

Statement of Ahmed El-Kaddah

To Whom it may concern:

To the best of my recollection, I have prepared this statement regarding the events of September 11, 2022. I am a 34 year old pilot. I have accrued 3500 hours of flight time (2300 as a flight instructor). This is the first time I have had an operational incident. My certificate number is [REDACTED]. I have an ATP, Commercial Multi/single Instrument rating, CFI CFII and MEI ratings. I also am type rated on the Embraer 145 aircraft.

Since I have worked as a flight instructor for Journeys Aviation, I am allowed to use their aircraft for recreational and training purposes. On September 11, 2022 I flew aircraft N9049H, a Cessna 172 from Journeys Aviation, Boulder Colorado Airport, for the purpose of VFR sightseeing flights.

Hobbs out: 1178.10 Hobbs in: 1179.60 Total time: 1.5 hours
Tach out: 2927.30 Tach in: 2928.6

Initially, I flew three short flights. They were uneventful. I then picked up my brother, Hamad El Kaddah, at the Boulder airport. My brother also is a professional pilot. He has accrued over 7000 hours of flight time. He holds an FAA multi-commercial certificate (# [REDACTED]) and is type rated on the Airbus 320, B737 and the Airbus 340 equipment. He has never had an operational incident. He flies professionally for an overseas airline.

The flight planned route was to fly from KBDU Boulder Airport to Horsetooth Reservoir and back. This is a normal route for a sightseeing flight. I often operated this flight while working as a flight instructor for Journeys Aviation.

My brother wished to fly as we made our way to Horsetooth Reservoir. I acted as an instructor pilot since he is not current on this aircraft. When we were east of the Horsetooth Reservoir (in-between Fort Collins City and the Reservoir) my brother reduced the power to slow the aircraft so he could observe more of the scenery. I noticed that we were losing altitude. I instructed my brother to maintain the altitude of the aircraft. He then stated "I can't pull up, Jammed

Elevator!" I believe we were approximately 1500 to 2000 feet above ground level at that point.

I immediately took control of the aircraft and confirmed that the elevator was jammed. The aircraft kept descending. To arrest the descent, I added power and used the trim control to gain altitude. The aircraft was able to gain some altitude. We discussed the situation and concluded that the best course of action was to fly toward the Horsetooth Reservoir and get away from the congested area (Fort Collins City) to avoid any potential harm to anyone on the ground if we could not unjam the elevator.

As we flew over Horsetooth Reservoir I decided to attempt to free the jammed elevator by wiggling the flight control in and out. That maneuver did not free the jammed elevator. In fact, that movement caused the aircraft to pitch downward. I moved the throttle power to idle but that caused the nose to pitch down further. Therefore I added power and retrimmed the aircraft to reduce the excessive rate of descent over the Reservoir. This stopped the aircraft from descending further. However, by that time we were just above the level of the lake.

I left the throttle on high setting to avoid any further pitching down. I was concerned that, at this low altitude, it would be hard to recover. I was unable to maintain straight and level flight even though I was using all of the controls at my disposal (aileron, rudder, and trim).

At that point there appeared to be three undesirable possible courses of action:

1. Fly east and attempt to land on the road on the ridge. However, it was a busy day—there were many vehicles on the road and the area contains many trails with pedestrians. There are also homes and other obstructions in the area.
2. Execute a water landing which could be very dangerous for us. The fixed gear aircraft with a jammed elevator could cartwheel in the water.
3. Fly west through the closest suitable valley to look for a flat area and attempt to land the damaged aircraft there.

I concluded that the safest course of action was to aim for the valley and attempt to find a safe place to land the aircraft.

I turned the aircraft toward the valley. My first priority was to ensure that no one would get hurt and that property would not be damaged. I thought there would be a location in the valley where I could land the aircraft without incident. Unfortunately, as we approached the valley I did not see a smooth flat area to land. The valley was littered with boulders and trees which made a safe landing unlikely.

I avoided any excessive turns so as not to lose any aircraft performance that was still available to me. I knew at that point there is no turning back out of the valley. Any steep turn to exit the valley would result in the loss of altitude and control and could result in a nose down accident.

I looked for a place to safely land in the valley. I was using full power but the terrain was climbing faster than the aircraft. This resulted in the speed slowing to the point where the stall warning was activated. I immediately tried trimming nose down to gain speed. However, the left wing of the aircraft impacted a tree. This resulted in the aircraft coming to rest on the ground.

My brother and I sustained minor injuries and were able to exit the aircraft. However, the aircraft was severely damaged.

I hope this narrative has fully explained the relevant events of the flight. Should additional information be needed please contact my Attorney, Jeffrey Small at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely, Ahmed El-Kaddah