



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: Pieter Dijkstra, Captain, Cape Air

Date: October 1, 2021

Witness: Kathy Yodice, Attorney

Captain Dijkstra was interviewed over the telephone. He had just been released from the hospital, where he had been treated for second- and third-degree burns to his arms and face/head. He also sustained a fractured foot in the accident when he exited the airplane.

Captain Dijkstra stated that he had been employed as a line pilot for Cape Air for 11 years. He was based in Rockland, Maine. Captain Dijkstra's normal flight schedule was three round-trip flights per day between Rockland, Maine, and Boston, Massachusetts, on a rotating schedule. However, Cape Air was in between their summer and winter flight schedule, so he was temporarily assigned as a back-up pilot out of Boston. On the day of the accident (Sept 9, 2021), Captain Dijkstra was scheduled to fly from Rockland to Boston, Boston to Provincetown, Provincetown to Boston, then Boston to Rockland. Captain Dijkstra said that he had flown into Provincetown "many times" and had completed numerous check-rides and training into and out of Provincetown airport.

Captain Dijkstra said he had been flying the accident airplane (N88833, a multi-engine Cessna 402B) on his regular Rockland to Boston route and reported there had been no mechanical problems with the airplane. He said it was normal for a pilot to be assigned to a particular airplane for several weeks, until it had to go into maintenance, etc., after which they would be assigned another airplane.

On the morning of the accident, the flight from Rockland to Boston was uneventful. In Boston, Captain Dijkstra conducted a preflight inspection of the airplane, and there were no mechanical issues with the airplane. He also reviewed the weather via a computer in the pilot crew room just prior to boarding the passengers for the flight. Captain Dijkstra said he reviewed the graphic area forecast; weather advisories including AIRMETs and SIGMETs, weather radar, METARs, and NOTAMs. Captain Dijkstra said the radar was showing green bands of rain only. Captain Dijkstra did not recall what the wind direction/speed was at Provincetown prior to departing Boston. But he did remember that the wind favored runway 7 and knew he would have to do the ILS RWY 7 approach to get into Provincetown. Captain Dijkstra filed an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan and began the boarding procedures. He worked with the on-duty Cape Air ramp agent to

obtain passenger and luggage weights so he could calculate the weight and balance. The calculations were such that a passenger could be in the front right (co-pilot seat), and row 5 would be empty. Captain Dijkstra asked if any of the passengers wanted to sit up front with him, and one of the passengers quickly said yes. That passenger sat in the front right seat. Captain Dijkstra said that once all the passengers were seated, he gave a passenger safety briefing. The briefing included making sure the passengers knew they were going to Provincetown; what the weather was going to be, and to expect a smooth flight. He also instructed the passengers on how to use the seatbelts, directed them to where the emergency exits were located, how to find the passenger life vests and to review the passenger briefing card. He also told them it was a no-smoking flight. Captain Dijkstra said the passengers were very cordial and he got the sense that they may have all known each other.

Captain Dijkstra then completed the "Before Start" checklist, started both engines, turned on the avionics and taxied to the top of the ramp area, where he received a clearance to taxi to the active runway. While taxiing he tested the airplane's brakes, and they were operating normally. Prior to departing, the pilot did an engine run up on both engines and there were no issues. The flight was then cleared to depart runway 22.

Captain Dijkstra said the flight was very quick and air traffic control vectored him directly for the ILS RWY 7 approach into Provincetown. While being vectored, the weather began to deteriorate. Because the flight was so short, he had the frequency for Provincetown's automated weather observation system (AWOS) already dialed in on the No. 2 radio. Captain Dijkstra said he could not recall when he obtained the AWOS information during the flight, but he remembered listening to it "at least" twice. The weather was an overcast ceiling of 200 ft, visibility 3 to 4 miles, and the wind was 5 knots or below. Captain Dijkstra said that after listening to the weather, he knew he would be landing with a quartering tailwind, but the speed/direction of the wind was within the performance limits for the aircraft and the company.

Captain Dijkstra said the flight was "super smooth." He flew the profile of the approach using the autopilot and when he was a few miles outside the final-approach-fix (FAF), he extended the flaps to 15 degrees. When they crossed the FAF, the airplane was traveling 120 knots, and Captain Dijkstra extended the landing gear. Once inside the FAF, he knew he had a quartering tailwind and the runway would be wet, so he turned off the autopilot when the airplane reached 1,000 ft and extended the flaps to 20-25 degrees. The airplane slowed to about 90 knots and broke out of the clouds at 500 ft. Captain Dijkstra said that because he broke out early (versus 200 ft as forecasted) this gave him extra time (about a minute) to set up for the landing and he picked a spot on the runway to touchdown. The airport's runway landing lights were on, and it was raining. Captain Dijkstra said the approach was normal and when they were 300 ft above the ground, he extended the flaps to 45 degrees.

Captain Dijkstra said that when the airplane was about 100- to 50-ft above the ground, the airplane encountered "an aggressive sinking tendency" and "very heavy rain." The downdraft and associated wind gust (which he estimated to be about 20 knots) pushed the airplane down

and to the left. Captain Dijkstra said the approach became unstable and he immediately initiated a go-around before the airplane touched down. He brought both throttles full forward and retracted the flaps to 15 degrees. The airplane continued to fly down the runway, while the downdraft continued to push the airplane down. The airplane briefly touched down on the runway for about 2 seconds before it came airborne again. Captain Dijkstra said he never applied the brakes because he was fully committed to going around. Captain Dijkstra said he did not remember where on the runway the airplane touched down, but it was beyond his intended landing point due to him initiating the go-around. Captain Dijkstra said he never looked at the airport's windsock and that both engines responded to throttle input during the go-around "as far as he could tell."

Captain Dijkstra initiated a climb but could never establish a positive rate of climb and he could feel the wings buffeting. The airplane impacted the trees off the end of the runway, then the ground, which Captain Dijkstra described as "very violent." Once the airplane came to stop, he took a breath. He saw that the pilot crew door had broken open and fire was coming in thru the door. He tried to block it by holding the door up, but it was too intense, and his hands got badly burned along with the left side of his arms and face. Captain Dijkstra then began yelling for the passengers to get out of the airplane. He said everyone exited the airplane out the back from the main cabin entry's upper window, which a passenger had opened. Fire was everywhere. Captain Dijkstra said that just as he was about to exit the airplane, he heard a woman near the front of the airplane say, "I'm stuck!" He went back up the cabin and saw the female passenger that had been sitting behind him, was unable to get out of her seatbelt...it was "jammed." Captain Dijkstra said the fire was "so much", but he was able to get her seatbelt loosened and pull her out thru the strap. He then pushed her out of the airplane, exited, and ran to the road. When he got there, he started asking "Where are my people?" He wanted to know if everyone got out. It was pouring rain.

Captain Dijkstra was placed in an ambulance and the driver allowed him to use his phone to call his wife. He was taken to Cape Cod General Hospital, then driven to Mass General in Boston, where he was treated for second- and third-degree burns, and a fractured foot.

Captain Dijkstra said he was 100% rested on the day of the accident and ate lunch prior to the flight to Provincetown. He described himself as healthy, had a great home life, and was not taking any drugs or medication.

End of Interview



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation - Witness

Who: Captain James Seeley, Cape Air 402 pilot

Date: September 12, 2021

Witness: Captain Jon Coste, Cape Air Pilot Union Representative

Captain Seeley was interviewed over the phone. He stated he had been employed at Cape Air for 23 years and held an ATP rating with about 20,000 hours in the Cessna 402. Captain Seeley was based in Boston and regularly flew between BOS and PVC. On the day of the accident (September 9, 2021), he had already completed a round trip flight between BOS and PVC and was in the middle of another round-trip flight between BOS and PVC when he witnessed the accident involving N88833, being flown by his friend and colleague, Captain Pieter Dijkstra.

Captain Seeley stated that he and Captain Dijkstra were both scheduled to fly from BOS to PVC on September 9, 2021. Cape Air normally books two airplanes to fly at the same time from BOS to PVC and books the flight for 18 passengers. The passengers are divided up between the two airplanes for weight and balance purposes. On the day of the accident, Captain Seeley had 5 passengers, and Captain Dijkstra had 6 passengers.

Captain Seeley saw Captain Dijkstra in BOS as he was preparing for his second trip to PVC. It would be Captain Dijkstra's first flight to PVC that day. Captain Dijkstra asked Captain Seeley about the weather, since there was a band of rain showers along the route of flight. Captain Seeley said he had just flown through them, and it was smooth. Captain Dijkstra asked Captain Seeley if he intended to fly the next flight to PVC, and Captain Seeley said "yes." Captain Dijkstra then said that he often had to cancel flights into Rockland, Maine, due to weather or "something to that affect." Captain Seeley then spoke to Captain Dijkstra out on the ramp prior to leaving BOS. Captain Dijkstra said he needed to get fuel, and he would be delayed taking off. Captain Seeley and his passengers departed for PVC.

Captain Seeley stated that the weather in BOS was VFR when he departed, but as he began his descent into PVC, he entered clouds. He also obtained the current weather conditions at PVC, and the wind was reporting 210 degrees at 6 knots. Per Cape Air General Operating Limitations for landing on runways shorter than 4,000 ft (Runway 7/25 at PVC was 3,502-feet-long), pilots cannot begin the published instrument approach procedure if the tailwind component is more than 5 knots. He checked the weather a second time, and the wind speed had reduced to 5 knots, so he was able to start the ILS RWY 7 approach with the intent that if the tail wind

component increased; he would execute a rejected landing if needed. Captain Seeley said that pilots who fly into PVC always try to touchdown in the touchdown zone, but if they don't, "then it's a rejected landing." Captain Seely said he landed uneventfully at PVC, but as he was taxiing to the ramp, it began to rain "really hard." He remembered feeling bad for the ramp agent who had to assist the passengers and refuel the airplane. Captain Seeley said he was on the ground for maybe 15-20 minutes, before he taxied out to the hold line for Runway 25 to return to BOS. There were no passengers onboard.

Captain Seeley said that air traffic control would not clear him to depart while another airplane was on the approach. He knew that Captain Dijkstra was inbound with N88833, because Captain Dijkstra had contacted him over the UNICOM frequency to ask if the airport lights were on. Captain Seeley confirmed the lights were on and informed him that the visibility had improved, and the rain was subsiding.

Captain Seeley did not see N88833 until after it had landed and was on the landing rollout, about halfway down the runway. As the airplane got closer to his position, he could tell that it was traveling "a little faster than it should be." Captain Seeley could not estimate its speed, but it was traveling faster than he would have expected. The airplane's speed was such that it would not have room to stop on the remaining runway. The airplane then took off and entered a slow climb. The attitude of the airplane looked normal, but it was climbing slower than he thought it should. The airplane cleared the localizer antennas at the far end of the runway, then the perimeter fence, before it collided with trees. The airplane disappeared into the trees followed by a ball of flames. Captain Seeley could not recall hearing N88833's engines or the position of the flaps and landing gear prior to impacting the trees. He also did not recall seeing the windsock but did add that the winds tend to shift a lot at PVC.

Captain Seeley immediately called fire rescue and told air traffic control that N88833 went off the runway. He then taxied back to the gate, shut down and called Cape Air's Duty Officer.

Captain Seeley mentioned that he was "very good" friends with Captain Dijkstra. He described him as very conscientious and felt confident that if Captain Dijkstra had any concerns about the flight (whether it was a weather concern or airplane mechanical issue), that he would have told him or asked for his opinion.

Captain Seeley mentioned that he did not observe any ponding or pooling of water on the runway and that he's never had an issue with hydroplaning at PVC. Regarding hydroplaning, he said, "He's never even thought about it."

End of Interview.



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: Charlie Bonanno, passenger

Date: October 13, 2021

Witness: Brian Coffman, Attorney

Mr. Bonanno was interviewed via the telephone. He and his partner Will Mcerlean were traveling from Chicago to Provincetown for his friend's wedding. Mr. Bonanno's cousin Felix was also traveling with them, but Felix flew to Provincetown on the first of the two flights that Cape Air had scheduled that afternoon, on September 9, 2021. Mr. Bonanno said that he was trying to get his cousin to be on he and Will's flight and was still upset that he could have put his cousin unknowingly in harm's way. Mr. Bonanno said that he has flown on Cape Air several times and was very familiar with their operation.

Mr. Bonanno said that he and Will flew from Chicago into Boston on another airline. In Boston, they collected their luggage and had to go back thru security. When they arrived at the Cape Air gate, Cape Air took some of their luggage and loaded in on the earlier flight, which was the same flight his cousin took to Provincetown.

Mr. Bonanno said the flight to Provincetown was on time and a Cape Air gate agent walked the passengers to the airplane and determined (by weight distribution) where everyone would sit. The agent also took their carry-on bags and put them in the airplane's storage lockers. Mr. Bonanno said the pilot and a passenger boarded, then two women, then he and Will boarded followed by another passenger, Nathan. The gate agent then latched the main entry/exit door after they were all seated. Mr. Bonanno sat on the right side of the airplane, and Will was on the left side with an aisle in between them.

The captain introduced himself and mentioned that had been flying that day and it had been raining, but there was no turbulence. The flight to Provincetown would be about 30 minutes. Mr. Bonanno said he started to film the captain when he was talking but quickly turned off his phone. His attorney had a copy of the video and would provide to the NTSB. Mr. Bonanno also stated that the pilot did not give any sort of passenger safety briefing. Mr. Bonanno said he is very nervous about flying and when he gets nervous, he becomes very aware.

Mr. Bonanno said a tropical storm had just passed through and it was cloudy that afternoon. He was not really concerned with the weather. Mr. Bonanno said his last two flights on Cape Air were much scarier and he could not see the ground at all. He was praying on both those flights.

During the accident flight to Provincetown, he could see the ground and there was no turbulence. Mr. Bonanno said he could see the water then the land (tip of Cape Cod), then the runway. He was excited they would be landing soon. Mr. Bonanno said the approach was "calm" and the landing was "perfect." He felt relieved to be on the ground. It was "calmly" raining, and he did not feel any wind associated with the rain.

Mr. Bonanno said the airplane did not swerve after it landed, but it never slowed down. The pilot never said a word and it was like he "just froze", and there was no braking at all. Mr. Bonanno said one of the girl's that was sitting in front of them turned around with a look of fear on her face that expressed "what's going on here?" The captain then "revved" up the engines (which he assumed was to full power) and the airplane began to climb. When asked where on the runway the airplane began to climb, Mr. Bonanno, whose father built large remote-controlled airplanes, so he was familiar with pilot vernacular, said that the airplane was on the ground longer than a normal airplane doing a "touch and go." It was a "long" roll-out. The captain never said a word the entire time, "not one word." Mr. Bonanno did not hear any unusual noises or warnings from the cockpit.

Mr. Bonanno saw the trees ahead of them, then heard the cracking of wood followed by an explosion. He hit his head on the side of the cabin, which really dazed him. Mr. Bonanno then recalled the cabin getting "freaking hot" and his partner Will saying they needed to get out of the airplane. Mr. Bonanno said he was so disoriented from hitting his head, that he was unable to physically unlatch his seatbelt. All he could do was pat the seatbelt buckle like it was a cat.

Mr. Bonanno said Will got his seatbelt unlatched and helped him get up and to the main entry/exit door, where the rear seat passenger, Nathan, had opened the top portion of the door. Mr. Bonanno said he grabbed the frame of the opening, and it was so hot it burned his fingers. He then stuck his head out and flames came up on to his face and burned the jacket he was wearing into his skin. Will kept urging him to get out, and Mr. Bonanno was not sure if he dove out the window or if Will pushed him out. Mr. Bonanno said after he fell to the ground, he looked up and saw Will getting out. Mr. Bonanno then saw the other passengers and was wondering how they all got out. The captain was crying and saying how sorry he was.

Mr. Bonanno said his hands felt like they were on fire, though they didn't look "bad" at first. When the ambulances arrived, they put him and Will on one together. The paramedics then asked who had the worst injuries, and Will said Mr. Bonanno did. Mr. Bonanno was then driven in another ambulance to Cape Cod Hospital where he had a cat-scan. He was later driven to Mass General in Boston, where he was treated for second and third-degree burns to his hands, arms, back and face. He also sustained broken ribs on his right side.

End of Interview



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: Adam Papa, passenger

Date: October 4, 2021

Witness: Anthony Tarricone, Attorney

Mr. Papa was interviewed via Zoom. He stated that on September 9, 2021, he flew from New Orleans, Louisiana to Boston, Massachusetts, where he then boarded a Cape Air flight destined for Provincetown, Massachusetts. He said he was traveling to Provincetown for vacation. Mr. Papa said he had never flown on Cape Air before, but he knew it would be a small airplane. Mr. Papa was aware that flights were being delayed in Boston due to weather and he was monitoring the weather radar on his phone.

Mr. Papa said that when it was time to board the flight to Provincetown, he and the other passengers were escorted outside by a Cape Air ramp agent and instructed to put their luggage down on the ground so it could be loaded on to the airplane. The agent then asked if anyone wanted to sit up front with the pilot. Mr. Papa said he knew that there might be a chance to do this and volunteered immediately. He then boarded the airplane first and sat in the front right seat. The captain was already seated in the front left seat. As they waited for the rest of the passengers to board, Mr. Papa asked the captain if he could take pictures. The captain said no. Mr. Papa said he was fine with that and happy to comply.

Mr. Papa repeated several times that the captain did not give any type of passenger safety briefing prior to the flight – particularly on what to do if there was an emergency. But the captain did mention how long the flight would be and something to the affect that he had been flying the “route” to Provincetown that day.

Mr. Papa said the captain slowly taxied the airplane to the runway and departed. Everything seemed normal. It was a cloudy and rainy day. Mr. Papa said he was a visual person, so he was looking outside and watching the captain. He was surprised at how busy the captain was during the flight, and how the captain was actively using charts and writing things down on a note pad. Mr. Papa said that when they turned “over the bay” the airplane entered the clouds and raindrops began to hit the windshield. The airplane then began to descend into Provincetown, and he could feel pressure in his ears. Mr. Papa said that when the airplane exited the clouds, he could see the tip of Cape Cod. He could also see the runway and thought it looked “small.” As the airplane continued to approach the runway, the airplane was “moving fast” and the runway

seemed “shorter and shorter,” and Mr. Papa started to get concerned. He said the approach did not look right...the airplane was moving too fast to land/stop on such a short runway. It was raining (light drizzle) and he “knew there was a tailwind.”

Mr. Papa estimated the airplane touched down “at least” halfway down the runway. The airplane shifted left and right and felt “wobbly” and “squiggly” during the landing roll out. He thinks the captain may have tried to use the brakes, but the airplane was not slowing down. Mr. Papa said the airplane was traveling too fast to be able to stop on the amount of remaining runway and he was trying to figure out what the captain was going to do. The captain then brought the power up on both engines and attempted to takeoff. Mr. Papa said power came up on both engines, but he felt like the engines could have produced more power, and that maybe the captain did not fully attain that power. Mr. Papa added that even if the captain was able to get more power out of the engines, it would not have helped. The captain never said anything during the approach, landing, or takeoff. Mr. Papa said he did not hear any warning horns or sounds from the cockpit area.

Mr. Papa said he could see the trees located off the end of the runway, and that there was no way they were going to clear the trees. He remembered thinking, “Holy S[***]t, Holy S[***]t, Holy S[***]t, we are f[***]ed!” Mr. Papa hoped the airplane would just skim the tops of the trees and still maintain flight. But the airplane impacted the trees, turned left, and impacted the ground. Mr. Papa said a tree came through the windshield in front of him on impact, and he could feel pain to his face, right foot, and arm. When the airplane came to a stop, Mr. Papa remembered thinking, “Wow, we survived.” He immediately observed flames starting to enter and consume the airplane. The captain had flames coming through his side of the airplane, and yelled, “Get out!” Mr. Papa said he just sat there for what felt like an eternity. The air was so hot, and it was hard to breathe. He was not sure if he could get out of the airplane. The pilot then turned to him and yelled “Get out!” twice, and it snapped him out of his “trance.” Mr. Papa unbuckled his seatbelt and bolted out of the cockpit. As he was trying to exit, he tripped and fell on Autumn, who was seated behind him and the captain. She was lying face down on the ground. Mr. Papa said he had to push down on Autumn so he could get up. The two men who were seated behind Autumn (Will and Charlie) were still in the process of trying to get out of their seats. Mr. Papa saw two other people trying to exit thru the top portion of the main entry door, which was open. He noted that the lower portion of the door was still closed. Mr. Papa was not sure why the bottom half was closed. Mr. Papa recalled that he may have helped push one of the people in front of him out the open portion of the door. Mr. Papa realized that he could fit through the open portion of the door and did not try to open the bottom half. He thought the airplane was going to explode, so he jumped out the open portion of the door (about a 12 ft drop) (he thinks the airplane’s tail settled after the accident) and landed on “all fours” then stood up and ran. When he turned around, he did not see anyone coming behind him. He felt bad for leaving Autumn behind, but he knew he could not go back in due to the fire.

Mr. Papa noted the fire on the ground and looked at his hands and arm, and they were badly burned. Another passenger was cooling their hands in a puddle. Mr. Papa then went back

toward the airplane to see if he could help anyone, and he saw the captain on the ground. He was just getting up and looking at his hands. The captain was very badly burned.

Mr. Papa said the captain was the last one out of the airplane, but he kept asking if everyone had gotten out. He was very concerned about the passengers. Mr. Papa then saw Autumn tucked into a ball leaning up against a tree. She was in shock.

Mr. Papa heard sirens in the distance. When rescue personnel arrived, they began to put the passengers in the ambulances. Mr. Papa said that he, along with the captain, Will and Charlie, were placed in one ambulance. The captain was on a stretcher. Mr. Papa told the paramedic to give him some pain medication but focus on the captain because he was more injured.

Mr. Papa was treated for second and deep-second degree burns to his hands and left arm. He also incurred a knee and shoulder injury. He said the trauma and pain from the burns were so bad that even the strongest pain medication did nothing to help.

Mr. Papa said that he had been wondering if both the upper and lower portions of the main entry/exit that they all exited from had opened, that maybe their injuries would not have been so bad. He did not know why the lower door was not opened and only surmised that maybe the person that had opened the top portion of the door's hands were too badly burned for them to do so. He also said that maybe if they had been given a safety briefing, it would have helped in getting that door fully open.

Mr. Papa said that from his point of view sitting in the front right seat of the airplane, the entire approach was too fast, and it was obvious that they were in trouble. He said the entire approach just got "worse and worse." Mr. Papa said the captain made a bad decision to take off again. Based on the airplane's speed and remaining runway, Mr. Papa knew, "they were f[] [] [] ed." The airplane was unable to out climb the trees and all he could do was hope for the best.

End of Interview



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: Heather Gaietto, passenger

Date: September 14, 2021

Ms. Gaietto was interviewed via telephone. She said the entire accident was fresh in her memory she was re-playing the event repeatedly in her mind. Ms. Gaietto said she knew that she would be flying a Cessna to Provincetown, but she did not realize the airplane would be “that small.” She took a few pictures of the airplane while they were waiting to board. Ms. Gaietto said all six passengers walked to the airplane together. It was barely misting out. They left their luggage on the ramp and the pilot asked if anyone wanted to be his co-pilot. One of the male passengers, Adam, said yes and sat in the front right seat. Ms. Gaietto said she boarded the airplane and sat behind Adam. She was nervous – and when nervous- she gets “giggley”-so she took a video of all the passengers to help calm her nerves. Ms. Gaietto was separated from her phone in the accident sequence, so she had not looked at the video, and figured it would show where everyone was seated and how “smooshed” they were in the airplane due to its small size. She asked the pilot if it was okay to eat on the airplane, and he jokingly responded, “Only if you share.” The captain told the passengers that it was raining in Provincetown, but he had been making the trip all day. The airplane was loud, and it was humid.

Ms. Gaietto said the captain started the engines and they taxied to takeoff. It was loud in the airplane, and they were wearing masks. She looked over at her friend Autumn, whom she was traveling with, and she was crying. Autumn was scared about the flight.

The takeoff was normal, and they climbed above the clouds. The air was smooth. Ms. Gaietto said that she and Autumn talked that they were not going to fly home and planned to drive instead. The captain began their descent into Provincetown. It was raining “pretty hard”, and she could see the runway. Ms. Gaietto said the landing “felt smooth.” There was no bounce. She felt the first set of brakes come on and the airplane slowed down. Then she felt a second heavier application of the brakes where she could feel her body shift forward. This is when the tail end of the airplane moved left-right-then left again. The captain grabbed the throttles and went full power. The engine noise increased, it got loud, and she felt the brakes release and the airplane’s forward speed increased. Ms. Gaietto thought to herself “Oh s[]t, what is he doing?” The airplane began to climb, and there were trees in front of them. Ms. Gaietto was like, “Are we going to clear them?” She did not feel like there was enough runway remaining to safely takeoff and clear the trees. The airplane then went right into the trees. Her friend Autumn’s seat

broke and struck her. Tree limbs then started to come inside the airplane. The nose of the airplane impacted the ground, and a big fireball came up and over the airplane.

Once the airplane came to a stop, the captain and Adam immediately got out of their seats and went to the back of the airplane. There was no screaming. But then she heard a male voice yell, "Get Out!" Ms. Gaietto and Heather saw flames and Ms. Gaietto punched the emergency exit window to try and open it. It did not open. She then read the instructions – opened the window – but the flames were "too much." Ms. Gaietto said she grabbed the window frame, and her fingers were instantly burned. Her thumbs were on the interior and did not get burned. Ms. Gaietto undid her seatbelt, and turned around, but her friend Autumn was not there (she later learned that Autumn was on the floor trying to get out of her seatbelt). All the male passengers had exited. There was a big wall of fire between her and the back of the airplane where the main exit was located. She ran thru the fire and jumped headfirst out the "back window." As she was exiting, she heard her friend Autumn scream, "Help me!" She then heard an explosion and instantly thought her friend had just died. Ms. Gaietto did not see the pilot when she exited the airplane and was unsure if he went back into the airplane to help Autumn.

Ms. Gaietto said she got up after getting out of the airplane and ran with great back pain to the road. A couple in a black SUV drove up and a lady exited the vehicle to help. Ms. Gaietto's hair was smoking, and the lady help extinguish the smoke.

Ms. Gaietto said she was placed on an ambulance, and it took a long time to get to the hospital. She shared an ambulance with one of the other passengers, Nathan Brookshire. Ms. Gaietto was admitted to Cape Cod hospital with second- and third-degree burns, and an L4 compression fracture. A Boston hospital turned down bringing her to Boston, so she was released the following morning. She then drove home to Ohio.

Ms. Gaietto said the captain did not give a passenger safety briefing prior to departing BOS. He did not show them how to use the emergency exit or their seatbelts.

End of Interview



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: William (Will) Mcerlean, passenger

Date: October 13, 2021

Witness: Brian Coffman, Attorney

Mr. Mcerlean was interviewed via the telephone. He stated that he and his partner Charlie Bonanno were traveling to Provincetown because one of Charlie's friends was getting married. It was their first vacation in years, and Mr. Mcerlean was also hoping to celebrate Charlie's birthday while there. They flew into Boston that morning, had lunch, and met up with Charlie's cousin Felix, who was also traveling to Provincetown on Cape Air. Felix took the earlier Cape Air flight. Mr. Mcerlean said he has traveled 3 or 4 times on Cape Air to Provincetown. He said there is an "uneasiness" flying on small aircraft, but he had no concerns about the flight.

Mr. Mcerlean said that while walking out to board the airplane, it was lightly raining. His eyeglasses kept getting wet. Adam, one of the other passengers, really wanted to sit up front. A Cape Air ramp agent collected their weights and adjusted their seating arrangements on the airplane. Adam boarded, followed by two female passengers, then he and Charlie boarded, followed by Nathan, who sat behind them. Mr. Mcerlean sat on the left side of the airplane, and Charlie was to his immediate right with the aisle in between them. The captain introduced himself and seemed like a nice guy. He said something regarding the flight being turbulent but otherwise normal. The captain did not give a passenger safety briefing "at all."

Mr. Mcerlean said the flight seemed normal and he could see outside. The two ladies in front of them had their eyes closed and were nervous about the flight. Mr. Mcerlean said he could see the water and was looking for whales. At times he lost sight of the ground due to clouds. As they approached the airport, he was watching the dunes.

The captain landed the airplane and Mr. Mcerlean said he felt relieved to be on the ground. The landing airplane swerved a little on landing, but he was not concerned about it because the runway was a little wet. However, the airplane never slowed down as it rolled down the runway. Mr. Mcerlean thought it was odd that they were moving so fast, and he did not recall the pilot using the brakes or the sensation of braking. He looked at Charlie and then saw that the female passenger sitting in front of Charlie, had turned around and gave a confused look as to what was going on. The captain then attempted to takeoff, and Mr. Mcerlean recalled thinking that

nothing good was going to come of this decision. The captain never said anything. Mr. Mcerlean described it as a “weird” and “uncomfortable” silence.

The airplane began to accelerate on the runway and the captain was trying to takeoff so they could go back up and go around for another landing. Mr. Mcerlean was not sure where on the runway the airplane became airborne, but he recalled the passengers all looking around at each other trying to figure out what was going on.

The airplane became airborne, and then it sounded like a soda can being crushed and going over boulders as they flew through the trees located at the end of the runway. Mr. Mcerlean thought, “Oh my god, we are going to die” and was freaking out with each tree they hit. The next thing Mr. Mcerlean remembered was waking up and seeing yellow and flames in the cockpit. He could not see the captain or Adam. He and Nathan stood up, but Charlie was not moving. Mr. Mcerlean said Charlie got knocked around like a rag doll when the airplane went through the trees and was unconscious. He tried to help Nathan with the door, but then turned back to help Charlie, who was starting to come-to. Mr. Mcerlean told Charlie they had to get out of the airplane. Charlie started to “pat” his seatbelt buckle and was unable to physically unclasp it. Mr. Mcerlean got Charlie out of his belt, then out of the seat and pushed him out the top portion of the main entry/exit door. He said it was so hot in the airplane like you were in an oven. Charlie landed on the ground and did not move. Mr. Mcerlean thought he killed him. He then jumped though a large burst of heat and flames almost overtook him. When he jumped, he recalled thinking how high of a jump it was (about 15-20 ft drop). Mr. Mcerlean said that Nathan and Charlie were just lying there on the ground, and that he may have passed out himself for a few moments. Mr. Mcerlean said that when he came too, Charlie was starting to come to. He crawled over to Charlie and told him they need to get away from the airplane. Then, “some bald white guy” told them they needed to move. Mr. Mcerlean got Charlie up and they ran to the other side of the road. Mr. Mcerlean then saw Heather and he was confused as to how she got out of the airplane. Nathan was soaking his hands in a puddle. It was raining and Nathan was telling everyone to soak their hands even if they would need a tetanus shot. Mr. Mcerlean said he felt no pain at that time, but he could see his skin falling off him.

Mr. Mcerlean saw the captain and his face was “so red.” He was crying and apologizing. The captain said he had been flying for 30 years and nothing like this had ever happened before.

First responders put everyone in an ambulance, and they handed out ice packs. Mr. Mcerlean gave his to Charlie. Mr. Mcerlean noted that everyone’s palms were burned. Paramedics ended up taking Charlie in a separate ambulance, and that bothered him. He did not want to be separated from him. They both ended up at Cape Cod General Hospital, where Mr. Mcerlean was released after 4 hours with second-degree burns and broken ribs. However, he was able to see Charlie before they took him to Boston. Charlie’s cousin Felix picked Mr. Mcerlean up at the hospital, and they drove to Boston together the next morning.

Mr. Mcerlean said the ambulances took forever to get to the hospital after the accident, which the drive alone, was about an hour ride from Provincetown.

Mr. Mcerlean said that after the airplane crashed, he had no idea how to get out of the airplane. He figured it out when he saw Nathan open and then exit out of the main entry/exit window.

End of Interview



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: Autumn Kerr, passenger

Date: September 14, 2021

Ms. Kerr was interviewed over the telephone. She stated she was a geriatric nurse and was traveling to Brewster, Massachusetts, for a work event and invited her longtime friend Heather Gaietto to join her on the trip. Ms. Kerr flew into BOS on Delta from Detroit and knew she was going to be taking a much smaller airplane to Provincetown. When she arrived in BOS and saw how small the Cape Air airplane was, she was not excited about the flight, especially since the weather was not optimal. Ms. Kerr said she saw the airplane being fueled, and then she and the other passengers walked out to board on the airplane. The captain wanted to place Heather's shoulder bag in the wing locker. The captain then asked if any of the passenger's wanted to sit in the co-pilot seat, and one of the male passenger's said yes. Ms. Kerr sat behind the captain, and her friend Heather sat behind the co-pilot seat. Two men sat directly behind them, and another man sat in the back, but she wasn't sure what seat.

Ms. Kerr said she was very nervous about the flight. Her best friend died in a small airplane accident about 20 years ago, and it was triggering a lot of anxiety about that loss. She said she prayed a lot and cried during most of the flight.

Ms. Kerr said the flight from BOS to PVC wasn't smooth "but not out of control." She watched the cockpit instruments the entire time and recalled one instrument descending from the 600's down to the 100's. Ms. Kerr said they flew through a lot of clouds and noticed intermittent views of the ground. At one point, she looked out the front window and saw the runway, and said, "Thank God!" When they landed, she said it didn't feel like a bad landing. It was raining heavily. But then the tail of the airplane swung to the left, and the airplane began "skidding", "fish tailing" and "hydroplaning." The captain never had control of the airplane and it seemed like the brakes never worked. The airplane never slowed down and was getting faster.

Then she heard the captain say something, which she thought was profanity, but wasn't sure. She interpreted it as him implying that the landing was not working out. Ms. Kerr said the captain took off again and she heard both engines get louder. Ms. Kerr remembered thinking, "S[]t!" They were not airborne that long when the airplane impacted trees, and the right wing came off. She said her seat back twisted when they struck the trees, and she was thrown to the right and hit her friend Heather in the jaw/face with her head. The airplane then impacted the ground and stopped. The airplane "was in flames." Ms. Kerr said the guy in the co-pilot seat got

up and ran to the back. Heather was seated next to the emergency exit, and she punched the window to try and open it. It did not open. Heather then read the instructions and opened the emergency exit, but there were flames. Ms. Kerr said she was unable to unbuckle her seatbelt and get free from her seat. She was tangled and it was a "real struggle" to get free. She laid down to try and get free from the belt and the seat. Heather then got up and exited the back of the airplane. Ms. Kerr then screamed for help and the captain came from the back of the airplane to help her. He got her free and then she exited "the left side window." Ms. Kerr could not tell how long it took her from the time of the accident until the time she exited the airplane. Once she was out of the airplane, she ran to the road and a couple in a mini van helped her. Ms. Kerr was taken to Cape Cod General hospital with second and third degrees burns to her right flank, feet, and hands. She also incurred soft tissue injuries but no broken bones.

Ms. Kerr said the captain did not give the passengers a safety briefing prior to departure.

End of Interview



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: Nathan Brookshire, passenger

Date: September 22, 2021

Witness: Stuart Fraenkel, Attorney

Mr. Brookshire was interviewed via the telephone from his hospital room at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.

Mr. Brookshire was being treated for second-and-third degrees burns to his hands and arms. He also had first degree burns to his face and head. Mr. Brookshire said he had no broken bones.

Mr. Brookshire said he has flown on Cape Air numerous times (in various weather conditions) and was very familiar with their airplanes and operations. He's even sat in the front right seat on flights. Mr. Brookshire said he was traveling to Provincetown to celebrate his friend's birthday. His friend was at the airport to pick him up when the accident occurred.

Mr. Brookshire said a Cape Air employee took his bags prior to boarding in Boston and told them to stay behind the wings. He boarded last and sat in the seat next to the main entry/exit door. A Cape Air employee then shut and latched the door. The captain introduced himself and provided an ETA at Provincetown. He said that he had flown the route earlier in the day and it was raining, but it would be a smooth flight. The captain did not give a passenger safety briefing.

The pilot started the engines, taxied out to the runway, and departed. Mr. Brookshire noticed that most of the flight was over land vs the water. He said it was a smooth flight and the rain "got heavier" as they approached Provincetown. As the airplane descended, he could see the runway and runway lights (orange colored) through the windshield. He took two pictures with his phone. Mr. Brookshire was not sure how high he was on the approach when he took the pictures.

The captain made a normal landing – but the moment the airplane landed, it careened left then right. It was raining lightly and drizzling. The engine power was reduced, and there were moments of braking, but the airplane was not slowing down. The airplane was "kind of skidding." The captain then "full throttled it" and "aborted the landing." Mr. Brookshire said he looked out the left and saw the airport's terminal building, and was like "Wow, we are just now taking off again." Mr. Brookshire did not think they had enough runway to safely takeoff and clear the trees off the end of the runway.

Mr. Brookshire said both engines came up to full power, and he confirmed that by looking at the engine rpm gauge. The needles were at the red band at the end of the green arc. He said he noticed the same power setting when they departed BOS. There were no warnings sounds or alarms heard from the cockpit during this time.

Mr. Brookshire said the airplane began to lift off. He looked out to the right hoping the captain made the correct decision to abort the landing. As he was hoping to see the tops of the trees, he instead saw "mid-trees", and the airplane impacted the trees. Mr. Brookshire said his sense of time stopped as the airplane impacted the trees, and he could not recall how long the next series events took. He recalled seeing flames as the right propeller struck the trees. Once they came to a stop, the captain said, "Get out! Get out!" Flames were visible in the cabin.

Mr. Brookshire said he was seated next to the main cabin door, but he was unable to open it. He turned in his seat facing the door and started kicking it. He kicked the upper window latch and the top window opened. He said he pushed a female passenger out of the window and then he jumped out. He fell on his hands and feet. He then ran to the road and never looked back.

Mr. Brookshire said he saw the pilot after they all got out of the airplane. He was on his knees with his head in his hands and was sobbing/whaling. Mr. Brookshire said he put his hand on his shoulder to comfort him, but the pilot never said anything. He just cried.

A civilian car pulled up along the road where they were standing and rolled down the window. An occupant in the car tried to call for help on their cell phone, but there was no service. About 5 to 7 minutes later, park rangers started to show up on foot. They were radioing to each other about getting vehicles into the area so they could be taken to the hospital. Mr. Brookshire then noticed vehicles arriving and he was placed in the back of an ambulance with one of the female passengers, Heather. This is when Mr. Brookshire began to come out of shock and saw skin melting off him. All the paramedics could do was give him morphine and IV fluids. Mr. Brookshire said they sat in the ambulance for about 15-30 minutes before they took them both to Cape Cod Hospital. He was given more morphine at the hospital, so his memory became "fuzzy", but he recalled his friend Amy being at the hospital before he was driven by ambulance to Boston for proper burn care. He said it was about 8 hours after the accident before he arrived in Boston.

Mr. Brookshire said the pilot made a "gross miscalculation on landing that made him aggressively slow down on a wet runway for which he did not have room to stop." He then asked, "Why didn't he just keep it on the ground?"

End of Interview