. Do you recall, Mike, if you ever saw any liquid on the
2 airplane, rain, that you flew through, through the course of the
3 flight?

4 A. Oh, yeah. I mean, I would say the plane was saturated from
5 almost the minute we took off until we landed. Looking out at the
6 strut there, there was a steady stream of moisture running off the
7 strut, yeah.

8 Q. Okay. And --

9 A. Immediately out my window.

10 Q. Okay. And do you -- and, if not, it's no problems. Is it
11 -- do you recall when that moisture on -- after you left
12 Fairbanks, and you started to climb, do you recall when you last
13 saw that moisture on the outside of the airplane?

14 A. When I last saw the moisture on the outside of the airplane?

15 Q. Yeah. I mean, I guess what I'm trying -- I'm trying to
16 understand, Mike. I apologize. I'm trying to understand if it
17 was raining --

18 A. No, that's okay. You don't have to apologize.

19 Q. I'm trying to understand just if you remember if there was
20 rain throughout the entire climb, if you only saw it for awhile.
21 I'm just trying to get a better idea if you have, if you can
22 recall what the meteorological conditions were for that flight up
23 until the steep descent.

24 A. Yeah, sure. I'd say it was, it was -- I mean, at least down
25 at Fairbanks elevation it was windy. It was extremely damp

1 outside. There were some areas of low lying fog. There was
2 drizzle, if not full-fledged rain. I'd say the air was pretty
3 saturated in my opinion. And I don't know, it was probably in the
4 low 50s.

5 Q. Okay. And --

6 A. If not the upper 40s.

7 Q. Okay. Sounds good. And that's down at Fairbanks. So thank
8 you. And do --

9 A. As far as up in the air, it wasn't very long after off the
10 ground that we entered into the clouds, and then at that point if
11 you're not the pilot staring at the controls, you couldn't tell if
12 you're 2,000 feet off the ground or 10,000 feet off the ground or
13 which direction you're going in.

14 Q. Sure. No, I understand. And do you recall if you ever
15 noticed throughout that climb the moisture stopped running or you
16 understand what I'm trying to say?

17 A. I do understand what you're trying to say.

18 Q. And if not, it's no problem. I just --

19 A. Yeah, I couldn't tell you. It's --

20 Q. No problem.

21 A. -- pretty hard to make a differentiation --

22 Q. Sure.

23 A. -- between liquid water and ice water, especially going for a
24 brief time period.

25 Q. Sure.

1 A. So, no. I did notice there was moisture on the strut, heavy
2 moisture on the strut the entire time.

3 Q. Okay. Sounds good. I appreciate that. Another question for
4 you, Mike. Do you happen to have any pictures from the flight?

5 A. Oh, man. I think I do. I think I have a picture shortly
6 after takeoff, and I have another picture shortly from after. I
7 took a picture of the aileron as we were flying back. So, yeah, I
8 might have two pictures.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And I have another one from the ground.

11 Q. Maybe when we're off the record I can provide you an e-mail,
12 and if it's -- or a text, and you could send those to me, if you'd
13 be willing.

14 A. Yeah, sure. No problem.

15 Q. Okay. And did you observe any damage to the airplane -- I
16 know you talked about the aileron, but did you observe any damage
17 to the airplane prior to this steep descent?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. No visible damage but, obviously, something was -- something
21 was off. I mean, you could tell there was something harmonic was
22 off within the airplane. I'm kind of a motor guy. Typically
23 those planes they run pretty smooth when they're running.
24 Something was causing the entire plane to shudder.

25 Q. And --

1 A. Or be out of balance.

2 Q. Sure. And I'd like to visit with you just a little bit more
3 about that. You talked about a shudder, I think, if I heard you
4 correctly you talked about a shudder. And then you indicated or
5 -- that the shudder went away or eased some, and was there another
6 shudder directly before the steep descent?

7 A. I think that's accurate to say that, yes, the plane was
8 shuddering followed by brief periods of a smoothing out of the
9 imbalance or shuddering sensation whatever that may have been. It
10 felt like the shuddering effect or whatever I was experiencing was
11 building up until the point of the plane descending.

12 Q. Okay. All right. Thank you. That provides some clarity for
13 me. And another question. Do you remember if there was any
14 bells, horns, things of that nature, noises that you recall coming
15 from the cockpit during the event?

16 A. You mean like a stall alarm?

17 Q. Some type of noise, yeah.

18 A. No. No noise.

19 MR. BANNING: Okay. All right. Well, if it's all right with
20 you, Mike, I'm going to hand it over to Craig, and see if he has
21 any questions, follow-up questions for you.

22 MR. MORAN: Okay. Thanks, Brice.

23 MR. BANNING: Thank you.

24 BY MR. KENMONTH:

25 Q. Okay. Hey. Thank you very much, Mike. So just for full

1 disclosure, I'm going to repeat what I said prior to the interview
2 that I am an Aviation Safety Inspector for the FAA, and I'm --
3 representing the FAA on investigation. Any regulatory issues that
4 FAA pursues that must be from information derived independent from
5 the NTSB. So I apologize in advance, but there's a couple
6 questions I'm going to ask you that you've already answered. If I
7 could just get a response to those, I'll move on. Okay?

8 A. Sure.

9 Q. We have nine areas of responsibility in the aftermath of an
10 accident. They include aircraft airworthiness, pilot competency,
11 and regulatory compliance. So to those -- to that extent the
12 following questions. Do you understand that, the separation
13 between the NTSB and the FAA?

14 A. I do.

15 Q. Okay. Thank you. So I wanted to start at the beginning of
16 the flight, and ask about the check-in process. Was your body
17 weight weighed or asked?

18 A. I was weighed.

19 Q. Okay. And could you tell me was your baggage weighed
20 accurately?

21 A. No, it was not. Not initially.

22 Q. Not initially. Do you feel after you pointed out a
23 discrepancy that the error was corrected?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Once again, that was you that pointed that out.

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. So when you were on the plane and the back, back behind you
3 was the baggage area, a baggage area on the plane, do you recall
4 if there was any baggage or cargo that looked other than passenger
5 baggage? For instance, mail, cases of soda pop, orange bags,
6 green bags?

7 A. You mean, like, what, like lying loose in the back of the
8 plane or in the cargo area?

9 Q. In the back behind the net in the cargo area. I just want to
10 know if there's possibly baggage -- if there is cargo other than
11 passenger baggage on the plane.

12 A. Well, I don't know what the passengers had going on the
13 airplane, but there was definitely cargo behind the net.

14 Q. Mail -- if you fly frequently, mail is pretty apparent in
15 those big green -- mail bags or orange -- bags or tri-packs but --

16 A. I don't recall that, Craig.

17 Q. Okay. Good. And just for my benefit, could you revisit the
18 plane struggling narrative and the shuddering prior to the
19 descent?

20 A. Sure. Approximately 20 minutes into the flight we began to
21 get the sensation that the plane was struggling. I don't know if
22 it necessarily felt like it was struggling to maintain altitude.
23 It just felt like it was struggling to -- it just felt like it was
24 working through something. And it began to develop some kind of a
25 shudder or an imbalance of some sort. And my inexperience as a

1 pilot, since I'm not a pilot, told me that maybe it was a
2 mechanical issue because that's kind of something that I would
3 recognize in a conventional motor. If something is out of whack
4 you can obviously feel it in the vibration of the motor, which is
5 a similar sensation we felt in the plane. Something was causing
6 and out-of-balance vibration. And I don't know if the pilot did
7 anything to help alleviate that condition, but it seemed to be
8 followed by some brief periods of a smoothing out of the
9 noticeable imbalance vibration. But it was quickly, it was
10 quickly -- it returned to that condition quickly after the
11 smoothing out effect. And it felt (indiscernible) it felt like it
12 was a cumulative effect, like it wasn't something that was being
13 mitigated. It was something that was building.

14 Q. Okay. And as a -- in summary as a frequent flyer, not a
15 pilot, as a frequent passenger, that was an abnormal sensation --
16 (indiscernible).

17 A. For sure.

18 Q. I'm going to repeat Brice's questions about the alarms,
19 beeps, horns, lights that might have caught your attention from
20 the cockpit prior to the event.

21 A. I'm sorry. No. I'm sorry. Were you -- I'm sorry.

22 Q. Yes. That was a question. I'm going to repeat Brice's
23 question. Did you see or hear any alarms, beeps or horns or see
24 any lights from the cockpit prior to the event?

25 A. No, I did not.

1 Q. And sorry for the repetition, but thank you.

2 A. That's okay.

3 Q. My final question is did you notice if the pilot was busy
4 with any paperwork up in the cockpit during the flight such as
5 filling out flight logs or reading or writing?

6 A. You know, in this instance I wasn't, I wasn't -- I didn't pay
7 enough attention to recognize that, but I do know that typically
8 once they've reached cruising altitude they stick it in autopilot
9 and do their paperwork. Whether or not that was what she was
10 doing in this instance, I'm not --

11 MR. KENMONTH: Okay. And that is my follow-on questions.
12 And thanks so much again for coming forward.

13 Brice.

14 MR. BANNING: Yeah.

15 MR. KENMONTH: Okay, Brice, back to you.

16 MR. BANNING: Yeah, thank you, Mike.

17 I don't -- I think I only -- I don't think I really have any
18 more questions for you. The one thing that I would ask is, is
19 there anything that Craig or I missed that you think we need to be
20 aware of?

21 MR. MORAN: No, I don't think there's anything that you guys
22 missed or are not aware of. I just think it's a shame that this
23 culture of pushing the weather all the time just to make sure the
24 business stays afloat financially is a really scary scenario, and
25 it's just setting up -- it's just setting everybody up for

1 tragedy. It's unfortunate that there's not a way around it,
2 whether it's in a more capable aircraft, better weather avoidance
3 tactics or whatever it may be. I just hope that -- hopefully,
4 that somewhere down the line that there -- somebody comes up with
5 some sort of solution to help prevent this from happening to
6 anybody else. Because it was probably the most terrifying
7 experience of my life, and I really hope that nobody else would
8 have to go through that again.

9 MR. BANNING: Well, we most certainly appreciate your time.
10 I know these things are never comfortable. And one of the goals
11 of the NTSB or the goal of the -- one of our more important goals,
12 and I think the FAA also, is to prevent these types of events. So
13 I really appreciate you being willing to share with us.

14 And Craig, do you have any follow-up question before we go
15 off the record?

16 MR. KENMONTH: That's all for on the record, Brice. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. BANNING: Okay. With that, we will go off the record at
19 10:50 Alaska Daylight Time.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: EMERGENCY LANDING OF N97HA
 CESSNA 208 IN FAIRBANKS, ALASKA
 ON AUGUST 16, 2021
 Interview of Michael Moran

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC21LA073

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: August 26, 2021

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
FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

EMERGENCY LANDING OF N97HA *

CESSNA 208 IN FAIRBANKS, * Accident No.: ANC21LA073

ALASKA ON AUGUST 16, 2021 *

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* * * * *

Interview of: PHILLIS ATTILA, Passenger
Cessna 208 (Caravan)

Via telephone

Thursday,
September 2, 2021

APPEARANCES:

BRICE BANNING, Senior Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E XITEMPAGE

Interview of Phillis Attla:

By Mr. Banning

6

I N T E R V I E W

(4:11 p.m.)

MR. BANNING: We are now on the record at 4:10, 4:11 in the afternoon, Alaska Time. My name is Bryce Banning. I'm a Senior Aviation Accident Investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

The NTSB 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 Federal Aviation Administration, and we have no regulatory or enforcement powers.

Today we will be using a digital recorder to record the interview, which will then be sent for transcription. The transcript, not the audio recording, will be made part of the public docket.

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

If you could please answer all of the questions, Phillis, to the best of your recollection. If you don't understand a question, just let me know. I can repeat it or explain it. And if you realize you misstated or need to modify an answer, please do so.

1 Do you have any objection to the digital recording, Phillis?

2 MS. ATTLA: I'm not going to be implicated in anything,
3 right? I mean, I was just a passenger.

4 MR. BANNING: Right. I'm just -- it's just fact-finding. So
5 it's just helping me to understand what you experienced on the
6 flight.

7 MS. ATTLA: All right.

8 MR. BANNING: So is it okay then to go ahead and record it?

9 MS. ATTLA: Yes, you can record it.

10 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you. You are entitled to have one
11 representative of your choosing. Are you -- is there someone you
12 would like to have as your representative, Phillis?

13 MS. ATTLA: Representative for what?

14 MR. BANNING: Or is there somebody you want with you on the
15 recording? Is there some -- is there someone you --

16 MS. ATTLA: As long as I'm not going to be getting in trouble
17 for anything, I can speak for myself.

18 MR. BANNING: Okay. I just wanted to make sure you were okay
19 to proceed without having someone else there. Sometimes these
20 things can be difficult, and I just wanted to make sure you're
21 okay to proceed on your own.

22 MS. ATTLA: I'm good.

23 MR. BANNING: Okay. Yeah. And it's just that we can't
24 guarantee any, like I said, any confidentiality or immunity. But
25 I just -- it would just be helpful for the fact-finding to know

1 what you experienced.

2 MS. ATTLA: Yeah.

3 MR. BANNING: Okay.

4 MS. ATTLA: And I'm willing to put myself out there to do
5 this because I don't want it to happen to anybody else in the
6 future.

7 MR. BANNING: Yeah. I really appreciate it. So do you mind,
8 Phillis, with that are you good to proceed?

9 MS. ATTLA: Yes, I am.

10 INTERVIEW OF PHILLIS ATTLA

11 BY MR. BANNING:

12 Q. Okay. Do you mind just telling me a little bit about
13 yourself? Are you a pilot? Do you --

14 A. Well, my name is Phillis Martha Attla. My birth date is
15 11/6/1960. I pretty much grew up in Huslia, and lived in
16 Fairbanks my whole life, Fairbanks and Anchorage. But I'm back in
17 the village now because -- because that's where I want to be in
18 my, you know, I'm getting up there in age, and I just want to be
19 where I grew up.

20 Q. Sure.

21 A. So anyway, you want to know what happened that day or?

22 Q. Yeah. First, Phillis, are you a pilot?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Do you fly regularly or how often do you fly on these smaller
25 airplanes?

1 A. I've been flying on them since I was probably about 15. So
2 probably about 50 years.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. 45 years. Maybe twice a month or every couple months when I
5 was living in Fairbanks.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But now it's a couple of times a month. I have medical
8 issues so I go in pretty often.

9 Q. Okay. All right.

10 A. But not now though. I'm not going to be going in for
11 anything for awhile. I'm not flying anywhere.

12 Q. Do you -- can you tell me real -- can you tell me what
13 happened maybe from the time you arrived at Wright's?

14 A. Okay. We waited at Wright's for quite awhile. I checked in,
15 and they were waiting for a plane to come back from somewhere else
16 because I think they're short on planes. Because our village has
17 a lot of freight backed up at Wrights there all the time. I know
18 that. And we've been getting like four, three or four flights a
19 day over here because this is a good size village, and we need our
20 -- we need Wright's to ship our freight. And people are going in
21 and back and forth every day. That plane is loaded with people
22 from here. So they do a lot of business with the village.

23 Q. Okay. And so you arrived at Wright's. Did they -- can --
24 did they weigh you? Did they weigh your baggage? How did that
25 work?

1 A. They weighed my baggage, and I checked in, and sat there for
2 a couple hours because they're always running behind probably
3 waiting for airplanes to come in from other villages to get there
4 to load us up, and take us here. So we left, we left Fairbanks,
5 and it was cloudy all the way. Everything was white in the sky.
6 We couldn't see anything. And in about 20 minutes into the
7 flight, my eyes were closed, and the whole plane felt like it was
8 just getting slammed with ice or something. It felt like the body
9 of the airplane was vibrating and shaking so bad that I thought it
10 was -- I thought the body was going to start tearing away from,
11 from -- I thought it was going to get shredded with that ice.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And then we hit a -- we hit turbulence, you know, like we
14 always did through all these years of me flying back and forth.
15 We hit turbulence and jumped like we normally do and we just
16 jumped and kind of -- I thought, okay, this was okay. And then
17 all of a sudden the -- I was on the back, towards the back, the
18 second seat to the back. There was another guy behind me. And
19 all of a sudden the plane just got thrown to the right. I
20 remember because I was on that side of the plane. And then just
21 for a couple of seconds, you know, nothing else happened. I
22 thought this is not -- I have enough time to think that there's
23 something wrong and something wrong with the way we got thrown
24 like that. And then we just got thrown to the left, and violently
25 too. And then all of a sudden the plane started rolling, and for

1 awhile there it felt like we were even falling backwards. But,
2 no, and then we flipped over, and started going right straight
3 down. Because we were all just strapped in, and everyone was
4 screaming and stuff and hollering and flailing their arms, and we
5 did two -- that second roll we did was so fast, and we were going
6 so fast straight down, and there was ice chunks flying back.
7 Sheets of ice and chunks of ice, which I can't understand because
8 we were pretty much going straight down. So how is ice flying
9 back at us? I don't understand that. But it was hitting the
10 wings and the airplane windows, and the pilot's window in the
11 front. And I was hollering, and then I was praying, and we were
12 going straight down. And all of a sudden the airplane just --
13 just leveled out, and started shimmying, like going back and forth
14 in the air like a, like hammock swinging back and forth like that.
15 And going still straight. And then all of a sudden she pulled
16 back on something. My friend in the front told me she started
17 pumping her feet, and turning something real fast, and all of a
18 sudden we just shot straight up.

19 And at that point, I didn't know if we were going to get -- I
20 didn't know if we were going to live or die or what. It was so
21 -- it was such a violent, violent traumatic thing to happen. It
22 was just -- it was overwhelming. And then we got -- and then the
23 plane leveled out. And the guy behind me stood up, and I told him
24 to sit down, and put his seatbelt back on because we just got done
25 flying all over in the air upside down and whatnot. And right

1 after we got leveled, he took his seatbelt off, and stood up over
2 me to look out at the wing on the right side, which is where that
3 hole in the wing was. But I couldn't see it. I couldn't see it.
4 I couldn't see the damage, but I told him to sit down, and put his
5 seatbelt on, and I calmed everybody down. I was telling them we
6 were okay. We were going to be okay. And then he told -- he put
7 his seatbelt on real quick, fast as he could, and he said tell
8 Harold, who was sitting in front of me, tell Harold to relay to
9 the pilot that there's damage to the right wing. And this was
10 already about a couple or four or five minutes into us rolling and
11 stuff, right after that, three minutes and whatever, you know,
12 three to five minutes. He told her that there was a hole in the
13 right -- I mean, there was damage to the right wing. And that's
14 when she turned around. She didn't turn around after we went out
15 of control and stuff like that.

16 We thought we'll continue on to Huslia. I mean, we didn't
17 know what to think. She (indiscernible) that we were going to be
18 okay. We're turning around. She didn't say anything to us. And
19 then we turned around, and I knew that any time we could go down.
20 And it was so violent, so, so (indiscernible). And I know that we
21 really lucked out with our lives. We really lucked out coming
22 through that. And when we got on the ground everyone was -- well,
23 everyone was already hollering and crying and everything, but I
24 calmed them down. I told them we're going to be okay. We're
25 okay. We're going to be okay. I know it. And I was praying

1 aloud, and I was praying in Indian. And I know that, you know,
2 prayers work because when I started -- soon as I hollered out
3 thank you Lord, and then that plane just leveled out, and somehow
4 we made it back just by a miracle. We landed. And no one from
5 Wright's came out to check on us. No one offered any kind of --
6 the only one that was outside to greet us or whatever was the
7 baggage handlers, and there was two of them. And this young man
8 offered to help Eileen down, and then Maureen, and that guy that
9 got out. And everyone was crying and whatnot. But I was okay.

10 Q. Right. Good. Yeah. Can you tell me, Phillis, a little --
11 before --

12 A. I would like to say --

13 Q. Sure.

14 A. I would like to say that when we walked into Wright's, they
15 were not -- they didn't ask us if we were okay or anything. They
16 didn't say does anybody need to go to the hospital or anything?
17 One of the passengers had to go to the ER, and she had to wait
18 around outside Wright's for a ride to come get her to bring her to
19 the ER. She was so upset they had to give her something to calm
20 down with.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So they didn't come out and offer any kind of assistance. We
23 went -- we all passed through the check-in area, and no one there
24 asked us if we were okay.

25 Q. Okay. Yeah.

1 A. And I don't think that's very professional in my opinion.
2 They could have come asked us if we were okay, and showed us a
3 little respect. We almost died on their airplane.

4 Q. All right.

5 A. And on Facebook one of the passengers said that we twirled.
6 We didn't twirl. We went violently. It just really -- just
7 literally throwing around in that airplane. We're lucky to be
8 alive.

9 Q. Okay. Yeah. Do you --

10 A. I wouldn't describe it as twirling.

11 Q. Okay. Is it --

12 A. (Indiscernible).

13 Q. Can I ask you a few questions, Phillis? Would it be all
14 right?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. Before the airplane banked, before it violent -- you
17 said it violently banked to the right. Before that, were your
18 eyes closed right up until that moment that that happened?

19 A. My eyes were closed when we hit whatever ice storm or
20 something, but my eyes were closed, and I felt it was -- I could
21 feel it just vibrating through my whole body, and I kind of knew
22 something was wrong.

23 Q. Did -- and that was --

24 A. And to that first almost -- I closed my eyes through for a
25 little a couple of seconds, but I was hollering, and telling them

1 we were going to be okay when we were, we were going down.

2 Q. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Do you remember before the airplane
3 banked violently -- you said it banked violently to the right, and
4 before it started its descent, do you remember seeing any ice on
5 the windshield, on the tires, on the strut, anything of that
6 nature before the loss of control?

7 A. Before we got thrown, no. Because my eyes were closed, and
8 when I did open it is when I saw that ice -- we were, we were
9 going right into it. We were just --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. We were just going straight into it.

12 Q. And when you talk about --

13 A. And then --

14 Q. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

15 A. I think we were going, I think we were going into the ice
16 when we -- before we started going down.

17 Q. Okay. And you say that you saw, heard -- it sounded like you
18 heard ice hitting the airplane, and you saw ice. When you say
19 that you saw it were you seeing -- can you describe what you saw?
20 Was it small pieces of white? Was it -- do you recall what you
21 saw?

22 A. I saw sheets of ice, like, like sheets and chunks of ice
23 flying back, and hitting the pilot's window and the wings, and the
24 body. And just for maybe one or two seconds I closed my eyes
25 because I thought that it was going to break through the glass.

1 It was hitting us so hard.

2 Q. Okay. And did that happen right before the violent actions
3 that the airplane take -- took? Did it happen -- can you describe
4 for me when it happened that you saw the ice in the flight as best
5 you can?

6 A. Pretty much I thought I saw it when we were going down, but I
7 don't know for sure.

8 Q. Okay. Yeah, no problem. I really appreciate you. I know
9 these things are not comfortable, and I really appreciate you
10 taking the time to visit with me.

11 A. So I didn't record this for my own benefit. So do you have
12 to put my name on there? Because if it comes out that Wright's
13 air is responsible for almost killing us, I think I might, I might
14 just take them to court.

15 Q. Well, and we -- we're -- our goal is just to prevent
16 accidents, Phillis. So we just want to figure out what happened.
17 And --

18 A. When do you think you'll figure it out?

19 Q. It's going to be awhile before our final report comes out.
20 But can I ask you a few more questions about the flight, and then
21 if you have some questions for me, we can -- I can do my best to
22 answer those? Would that be all right?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. My next question is have you seen any ice buildup like
25 this or coming off like this on previous flights that you have

1 been on?

2 A. Not in the 50 or so years that I've been flying back and
3 forth between here and anywhere.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And I fly -- I've been flying my whole life. So I've never
6 had anything at all like this happen.

7 Q. Okay. And --

8 A. I've never seen ice come off and fly back like that.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I've never even twirled up -- not twirled, but spun --

11 Q. Right.

12 A. -- is more the word, violently.

13 Q. Do you remember if you heard any horns, noises from the
14 cockpit about the time that the violent turn and these things
15 started to happen?

16 A. I didn't hear anything because everyone was screaming.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And hollering and flailing, flailing their arms around, like,
19 trying to, trying to balance themselves upside down on the room, I
20 mean, while they're sitting down and strapped to the chair.

21 Q. Okay. And did you happen to get any pictures while you,
22 while -- before or after during the flight, Phillis?

23 A. No. Well, I recorded a message but -- for my kids to tell
24 them I love them right after that happened, but you can't hear
25 anything. There was nothing on there when I played it back.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. When I got home.

3 Q. Okay. And did you observe -- I know that you said the
4 gentleman behind you stood up, and said there was damage to the
5 wing, but you said you didn't, couldn't see any damage; is that
6 correct?

7 A. I couldn't see any damage. I wasn't looking because it was
8 like a matter of life and death, and I knew we were in a really
9 bad situation, and I couldn't do nothing about it if there was
10 damage.

11 Q. No problem. No, I -- yep, I just -- no, I appreciate, I
12 appreciate all your input.

13 A. We were just completely at the mercy of Wright Air's pilot.

14 Q. And do you recall were you able to observe what the pilot was
15 doing up front before the airplane entered these violent
16 maneuvers?

17 A. No. I was dozing off kind of between dozing off and, you
18 know, not sleeping but aware of -- I was aware enough to know when
19 we hit that storm before we even hit that one turbulence that I
20 said made us jump.

21 Q. Okay. Yeah, no, I -- no problem. I really appreciate the
22 input. I think that that's all the questions I have, Phillis. Do
23 you -- is there anything I didn't ask that you think I should know
24 about?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But it would have been really nice after going through
3 something like that if they had sent someone out to make sure we
4 were okay, you know, after such a traumatic, traumatic experience
5 as that.

6 MR. BANNING: Yeah. No. It sounds like it was -- yeah, I
7 understand. I'm going to go ahead, and turn off the recorder now,
8 Phillis; is that all right?

9 (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: EMERGENCY LANDING OF N97HA
 CESSNA 208 IN FAIRBANKS, ALASKA
 ON AUGUST 16, 2021
 Interview of Phillis Attla

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC21LA073

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: September 2, 2021

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
FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

David B Banning
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Alaskan Region

Date: August 27, 2021
Person Contacted: Lorraine Pavlick
Location: Telephone
NTSB Accident Number: ANC21LA073

Narrative:

On August 16, 2021, about 1452 Alaska daylight time, a Cessna 208B airplane, N97HA, sustained substantial damage when it was involved in an accident near Fairbanks, Alaska.

Mrs. Pavlick was a passenger on the flight and stated the following:

She is not a pilot but flies somewhat regularly as a passenger. She averages a trip about once a month or once every other month. After arriving at Wrights Air Service, she along with her bags were weighed. There was a total of eight passengers on the flight and she was the fourth passenger to board the airplane. She sat in the second passenger seat behind the pilot on the left side of the airplane next to a window. After departure, she worked on a puzzle for about 15 minutes before noticing snow and ice buildup on the passenger window. She stated that the accumulation on the window was fairly thick as she could not see through it. The air was turbulent, and the airplane was being bounced around. In addition, she heard ice hitting the airplane which she recognized from previous flights as the de-ice system shedding ice that was then impacting the airplane.

She said that the airplane suddenly “flipped” to the left and began a steep descent before being pulled back up. It then “flipped” to the right almost all the way over and began another steep descent before the airplane was pulled up. After the airplane was under control, the pilot informed them (the passengers) they were returning to Fairbanks. She noted that she observed the pilot struggling with the control yoke on the return flight to Fairbanks.

She also stated that a little red light on the right side of the airplane illuminated, and she heard a beeping noise right before the airplane “flipped”. She believed the pilot moved a switch following the illumination of the red light and beeping noise. - END

Record of Conversation

Lorraine Pavlick
Passenger on Flt. #440 8/16
8/27/2021 1130 lcl
Fairbanks, Ak
Telephone

CMK phoned LP as she was a listed passenger on WAS #440 when the Loss of Control was experienced. Ms. Pavlick is a resident of Huslia, Alaska and is a long time flyer on commuter flights between Fairbanks and Huslia

CMK asked where she was seated: Ms. Pavlick said she was seated in third seat back on left side of aircraft. (Stated Alvin Attla was seated between her and pilot)

CMK asked if she took any picture on the flight – answer no.

CM asked if she had seen any ice, snow, or frost on the aircraft struts, windows, tires, etc. She answered “Yes, there was ice and snow on her side window – so much I couldn’t see out of it”. CMK asked if was possible that was because they were in the clouds and couldn’t see– she responded that she has flown in small planes all her life and she knows the difference – the side windows were covered in ice on the outside. She also stated she heard ice sliding off plane when it lost control “you could hear it sliding all over the top of the plane”.

CMK – did you hear any beeps or alarms prior to the upset? She responded just prior she heard a beep from the co-pilot side and saw a red light on the co-pilot side of the aircraft.

CMK asked if she had any baggage, and she responded she had 9 boxes, she had been shopping in town. She stated she could not remember the weight or the excess baggage charge. When asked if her bags were on-board the flight she stated: “yes, all of them” – she knew because after they arrived back in Fairbanks she stayed out on the ramp while the plane was being off-loaded to take care of her Freeze and Chill boxes – they were in the belly pod.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

David B Banning
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Alaskan Region

Date: September 30, 2021
Person Contacted: Mr. Alvin Attla
Location: Telephone
NTSB Accident Number: ANC21LA073

Narrative:

On August 16, 2021, about 1452 Alaska daylight time, a Cessna 208B airplane, N97HA, sustained substantial damage when it was involved in an accident near Fairbanks, Alaska.

Mr. Attla was a passenger on the flight and stated the following:

He sat in the passenger seat directly behind the pilot on the left side of the airplane, across the aisle the other two seats were occupied. He was asleep prior to the loss of control and awoke to the airplane spinning. He observed a piece of ice slide off the windshield and estimated it to be about 18 inches square. He was unable to tell how thick it was. He did not hear any unusual noises or observe any ice on the airplane prior to the spin as he was asleep.

He stated that all his bags were on the aircraft and loaded behind the curtain. - END

Record of Conversation

Harold Davis Jr,
Nicole Bifelt
Passenger(s) on Flt. #440
8/27/2021 1200 lcl
Fairbanks, Ak
Telephone

HD phoned CMK (heard from Lorrain I wanted to talk to them) they were both listed as passengers on WAS #440 when the Loss of Control was experienced. HD and NB are partners. Both are residents, over 30 years old, of Huslia Alaska and long time flyers on commuter flights between Fairbanks and Huslia

CMK asked where they were seated: NB was seated by right window, on bench immediately behind co-pilot; HD seated on same bench seat to left of NB.

CMK asked if either took any pictures on the flight – answer no.

CMK asked if they had seen any ice, snow, or frost on the aircraft struts, windows, tires, etc. NB answered the windshield had ice on it, when asked right left or both, she responded “both front windshields were fully covered.” Following up CMK asked if during the upset they saw any ice coming off the aircraft – HD stated ice swept off in sheets from windshield during or after the event...he couldn’t recall exactly, but remembered seeing it.

CMK – did you hear any beeps or alarms prior to the upset? They were wearing Air-pods, and didn’t hear anything unusual, unusual, or notice “any red buttons.”

CMK asked if they had baggage, if so, how much, and if they saw it loaded on the aircraft. Together they recall two 55 lb. boxes, a 15 lb. suitcase, and a 10 lb. back pack. They say baggage was checked in as freight, to save money. Both say they know their baggage was loaded on the plane, because no one said it was bumped, and they waited for it after landing to take back to the hotel (from off-loaded baggage area, not the freight bldg.) “We know our baggage was on the plane.”

Asked if they saw any boxes in the aircraft when boarding – they both saw “boxes” in the back of the plane.

September 3, 2021

Craig Kenmouth, Aviation Safety Inspector - Operations
Fairbanks Flight Standards District Office
4419 Airport Way
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

Scott Justesen
Wright Air Service
PO Box 60142
Fairbanks, AK 99706

Re: Emergency involving N97HA

Mr. Kenmouth:

On August 16, 2021, I was pilot in command of flight 480 for Wright Air Service in the vicinity of N97HA when the pilot in command of that airplane declared an emergency. I do not recall the specifics of what was said on the frequency when the emergency was declared, except that the pilot requested Center give a lower altitude. The altitude Center gave was not low enough for what was happening, and the pilot declared an emergency to obtain a lower altitude. I heard something about a flight control issue. When Center asked about the nature of the problem, the pilot said she was too busy dealing with the issue to give more information. I was probably out of range after that and did not hear any further details if anything was said. I noticed a circular track on my ADS-B traffic indication for N97HA.

At about the same time as this occurred, I encountered what I thought was light mixed icing but which accumulated rapidly enough that I had to deviate from my altitude. I was somewhere between Manly Hot Springs and Tanana on my way direct to Galena at 8000 feet in cloud and drizzle. My airspeed decayed to 120 kts at normal cruise power, and I began to experience what I believe to be an indication of a vertical stabilizer stall (something I don't remember ever experiencing before). The airplane began to yaw strangely back and forth, and the controls felt similar to slow flight mushiness. I did not attempt to maintain my altitude by adding more power (I was in the smaller-engine Caravan, so I knew I didn't have much to work with anyway). I requested a lower altitude. The ice was mixed, with some sweep-back on the upper and lower wing surfaces, and some thick, coarse accumulations which looked likely to develop into horns on the upper and lower portions of the leading edge of my wings. It was accumulating rapidly and growing thick on all narrow protruding surfaces. I did not accumulate notable ice on my windscreen. I activated the de-icing boots, shed some of the ice, and gained some airspeed to eliminate the mushy control feel. At 7000 feet I began to very quickly shed the ice and at 6000 feet I was comfortable with no ice at all, in rain.

No known icing was reported prior to departure that I was aware of, and I don't remember receiving a PIREP from ATC. The weather was mostly rainy and drizzly that day. Below 7000 feet or so, the wings were washed clean by rain, but above that (within 1000 feet) the wings accumulated ice rapidly. The difference in altitude between bad ice and no ice was surprisingly small, almost abrupt.

Sincerely,

Scott Justesen

From: Jared Brank [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 16, 2021 11:07 AM
To: Dave Fagre [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: FAA request N97HA

Hi Dave,

Here is my statement. I'm not sure of what specifics you're looking for so I will just speak to what I think may be pertinent. It has been some time since the event but I will relate what I remember.

I was the PIC of flight 380 on 8/16/2021. On climb-out I experienced trace to light icing below the freezing level (2 C OAT if I recall). I heard several other pilots reporting icing as well as favorable altitudes, both higher and lower, to avoid the icing on departure and center frequencies as well as the company frequency. I heard flight 440 cleared to climb above 10000 ft (which is what I was filed for) and since they were ahead of me a little ways and I was beginning to experience slightly more intense icing in the climb (what I would call light to moderate mixed), I elected to continue climb as well with the hope of getting out of the ice. A few minutes later I heard the clicking of a mic on frequency and what sounded like a pilot in distress on the radio and observed 440's ADS-B target begin erratic heading changes but did not realize a large altitude loss had occurred at that time. Simultaneously, center had called 440 several times then 440 declared an emergency after a period of silence and mic clicking. After this, through roughly 8000 ft the icing intensified and became what I believe I later reported as moderate mixed icing. The icing continued to intensify in the climb to the point where I became concerned despite having the TKS system operating on high/ intermittent MAX on my aircraft. In accordance with the AFM's definition of conditions that indicate severe icing, which I was experiencing as I had lots of clear run back ice forming very rapidly on the windshield and rapidly spreading around the curved sections of the windshield between 9000 ft and 9300 ft, I requested a descent back to 7000 ft, which I had previously heard a Navajo report as being better for icing. There was also approximately a half inch of ice built up behind the landing lights on top of the wing in just this short time, but my wings stayed otherwise fairly clean because I had the TKS system on. Just before reaching 7000 ft in the descent the icing began to decrease and melt off. My icing experience in Alaska and time in the C208 was quite limited at that point so my observations and interpretation of what is normal here and with the airplane's normal handling of icing may be of limited value as I didn't have a basis for comparison as to how a booted aircraft would have handled the same ice. However, if I had reported the same icing today I would have called it severe for my aircraft.

Please let me know if you would like any more information. This is the best I can recall at this point but if you have a specific question I may be able to remember something else when prompted.

Thank you,

Jared A. Brank
[REDACTED]

Record of Conversation

Joel Fagre
Cargo Support
Wrights Air Servcie employee
9/29/2021 0930 lcl
In person interview / Evrett Lief in attendance

Introductions were made, and CMK made a statement that they were not personally under any investigation, that the FAA was conducting interviews in order to verify/validate statements made in previous interviews concerning the occurrence in Caravan N97HA .

CK: Were you working August 16, 2021?

JF: Yes

CK: What is your position/title at WAS?

JF: "Cargo Support"

CK: Do you recall loading Heathers Caravan that day?

JF: I didn't load that airplane, Cayce did.

CK: You work in the freight department. If freight was checked into the freight department, and not loaded onto the aircraft, would it be available for pickup in the passenger terminal baggage claim area, after the flight terminated and returned to Fairbanks?

JF: No, only bags from the airplane"

CK: Looking at the " Wright Air Service C208B Loading Schedule", where on the aircraft is A,B,C,D?

JF: Those are all in the belly pod

CK: Zone 4?

JF: Forward of the rear door, in the cabin.

CK: Where is Zone 6, and Extended baggage, are they both behind the net?

JF: Yes

General discussion was had about the flow of information from dispatch and freight department. JF had a comprehensive understanding of the aircraft load building process, and reiterated that nothing can go on an airplane without it being manifested; if a load were altered, it was because the paperwork directed that.

CMK thanked JF for his time, and commended him for his professionalism and knowledge of the loading procedure.

Record of Conversation

Cayce Morin

Ramp Agent

Wrights Air Service employee

9/29/2021 0930 lcl

In person interview / Everett Lief in attendance

Introductions were made, and CMK made a statement that they were not personally under any investigation, that the FAA was conducting interviews in order to verify/validate statements made in previous interviews concerning the occurrence in Caravan N97HA .

CK: Were you working August 16, 2021?

CM: Yes

CK: What is your position/title at WAS?

CM: Ramp agent

CK: Do you recall loading Heathers Caravan that day?

CM: Not necessarily

CK: (Showed Load Schedule with initials "cm") – Can you verify that you made this load schedule?

CM: Yes

CK: Do you recall if you were asked by Heather to off-load baggage on this flight?

CM: Not necessarily

CK: Does it happen that pilots ask you to off-load a plane after it's loaded?

CM: Occasionally

CK: Could you see a scenario where the load was changed without a new manifest being printed first?

CM: Everything we go off of is in the paperwork.

CK thanked BB for his help.

Record of Conversation

Kelly Seekins
Guest Service Manager
Wrights Air Service employee
9/29/2021 0945 lcl
In person interview / Everett Lief in attendance

Introductions were made, and CMK made a statement that they were not personally under any investigation, that the FAA was conducting interviews in order to verify/validate statements made in previous interviews concerning the occurrence in Caravan N97HA .

CK: What is your position/title at WAS?

KS: Guest service Manager

CK: Were you working August 16, 2021?

KS: "Yes"

CK: Do you recall the load on Heathers Caravan that day?

KS: Yes

CK: Do you recall off-loading any baggage or freight at the pilot's request

KS: No

CK: Or, do you not recall

KS: No, they never did that.

CK: Would you recall a load change from Aug 16 after the pilot had already received a load schedule?

KS: I don't recall ever having a change after Heather got the load schedule.

General discussion was had about the "Take Flight" software that manages passengers, baggage, freight and load manifests, KC was confident that what was on the Flight Manifest and Loading Schedule is what is on an airplane. Everything on the airplane is managed by that paperwork. That's what the rampers load and the pilots perform their calculation with. That's what controls the baggage and freight inventory. KS is very aware of the importance of accurate weight information provided to the pilots.

CMK thanked KS for her help, and complimented her on her competent, and very professional attitude.

Record of Conversation

Bobby Bursiel
Dispatch
Wrights Air Service employee
9/29/2021 1000 lcl
In person interview / Everett Lief in attendance

Introductions were made, and CMK made a statement that they were not personally under any investigation, that the FAA was conducting interviews in order to verify/validate statements made in previous interviews concerning the occurrence in Caravan N97HA .

CK: What is your position/title at WAS?

BB: Flight coordinator responsible for building the loads (manifests) on the airplanes – passengers, bags, freight, mail.

CK: Were you working August 16, 2021?

BB: "Yes"

CK: Do you recall the load on Heathers Caravan that day?

BB: Not particularly

CK: How does that work...how much do you know to put on a given airplane?

BB: The pilot gives us a load available weight.

CK: If a pilot changed their mind on a previously stated load available, would you be notified.

BB: Yes

CZK: Would you make a new manifest?

BB: Yes

CK: Do you recall a revised load available change on Heather's flight that day?

BB: No

CK: Could a pilot bypass you and direct a ramper to off load the aircraft without you being in the loop?

BB: Improbable.

General discussion was had about the "Take Flight" software that manages passengers, baggage, freight and load manifests, BB was confident that what was on the Flight Manifest and Loading Schedule is what is on an airplane. Everything on the airplane is managed by that paperwork. That's what the rammers load and the pilots perform their calculation with. That's what controls the baggage and freight inventory.

CMK thanked BB for his help, and complimented him on his professionalism and dedication to safety in his Load planning position.