

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CRASH LANDING OF A CESSNA 525A
N525KT AT THE MGC AIRPORT
IN MICHIGAN CITY, INDIANA,
ON DECEMBER 27, 2017

Accident No.: CEN18LA062

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Interview of: CHRISTOPHER MARAZAS, Pilot
Integrated Flight Resources, Inc.

Tuesday,
February 20, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MITCHELL GALLO, Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JAMES LOBASH, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

I N D E XITEMPAGE

Interview of Christopher Marazas:

By Mr. Gallo

4

By Mr. Lobash

10

By Mr. Gallo

14

By Mr. Lobash

20

I N T E R V I E W

MR. GALLO: All right. This is an interview with Christopher Marazas. This is Mitchell Gallo from the NTSB, and with me is James Lobash from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Christopher, do I have permission to record this conversation?

MR. MARAZAS: Yes.

MR. GALLO: All right.

INTERVIEW OF CHRISTOPHER MARAZAS

BY MR. GALLO:

Q. Like I asked Calvin during his interview, I want you to go back and kind of tell us when you first learned of the flight, what happened from that point on, what you were thinking, what you were feeling, what you were experiencing. And we'll probably have questions later on just to -- that may relate to other accidents that we've seen.

A. Okay.

Q. Do you have any questions for me?

A. Not at this time.

Q. Okay. All right. Why don't you go ahead.

A. Sure. So I guess it started the day before, the 26th. I looked on our online app, Airplane Manager, to see if anything had been done for the upcoming trip on the 27th. You know, again with everything -- I was not in the office that day, so I just texted Calvin, hey, has anything -- you know, do you know anything? He

1 was like, no, so go ahead and, you know -- or I was inquiring
2 about have any arrangements been made at the FBO for the
3 passenger, et cetera, you know, just because I'm not in the
4 innerworkings of the office. So I'm like, hey, do you know what's
5 going on for tomorrow morning? He's like, no, so go ahead and
6 call the FBO and start getting that information.

7 So I continued with my day. Called the office on the early
8 afternoon, the 26th. I believe it was a line guy. I did my
9 normal spiel just like I do with every FBO: Hey, my name's Chris
10 Marazas. I was wondering if I can get your fees, or if you'll
11 waive those fees for whichever airplane's coming in that day.
12 He's like, oh, there's no fees. I was like, okay, we're coming in
13 at -- I think it was, like, 6:30 the next morning. Is there a
14 call-out fee, you know, just if we needed anything? The line
15 guy's, you know, I don't really know.

16 So after, like, a minute or so of being on hold, another
17 gentleman answered the phone. I believe it was his manager. He
18 stated that oh, it's a \$50 call-out fee, but do you need any
19 services? Like, I don't believe so, because we'll have enough
20 fuel to get to here and the next destination, et cetera, et
21 cetera. So he's like, oh, then there's no call-out fee if you
22 don't need anyone there, so you don't need anybody there. I was
23 like, well, we're going to pick up a passenger for a quick turn.
24 How does that work with no one being there? He's like, oh, well,
25 here's the gate code if they need to drive on the ramp for a short

1 period to load the bags, and then they can just drive through the
2 gate and it'll close, et cetera. So okay, that's fine.

3 I also asked about, you know, how's the runway and stuff?
4 And he was like, oh, the runway's fine; it's clear. And I said,
5 well, the CJ2 has a pretty low wing profile. It hangs pretty --
6 you know, it sits pretty low. So how high are the snowdrifts
7 especially in the taxiways and taxiway conditions? He said, oh,
8 the snowdrifts are below the taxiway lights, and you should be
9 good to go. I was like, okay, that's great.

10 Later on that day -- excuse me; I have a throat lozenge.
11 Later on that day, went on to Flightplan.com to make some flight
12 plans and make a fuel plan for the next day. You know, looked at
13 the weather, looked at the fuel, made my little spreadsheet that I
14 like to do from the information. Called the next FBO. Got again
15 the same spiel. That concluded, you know, I went to bed.

16 The next morning, arrived at the office here at -- yep, about
17 5:45 or so. Should have left at about 6:30. That's the normal
18 plan. As I arrived, I did the normal morning duties as I usually
19 do. You know, I make the coffee, get the ice, newspapers, any
20 other, you know, things that the passenger requested on the trip
21 sheet. Normal duties. Once you kind of run around and do all
22 that, you know, I met with Calvin; hey, here's my fuel plan that I
23 propose. You know, here's the weather, here's the fuel plan, what
24 do you want to do? And we agreed. I pulled the airplane out,
25 called the flight center to fuel it up to whatever we agreed upon.

1 After that, we were talking about okay, well, should we go
2 IFR or VFR? It was kind of close depending on the weather, so we
3 determined that, well, we'll make that a game time decision. So
4 then keep going, you know, wait for the fuel guy to fuel it up.
5 You know, closed up the doors and everything. I checked the
6 latches, did my little walkaround for the nose, baggage, the fuel
7 cap -- baggage, again, fuel cap, okay, we're good, close the door.

8 Then we're like, okay, well, might as well just go IFR, would
9 be the best. So he turned on his phone, clicked IFR -- or clicked
10 on the Flightplan.com app or a minor, whatever, trip file, filed
11 it. You know, let the engine start up and everything, let
12 everything warm up. And then got our ATIS, got our IFR clearance,
13 taxied, et cetera. Yeah, then we're -- went along on our way.

14 Listened to some weather. Determined that the RNAV 2-0 -- I
15 believe it was 2-0 -- yep, 2-0 would be the best approach for the
16 given wind conditions. We did that. We saw some clouds ahead,
17 and given that it was really cold, especially in that altitude, we
18 turned on our anti-icing equipment. Continued, got vectored, made
19 the approach. During the -- followed the normal approach, nothing
20 unusual about that. Pethan noticed that we had a light on the
21 right-hand side, like a tower above some trees. Saw some PAPIs
22 which were NOTAM'd out of service. We made the note later that,
23 hey, the PAPIs are out of service; don't follow those even though
24 they are lit.

25 Saw the runway lights. Continued. Again, missing -- you

1 know, made sure we stayed clear of the terrain and the obstacle
2 that was on the right there. We made note especially, you know,
3 shorter runways that we sometimes go into, hey, you know, the
4 important part is get it on the ground and get it stopped. You
5 know, get the flaps out as soon as possible once all the wheels
6 are on the ground. Soft touchdowns are not the priority here.
7 Make sure it gets on the ground and stopped. Same briefing pretty
8 much that we do every single kind of short runway that we go into.

9 Unfortunately, as we made the touchdown there, we immediately
10 again put the ground flaps out, heavy braking, and noticed that
11 not much braking was happening. And I said to the effect, I don't
12 know if we're stopping; we're not slowing. And Calvin was like,
13 huh, and then he gets on the brakes with me as well just to test
14 and make sure nothing was weird or anything. Said to the effect,
15 yeah, it's not. So then he said go, go, go.

16 Powered up, accelerated down the runway. I'm just staring at
17 the end of the runway trying to hope to make, you know, make sure
18 that airplane's centered straight going. And unfortunately that
19 end of the runway came, and I just pulled it to my chest trying to
20 get that nose off the darn ground, and she wasn't working. Went
21 through the fence and a guardrail, and after some rollercoaster
22 ride, we ended up in a field, I don't know whatever distance.

23 And after that, probably a couple seconds of just staring at
24 each other -- you okay? I'm okay. You okay? Yeah,
25 (indiscernible) everything. You know, a little bit shocked or

1 unsure just, you know, staring, are you okay? Then we just said,
2 okay, well, secure the airplane. You know, I just verified
3 engines were cut off. And, you know, he said, don't touch any
4 switches. Okay. Other than the master; I turned the master off.

5 And then we kind of walked a little bit to the mid airplane
6 in the cabin there. It was nice and warm. Unfortunately it was
7 ridiculously cold outside, so we were kind of hunkering down in
8 the warmth for a couple seconds there as he's like, hey -- told me
9 close the flight plan and let them know that we ran off the end of
10 the runway; I'm going to make my own calls. So I called flight
11 service and, hey, we'd like to close IFR flight plan. Okay. Are
12 you on the ground? I was like, yes, but we ran off the end of the
13 runway. And the guy -- I could hear the guy was shaking probably
14 as much as I was. He was like ahhh. I'm like, yeah, I know. He
15 was kind of startled just as much as I was.

16 Yeah. Then we opened the door. We saw some people running
17 out in the middle of the field, which was to our surprise, but,
18 you know, (indiscernible) for them, bystanders there. We heard
19 some sirens, and so we knew emergency people were called, and
20 people were here to kind of collect us. And emergency personnel
21 come checked us out, et cetera, et cetera. You guys came and --
22 so the day progressed. You know, I had the meeting with you and,
23 you know, naturally they plowed the runway. Still hate them for
24 that, but -- so they taunted us with that and, you know, so on and
25 so forth, and then the investigation begins.

1 MR. GALLO: Jim, do you have any questions?

2 MR. LOBASH: Yes.

3 BY MR. LOBASH:

4 Q. For mission planning, when was the last time you checked the
5 weather the night before you went to bed?

6 A. The night before? Probably -- I don't know. I have to
7 guess. If I'd have to guess?

8 Q. Yeah. Like what time did you go to bed about?

9 A. I went to bed about 8 o'clock.

10 Q. Okay. So it would have been --

11 A. Because it was, you know, an early morning. But it was about
12 8 o'clock or so.

13 Q. Okay. So obviously before 8 o'clock.

14 A. I was going to guess around 7 or -- sorry -- 6.

15 Q. Six to 7?

16 A. Probably a little bit after dinner.

17 Q. Okay. And then you show up in the morning. Company policy
18 for flight release on Part 91s, is there anything other than just
19 having it on the schedule that you have to do to check with
20 anybody or have a formal release like in a 135 flight?

21 A. I mean, as an SIC, I don't really do much. I -- you know,
22 it's the PIC. Like hey, are we released; are we good to go, you
23 know?

24 Q. All right.

25 A. I don't personally do much.

1 Q. Right. Yeah, you're pretty much involved in doing the
2 performance stuff and things like that.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. As far as the weather goes, looking at what the -- as far as
5 finding a forecast, since Michigan City doesn't have a forecast,
6 right?

7 A. Right. It does not.

8 Q. What was the thought process about whether or not you can
9 meet -- whether or not you needed an alternate for the plus or
10 minus an hour, what was the thought process about what forecast
11 were you going to use or --

12 A. Oh, sure. I mean, again, the local kind of airport's going
13 to be -- the best ones being Gary or -- what's the darn name --
14 South Bend.

15 Q. South Bend.

16 A. You know, looking at those two, see how they're doing.
17 Because, again, there's nothing in the middle there, so kind of
18 interpolate the difference between them.

19 Q. Right. Okay. Yeah, the reason I bring that up is because
20 there was a vast difference between two of them that day.

21 A. There was.

22 Q. Gary's completely clear and forecast to stay that way, and
23 South Bend was not.

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. So I was just -- what was the thought process about whether

1 or not you would need an alternate?

2 A. If we needed one -- I don't know, I've always just done
3 the -- you know, when I put flight plans in, I just always put the
4 alternates in there, like, whether you need them or not. It's
5 just, why not?

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. I've noticed something with Flightplan.com though. It's the
8 weirdest thing that sometimes it keeps them, I don't know, but
9 other times it doesn't keep the alternates. I don't know if it's
10 a time thing or -- you know, sometimes I'll make flight plans, you
11 know, the day before, a week out, et cetera, and sometimes they're
12 there, sometimes they're not. I don't understand why.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But I put them in there. Why not? That's my, you know --

15 Q. So did you have an alternate in this case?

16 A. I put one in the night before.

17 Q. Okay. And was it Gary or --

18 A. It was Gary.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. It was -- again, it was the best. It should have been the
21 best.

22 Q. Okay. And the reason I ask is because when I looked at the
23 flight plan from Flightplan.com, it wasn't there. So that's why I
24 was wondering.

25 A. Okay. Yeah. I know for -- I always do it.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. That, I mean -- but I -- sometimes, again -- I don't know if
3 it's a glitch or I, you know -- you know, you got to do an extra
4 special something randomly. I don't know. But I always put one
5 in there, and it was Gary.

6 Q. Okay. So Gary was filed as your alternate. Okay. Was this
7 your first time going into Michigan City, or had you been there
8 before?

9 A. To my knowledge, yes. I've been a flight instructor in the
10 area for 3 years. I may or may not have landed there with a
11 Cessna, but not a jet.

12 Q. Not a CJ?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. That was really what my question was, in a CJ. And
15 how about checking the performance for the aircraft for the day?
16 Was it done -- did you use -- does your online applications figure
17 that out, or did you do it manually?

18 A. Figure what out?

19 Q. Landing performance as far as distances go and --

20 A. That's in the book.

21 Q. It's in the book, so you just -- you opened it up and looked
22 at it that morning and -- or --

23 A. I didn't. I was doing my morning duties. I don't know what
24 Calvin did.

25 Q. Okay. And as far as training goes, rejected landings. Every

1 time -- yeah. The only thing I could find was go-around
2 procedures.

3 A. Go around, but that's not such the case.

4 Q. Right. So there's --

5 A. So actually touching down.

6 Q. Right. So was there any discussion or anything, you know,
7 when you're -- you know, about anything?

8 A. I mean, training after the fact, sure, but -- with our
9 modules, I mean, that I guess was created from the incident, but
10 beforehand, I don't recall anything being talked about of a
11 rejected landing.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. We practice go-around, sure, or single engine events,
14 et cetera, et cetera, but never fully touching down that I recall.

15 Q. Right.

16 MR. LOBASH: Okay. That's all I have.

17 MR. GALLO: I have (indiscernible) a little bit.

18 BY MR. GALLO:

19 Q. As far as your background --

20 A. Sure.

21 Q. -- did you get your flight training through a university
22 system?

23 A. Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Graduated in 2013.

1 Q. So I probably know the answer to this question. It's more of
2 a perception.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. I mean, you're a professional pilot. Is there a bad
5 connotation associated with being involved in an accident?
6 Because my thought process is, there may be some accidents that it
7 may be better to be involved in an accident than make it a worse
8 accident by having a loss of life.

9 For example, I had an accident in Cresco, Iowa. A Citation
10 touched down on a 2,700-foot long runway, and they were running
11 out of runway, so they did a rejected landing and added energy and
12 went off the runway across a road. They hit trees at about 92, 93
13 knots and both crew members were fatal. So that's one example.
14 Like, well, it's better just to cut the energy and buy the
15 accident.

16 Or another scenario would be, if you're surrounded by
17 thunderstorms, better to land in a cornfield rather than going
18 into a thunderstorm and losing the airplane. So it's a little
19 more control.

20 A. So you're asking is it --

21 Q. So do you -- so is your, is --

22 A. You said the word bad. Is it bad? Or, like, I'm --

23 Q. Is the perception out there that it's not good to be involved
24 in an accident --

25 MR. LOBASH: Period.

1 BY MR. GALLO:

2 Q. I mean, there may be some accidents with lesser damage and
3 lesser injuries.

4 A. Okay. So if it's going to happen either way, would you
5 rather have more or less control of it?

6 Q. As a preventative measure.

7 A. I'm not sure I know how to answer that, other than less is
8 better. I don't -- maybe I'm not just understanding.

9 Q. Is it -- to you, does it seem -- well, to you, you want to
10 avoid being in an accident. Is that kind of a -- that's a correct
11 statement?

12 A. That's a fair statement.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Accidents are bad.

15 Q. So do you think there are accidents that are less bad because
16 of their -- they would be lesser in terms of injury to people? So
17 you want to get involved in an accident --

18 A. I'm just not understanding.

19 Q. You might get involved in an accident as a preventative
20 measure to avoid something worse, a worse accident.

21 A. Oh, sure. Like less damage the better?

22 Q. Yeah, like less injury.

23 A. I'm not understanding that.

24 Q. So, for example, you're flying along and you're surrounded by
25 thunderstorms.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. You can't -- it's all red. You can't fly through the
3 thunderstorm.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. If you fly through the thunderstorm, you're going to have a
6 structural failure.

7 A. Right. Okay.

8 Q. Or you could land in some cornfield which doesn't have really
9 great terrain, and that'll damage the airplane, but you'll
10 survive.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. So --

13 A. What -- I mean, obviously, turn around or -- I mean, maybe
14 I'm just misunderstanding the scenario. They're forced into
15 something?

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. I guess, given the two options of structural failure or a
18 cornfield, knowing those are the only options, I guess I would
19 choose the cornfield.

20 MR. LOBASH: It also assumes you know what the outcome's
21 going to be, which you don't.

22 MR. MARAZAS: Correct.

23 BY MR. GALLO:

24 Q. Yeah. More of a preventative measure than anything else, you
25 know.

1 A. I suppose when I -- yes. Based on those options.

2 Q. In your simulator training, where did you go for your type
3 rating?

4 A. Well, for which training are you -- I have a SIC in the 500
5 and the 525.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But then I went to a PIC training in a King Air 300.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So I'm not sure which one you're referring to. Only one
10 training has been in a simulator, and that was for the King Air.

11 Q. Okay. So in that training, have you -- do they do
12 contaminated runway landings?

13 A. I don't recall so.

14 Q. All right. Any training as far as rejected landings?

15 A. Again, a full touchdown and then --

16 Q. And then add power to try to --

17 A. -- continue? No. Not to my recollection.

18 MR. GALLO: And that's something that Jim will elaborate on,
19 right? As far as simulator training?

20 MR. LOBASH: Yeah. If they had talked about it or discussed
21 it or even done anything similar to that.

22 MR. MARAZAS: I mean, I'm sure if you have an extra day and
23 money, you could be like, hey, let's try something out in the sim.

24 MR. LOBASH: Yeah. Did they do low -- when you land, do they
25 have low braking action? Lower, do they lower the braking action

1 occasionally? Do they ever practice --

2 MR. MARAZAS: I don't know what their normal practices are.
3 I just -- I don't remember doing it in the King Air training. I
4 don't know --

5 MR. LOBASH: Okay.

6 MR. MARAZAS: -- others.

7 BY MR. GALLO:

8 Q. On the accident flight, this one going to Michigan City, did
9 you see any yellow or red annunciations or any annunciations in
10 the cockpit?

11 A. Not that I recall. No.

12 Q. Well, I'll just -- and the last question, I think -- well,
13 one of the last questions. Are you familiar with Flight Safety
14 publications?

15 A. Flight safety, as in --

16 Q. Flight Safety Foundation publications.

17 A. Not -- I don't recall. Is that associated with the
18 simulator, the other group? Flight Safety?

19 Q. No. They put out publications about different topics. And
20 again, I'm not --

21 A. I have not then subscribed to them.

22 Q. Yeah. I'm not trying to assess your --

23 A. No. I honestly have not --

24 Q. -- right or wrong knowledge base.

25 A. Unless it -- was that ever in Flight magazine? I used to

1 subscribe to that.

2 Q. I pull it up on the internet.

3 A. I've only seen Flight Sim. You know, that's why I was
4 wondering if they kind of had a thing with that as, you know, an
5 advertisement. But --

6 Q. That's all the questions I have. Do you have anything else
7 that you want to add that we may have missed or you want to
8 comment on?

9 A. I'm willing to answer any questions. I don't.

10 MR. LOBASH: I have just one more question --

11 MR. MARAZAS: Sure.

12 MR. LOBASH: -- came up while we were talking.

13 MR. MARAZAS: Sure.

14 BY MR. LOBASH:

15 Q. Since you were the first one on the brakes, what did it feel
16 like?

17 A. Unusual. That's the word that comes to mind. Certainly not
18 an immediate deceleration as accustomed to. You know, just
19 getting on like -- you know, and then I see like, oh, we're not
20 slowing, we're not stopping, or something to that effect. Or like
21 brakes aren't working or something like that.

22 Q. Did it feel like the anti-skid was working or did you --

23 A. I didn't feel any jostling. It was just kind of like -- I
24 don't know how to quantify that as a -- on the brakes -- I --

25 Q. Yeah, what I'm trying to see is -- what I'm really asking is

1 did it -- you know, did you notice if the -- on a dry runway, if
2 you were heavy braking and you've noticed the anti-skid before,
3 did it feel like that this time?

4 A. I've felt on the 5 before. Not me personally, another person
5 was flying, but I was in the right seat and I felt that.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. It did not feel like that.

8 Q. Okay. It just felt like it was --

9 A. At the moment, it was just on the brakes and just continual
10 momentum. I don't know how else to --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And it's an awkward feeling. I don't know.

13 Q. Yeah. And I'm trying to figure out what the -- you know,
14 based on the runway conditions of what was there, what wasn't
15 there --

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. -- and what you guys were feeling in the airplane.

18 A. An unusual feeling in the feet or, you know, steady hard
19 pressure, heavy braking, not an initial response and just kind of
20 a --

21 Q. But nothing -- but it didn't feel like the anti-skid was
22 giving back?

23 A. Not that I felt or noticed, no.

24 MR. LOBASH: Okay.

25 MR. GALLO: That's all the questions I have. Thank you very

1 much.

2 (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: CRASH LANDING OF A CESSNA 525A
 N525KT AT THE MGC AIRPORT
 IN MICHIGAN CITY, INDIANA,
 ON DECEMBER 27, 2017
 Interview of Christopher Marazas

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN18LA062

PLACE:

DATE: February 20, 2018

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.



Kay Maurer
Transcriber