



National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety – Central Region
Interview Summary: CEN14FA051

Interviewers: Jennifer Rodi NTSB, Denver, Colorado

Peter Basile Cessna, Wichita, Kansas

Interviewee: Clay Aimes

During the interview, Mr. Aimes stated the following:

Mr. Aimes was driving in the front gate at Texas Tech, headed to the west. He looked to the northwest and observed a big plume of black smoke for 5 to 10 seconds followed by white smoke. He did not hear or see anything prior to the smoke.

Mr. Aimes stated that there were low clouds at the time and it was “borderline foggy and drizzly.” He stated that the wind blew the smoke away to the southwest.



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Interviewee: Mike Baley

During the interview, Mr. Baley stated the following:

Mr. Baley was in downtown Junction, headed west. He observed a smoke plume and initially thought someone was burning brush.

Mr. Baley stated that at the time it was “extremely overcast, not foggy down to the ground but just over the hills, with a strong north wind.” He stated that a frontal system blew into town around 0800 the morning of the accident.



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Interviewee: Maria Dempsey

During the interview, Ms. Dempsey stated the following:

Ms. Dempsey was inside a building, closer to the river. Between 0930 and 0940 she heard the engine of an airplane revving up like when an airplane “goes down.” She then heard a big “boom.” She did not see the airplane prior to the boom.

Ms. Dempsey ran outside with a colleague and observed smoke to the west. She stated that it was windy and cold at the time. She stated that the clouds were above the tower – there were no “low clouds”, just very cloudy.



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Interviewee: Donn S Edwards

During the interview, Mr. Edwards stated the following:

Mr. Edwards, a wildlife photographer, was sitting in his truck near the Texas Tech campus with his window rolled down. He heard an airplane approaching and audibly determined that the airplane sounded fast and low. The airplane was approaching from the southeast. He heard an “obvious change in pitch” as if the airplane changed pitch attitude or if the pilot increased power on the engine.

Mr. Edwards looked up and for a few seconds saw a flash of an airplane and then a subsequent smoke and fireball as it impacted the ground. He stated that the wind blew the smoke away. At the time of the accident the clouds were above the hill – he could see the hill but the clouds were otherwise low.



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Interviewee: Ino Gutierrez

During the interview, Mr. Gutierrez stated the following:

He was in the Red Building at Texas Tech, before 1000, closer to 0930, with another custodian. Mr. Gutierrez heard a “boom”. They went outside and looked in the direction of the boom and observed smoke. He stated that it was windy and cold at the time of the accident. He did not hear the airplane prior to the accident nor did he see the accident airplane prior to the boom.



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Interviewee: Salvador Martinez

During the interview, Mr. Martinez stated the following:

Mr. Martinez driving in the front gate at Texas Tech, headed to the west. He did not hear anything; however, he observed a large explosion and white gases or smoke. He stated that there was a large solid black ball of smoke followed by billowing black smoke. He did not see the airplane.

Mr. Martinez stated that it was cloudy at the time of the accident. He could see the tower and the house to the west.



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Interviewee: Esmeralda Valenzuela

During the interview, Ms. Valenzuela stated the following:

Ms. Valenzuela was in the dorm building right after her break, between 0930 and 1000. She could hear an airplane flying – it sounded like it was in the same area, circling, not like it was moving away. The sound of the airplane then changed – it sounded like it was in a nose dive and then she heard a loud “boom”. She stated that it sounded like airplanes on television that are in a nose dive or are “going down.” She did not hear the airplane after the boom.

Ms. Valenzuela went outside and observed a small cloud of smoke. She did not see the airplane prior to the boom sound. She stated that it was cloudy and windy all day.