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National Transportation Safety Board Headquarters

[REDACTED]
Washington, DC 20594

September 19, 16

RE: Plane Crash in Gilbert, Arizona on the Eve of September 17, 2016

Dear Investigators,

I am submitting to you what I witnessed on the evening of September 17, 2016 at approximately 1930 hours in Gilbert, Arizona.

My Background:

Served in the US Air Force from May 1978 to Dec 1983, Jet Engine/Aircraft Mechanic 3.5 yrs, Air Traffic Controller 1.5 yrs. Earned degree and flight ratings from Private to Commercial Instrument while in the AF. After I left the AF I continued my flight training. Taught Cessna 400 Series Twin Aircraft Systems for Flight Safety International in Wichita, KS. Instructed and flew multi-engine charter before being hired by Air Midwest Airlines in 1985 where I flew Part 135 Commuter Operations. Was hired by Airborne Express in September of 1989 flying Part 121 Supplemental Operations until retiring in 2010. The majority of my 121 flying was in the DC-9, (-10 through -41 Series). Finished up in the B-767. I hold an ATP Certificate and I am Type Rated in the SA-227, DC-9, B-737, B-757, and B-767. I have logged 13,355 Flight hours.

My impressions and observations of Speeds, Bearings,
and Distances are estimates based upon my
Aviation experience throughout the years.

On September 17, 2016, I was taking my evening, 3-mile walk. I live only 3 city blocks from the Gilbert Civic Center where a daylong annual Constitution Fair was taking place. Earlier that day I enjoyed watching the old Stearman Fly-by and was now focusing my attention to skydivers that had just departed their drop plane and watched as their flares ignited. I noticed nothing unusual at this point. I was walking on the south side of Cypress St and was at the intersection of Cypress St and Larkspur St., walking and facing west while looking at the skydivers, which were high and approximately 15 degrees to my right, or at about a 285 degree bearing. It took about 4 or 5 seconds for all four of the divers' flares to reach full intensity. About ten to fifteen seconds later the silhouette of a single engine aircraft appeared in my view. I estimated it to be about 500 ft AGL and the distance to the aircraft

from my position to have been approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. When the aircraft came into my view I observed that it was descending at roughly an 85 Degree Attitude Nose Down, with wings at almost a full 90 degrees relative to the horizon. I observed the two wing Navigation lights illuminated, but no lights on the empennage, or a landing light. I saw no signs of fire until a split second later when an intense white glow burst out from both sides of the engine cowlings. The glow clearly illuminated the outline of the aircraft. I estimated the speed at 250 knots. A split second later the aircraft disappeared behind a tree line, followed by an orange flash and the loud sound of impact. I estimate the cowl burst to be at about 250' AGL and lost sight of the aircraft at approximately 75' AGL.

Sincerely Submitted,

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Joseph A. DeLima, Jr

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