

Responses to Questions from Amanda Taylor, Senior Survival Factors Investigator, Office of Aviation Safety, NTSB to Kennon Vaughn

1. Brief overview of flight, from when you arrived through getting out.

Kennon recalls that everyone arrived early, shortly after 7am. Steve Tucker (pilot) was there. Steve encouraged all passengers to use the restroom as he packed everyone's luggage in the plane. Within 30 minutes of our arriving at the airport, everyone boarded the plane and Mr. Tucker went through what appeared to Kennon to be his normal protocols for the flight.

2. Was he given a briefing of any sort, indicating seat belt operation, emergency exits, or door operation?

Kennon had flown with Mr. Tucker on prior occasions, so he had been previously briefed on seat belt operation. However, on this flight Mr. Tucker demonstrated to the passengers who were sitting by the door how to latch and unlatch the door, as well as where the seatbelts were.

3. Had he flown in this aircraft, or a similar one previously?

Kennon had previously flown three or four times with Mr. Tucker, although it is possible that this was only his second flight in this particular aircraft. Kennon had flown a couple of times on similar sized private planes but not with Mr. Tucker.

4. As he works through it, if he can think about what the occupants around him were doing, how they were sitting and those types of things.

Kennon recalls that he was sitting in the rear passenger side seat, facing forward. Mr. Tucker occupied the left front seat, and Tyler Patterson was sitting in the right front passenger seat. Tyler Springer was on the pilot side in the rear, next to Kennon, facing forward. Bill Garner was in the middle seat, facing the rear of the plane, with his back to the pilot seat and his feet towards Tyler Springer. Kennon recalls that everyone was engaged in normal conversation throughout the flight.

5. During the accident sequence, the sounds he heard, feelings he felt.

Kennon is not able to recall every detail of the accident sequence, however he remembers that he heard various noises from what he assumed were plane alarms. He recalls thinking that Mr. Tucker was a great pilot, so this did not cause him much concern when he first heard the alarms. He then recalls the ride becoming more turbulent or bumpy, and that the sound of the alarms seemed to be going off and on, continuously, which began to cause him concern. He recalls that when the noises were occurring it was cloudy, and he does not recall seeing much out the window. At some point, he recalls the aircraft going vertical and climbing, pretty aggressively. He remembers thinking that this was out of the ordinary.

After a brief upward trajectory, he recalls the vertical climb ceasing and what felt like the nose of the aircraft going down significantly. He then remembers the aircraft coming out of the clouds and he saw the ground. It was at this point that he remembers thinking that a crash was inevitable.

The moments before impact he spent in prayer. After impact, he was very disoriented. He recalls struggling to maintain consciousness, and he believes it is possible that he may have lost consciousness for a brief period. He also remembers that things were spinning for a few moments as he tried to get his bearings.

Once he became oriented and opened his eyes he realized he had suffered injuries which made it difficult to breathe (later diagnosed as a collapsed and punctured lung). He then recalls saying an additional prayer asking the Lord for help in breathing and figuring out what to do next.

6. Did he alter his seating position, or adjust his belt at all as a result of the motion of the aircraft?

He does not recall doing so.

7. Did he hear any words from the front occupants, such as shouts alerting him to brace or that a crash was imminent? If so, did he tense up?

He recalls that as the airplane was descending prior to the impact he saw Mr. Tucker pulling hard on the yoke, and believes he heard Tyler Patterson calling for Mr. Tucker to try and get the nose of the plane up and straighten out. No one alerted them to the imminency of the crash, but in looking out the window he knew that a crash was imminent.

He does not remember tensing up as he did not know precisely when the aircraft would hit. He remembers that the entire sequence seemed to happen pretty quickly.

8. When the aircraft came to rest, if he could describe how he got out, including how he knew how to operate the door and any issues he encountered during the egress.

When he regained consciousness and was able to process what was going on, he noticed that the door had either blown open or was missing (he is not sure of which). He unbuckled his seatbelt, and crawled towards the door. His injuries caused significant pain and an inability to breathe. He was unable to walk, but somehow managed to exit the airplane and remembers being on his knees outside the airplane on the ground. He used his elbows to brace himself on the door of the airplane, and scanned the floor for a phone. He saw Tyler Springer's phone on the floor and used it to call 9-1-1. He estimates that it took about 15 minutes from the time of the call until help arrived.

9. Does he recall that the belt anchor had been pulled free, and if so did he remember when that might have occurred?

No.

10. Is there anything else he believes that would be useful to the investigation that I haven't asked about?

Not at this time.