



RECORD OF E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

**Eric M. Gutierrez
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region**

**Date: August 12, 2021
Person Contacted: Barbra McMahon (CFI)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR21FA270**

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Mrs. McMahon in an e-mail correspondence.

She had flown with Mary Ellen Carlin on July 17, 2020, in N687SW a Cessna 421, and endorsed both her Flight Review and Instrument Proficiency Check as satisfactorily completed. According to her records the flight was about two hours in duration, that included three instrument approaches (GPS, LOC and VOR) and half an hour of actual instrument flying. Airports visited included the Monterey Regional Airport (KMRY) Monterey, California, Hollister Municipal Airport (KCVH) Hollister, California and San Martin Airport (E16) San Martin, California.

The flight review included a one and one half hour ground review of FAR parts 61 and 91; aircraft systems; runway incursion prevention; airspace; and weather avoidance.

All aircraft emergencies were simulated during the flight, including, but not limited to loss of an engine: on takeoff roll; on upwind; turning from crosswind to downwind and during instrument approach; and fire in an engine. Partial instrument panel was practiced. Her notes indicated that Mary Ellen's performance was excellent in most areas and satisfactory in others. She flew to the standard of her ATP certificate in all maneuvers including stalls, slow flight and steep turns. She noted that her instrument approaches including missed approaches were excellent and her holding was satisfactory. None of the maneuvers Mary Ellen performed required any remedial training. As usual, it was a joy to fly with such an accomplished, conscientious pilot who knew her airplane so well.



RECORD OF PHONE CONVERSATION

Eric M. Gutierrez
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: July 20, 2021
Person Contacted: Jaime Valle Jr., (Witness)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR21FA270

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Mr. Valle in a telephone conversation.

On July 13, 2021, Mr. Valle was working near the airplane accident location. He heard an airplane and as the noise of the airplane got louder, he saw an airplane in a descending right turn, nose low attitude. The airplane briefly pitched up, then suddenly made a right descending turn. The airplane continued to descend out of visual sight, he then heard the airplane impact terrain followed by an explosion and saw a cloud of smoke. He did not recall hearing any abnormal engine sounds or what position the landing gear may have been in.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Eric M. Gutierrez
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: July 14, 2021
Person Contacted: Mark Mitchell (FAA)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR21LA270

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of a witness interview conducted by Mark Mitchell, from the San Jose Flight Standards District Office, California.

Interview with Chris Guthrie, A&P of mishap aircraft, on 7/14/2021

Witness hangar location: N36 35' 26.7" W121 50' 48.5"

Mr. Chris Guthrie stated that he conducted the most recent annual inspection on the accident airplane. He has known the accident pilot for about twenty years. The hangar where he conducts business is directly across from Mrs. Carlin's hangar. Prior to the flight, he noted that Mrs. Carlin and another individual that he did not recognize, but stated was female with reduced mobility, boarded the accident airplane. He states that Mrs. Carlin was also carrying a plastic pet carrier of some sort, based on the way she was holding it, which appeared heavy and believed that it had a pet inside. He was surprised that she was flying on a day with instrument meteorological conditions at the airport. During the time that he had known her, he stated that she typically only flew on days with VFR conditions. After start-up, he could hear her taxi to 10R. [Of note, from the witnesses' perspective and location of his business the run-up area of 10R would be to the southwest of his position while the run-up areas to 10L or 28L/R would be nearly directly east, and his hangar had an excellent sightline to any departures to the East.] He felt that she was in the run-up area for an abnormally long time. On take-off, he noted that her climb-out angle was very steep, although from his perspective it did not appear to be any slower than usual. He thought "perhaps she just wanted to get through it" when referring to the fog bank. After viewing her departure, he returned inside his hangar. However, after getting quieter on departure, the airplane started to get louder again, meaning that it was once again getting closer to his vantage point. When asked if the airplane sounded normal, he stated that he

was “100% certain” there were two engines operating. Shortly after, the noise suddenly stopped after getting louder. He briefly went to his laptop to look at the radar track from a third-party provider website and felt that the website was slightly behind what actually occurred. On returning to his hangar door, he then noted black smoke from what he suspected was the impact site.

The witness added that he is at his place of business “a lot” and believed the accident pilot’s most recent flight was to Watsonville, California, within a day or two prior to the accident flight, for a fuel stop. He stated that she was roughly flying every other week when asked how often she flew. When asked if she utilized a certified flight instructor on the field, he stated that he did not think so, and recalled that she might have used a friend from the Palo Alto West Valley Flying Club, where she previously instructed. He believed she gave up flight instruction about 5 years ago. He never witnessed her let someone else fly the accident airplane and stated that the overall condition of the airplane was good. He further stated that Mrs. Carlin never argued about any maintenance requirements that needed attention during the annual inspections and noted that the airplane had been zinc chromated when it was previously sent to New Zealand and felt that was unique.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Eric M. Gutierrez
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: July 14, 2021
Person Contacted: Mark Mitchell (FAA)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR21LA270

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of a witness interview conducted by Mark Mitchell, from the San Jose Flight Standards District Office, California.

Interview with Anthony (Tony) Trujillo on 7/14/2021

Witness location during the accident: N36 34' 11.3" W121 50' 15.1"

Mr. Trujillo has worked as a community landscaper on property for over a year. While heading to a client's house, approaching from the south-west, he stopped his vehicle roughly 400 yards from a house on the south side of Monterra Ranch Road to pick up some trash along the side of the road. About 10:39 am (Pacific daylight time), he heard an airplane that was very loud. Looking south, in the direction of the noise, he saw the airplane break out of the clouds, in what he demonstrated with a model, to be an aircraft that was wings level and nose down. The airplane was not pointed directly at him, but slightly to his right, meaning he assessed that airplane was pointing to the northwest. The airplane then began a right-hand turn, turning toward him, while still maintaining a nose low attitude. The airplane turned past him and towards the house, thinking the airplane was attempting to land on Monterra Ranch Road. As the airplane continued to descend, the airplane struck a pine tree roughly 100 yards from the house and then disappeared from his view below the trees. He believes the airplane's last orientation prior to losing sight was nose low, right wing down. The airplane was very loud, in what he described as full power. His opinion is that the left motor (right engine from his point of view) was operating but was not sure about the right engine. As the airplane passed by, he observed the bottom of the airplane and did not see any landing gear. He also did not see any smoke or anything else coming off the airplane that would seem abnormal prior to impact. Roughly 1-2 seconds after losing sight of the airplane, there was a big explosion. He then rushed to

the house, shut off the gas line, and waited for the first responders. He noted that a home building crew from a property roughly 500 yards below the impact site to the northeast also arrived on scene.