



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

All persons listed were interviewed by Zoë Keliher

The following is a summary of conversation:

Todd Hopkins

Mr. Hopkins, with Cal Fire Riverside, stated that the crop duster crashed in a field and there was a fatality that ensued thereafter. The airplane was coming from the south over trees and the nose dived into the ground. There was one person that witness the accident and he was in contact with the pilot over radios. The pilot did not report any mechanical malfunctions. Their dispatch got called at 1046. He stated that the trees and the powerlines were about 60 yards away from the accident site. The airplane did not make contact with the powerlines or trees.

Armondo Garcia

Mr. Garcia witnessed the accident. Mr. Garcia was going over to a field just to the north and was waiting for the pilot. He stated that the pilot departed about 0730 and had already sprayed one load of chemical. The pilot then reloaded and sprayed two fields (named P4 and P5) until the hopper was empty. The spotter then drove ahead to the next field to be sprayed, P2, and expected the airplane reload at the airstrip and come to spray P2. The pilot made a transmission to the spotter asking what the wind conditions were at the field. The spotter replied by telling him that there was a light wind from the southwest.

The spotter further stated that he witnessed the airplane coming from the south and clear the powerlines on the south perimeter of the field. The airplane then pitched in a nose-high attitude consistent with the pilot's normal operation of pushing the chemical toward the spread doors. The airplane continued to climb in a near vertical ascent until reaching about 500 feet above ground level (agl), at which point it transitioned into a nose-low vertical decent and collided into the field.

He further stated that the weather was hot the winds were calm. He said when they were spraying dry chemical or "dry work" (granules can get stuck in shelf). When the airplane gets flowing material the pilots will climb a couple hundred feet and push it off the hopper table into the dump gate, which is a zero G maneuver. He remarked that the pilot was very talkative and would always speaking communication on the radio.

Mile Morris

Mr. Morris, the owner of Morris Ag Air and Sons, stated that during the pilot was likely back en route to the airstrip to reload fertilizer in the hopper when the accident occurred. He would have not been applying in the field area where he crashed. He further stated that the pilot was having back problems and about a month before the accident he had taken a week off of work. He been nursing himself back to health and received a cortisone shot, but said his health was okay. His wife had told him that he was taking muscle relaxers. The pilot said he was fine to fly.

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The pilot had a fainting spell prior and had indicated that he had gotten dizzy while pulling out of the field. Morning of the accident, the secretary at Morris Ag Air and Sons stated that the pilot said he just wasn't feeling himself and nothing in the morning was going right. He was having difficulties with the GPS that morning, which Mr. Morris thought was unusual.

The pilot had worked for Mr. Morris for about seven years. He classified the pilot as being very cautious in one of the safest pilots that he knew. The pilot was going through a divorce in the last four months, but was as happy as he ever been most recently.