

From: Vernon.Rockett@faa.gov
To: [Aguilera Jason](#)
Subject: Fw: Taos plane crash witness statement
Date: Thursday, April 04, 2013 2:58:36 PM

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----- Forwarded by Vernon Rockett/ASW/FAA on 04/04/2013 02:58 PM -----

From: "Yeager, John D" [REDACTED]
ASW-ABQ-FSDO-01, Albuquerque, NM
To: Vernon.Rockett/ASW/FAA@FAA,
Date: 07/10/2012 12:39 PM
Subject: Taos plane crash witness statement

Hi Vernon,

Following our phone conversation, I am writing this email as a written statement as to what I observed regarding the plane crash on the west rim of the gorge near Taos on 7/7/12.

Lee Herring and I were biking north along the West Rim bike trail, having started at about 9:30am on 7/7/12 from the parking lot at the edge of the gorge (parking along 567 about 2 miles east / southeast from Carson). After we had traveled north about 5 miles along the trail paralleling the edge of the gorge (~10:30am), we saw a blue and yellow 2 person plane fly approximately 100-200 feet overhead. We waved at the occupants and they waved back. They were going approximately south at a reasonable speed, and nothing appeared wrong to my inexperienced eyes. We watched them travel over to the edge of the gorge and it looked like they were making a controlled descent into the gorge. After only a few seconds, I saw them roll to the right so that the left wing was nearly straight up in the air and I seem to remember the engine making a louder, higher pitched noise. I'm not sure if the pilot rolled the aircraft in response to a problem or if the movement itself was the problem. The roll of the plane continued in what looked like an out-of-control fashion, though it seemed to bring the nose around back towards the mesa and I think the plane moved up a little bit so as to not catch the edge of the gorge before coming down hard onto the mesa surface. My view of the plane impacting the ground was obscured slightly by a small rise in between myself and the plane, but it looked like the plane must have either hit on the side or upside down (hitting the cockpit). The plane then bounced up but I didn't get a good look at how it turned in midair as I was already on my bike again and riding towards the crash.

When we arrived on scene, the plane was facing north, the opposite direction they had been heading, and was resting on its side. The female passenger was already out of the cockpit and on the phone with 911. She handed the phone to me and Lee assisted her in pulling the male pilot the rest of the way out of his seat. Some fuel was leaking out of the wing and the passenger helped Lee find the ignition key and remove it.

To my knowledge, the plane wreckage was not disturbed between that time and the time the paramedics arrived, other than all of us moving a few pieces of debris out of the way. Some people from the fire department eventually arrived and one of them attempted to locate and disable the ELT. I'm not sure if they did eventually find it or if they disturbed the plane in any other way.

Please let me know if you need any more information from me.

Thanks,
John Yeager

