

Factual Report - Attachment 1

Interview Transcripts

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

WPR21FA286

Interviewee: Rhonda Legge, Local Controller
Representative: None

Date / Time: August 2, 2021/ 1109 PDT to 1141 PDT
Location: TRK ATCT
Present: Amy St. Pierre
Investigator: Betty Koschig

Interview transcript of Rhonda Legge:

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

N605TR CHALLENGER FATALITY *

IN TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA *

Accident No.: WPR21FA286

ON JULY 26, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: RHONDA LEGGE, Air Traffic Control
Midwest ATC Service, Inc.

Truckee, California

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

AMY ST. PIERRE, Area Manager
Midwest ATC Service, Inc.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Rhonda Legge:		
By Ms. Koschig		5

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

I N T E R V I E W

(11:09 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: -- make sure it is, okay. All right, it's 11:09. All right. So, first of all, good morning, my name's Betty Koschig and I am an air traffic investigator with the NTSB.

MS. LEGGE: Good morning.

MS. KOSCHIG: And we are -- I'm here as the investigator for the ATC side for N605TR that occurred here in Truckee, California, and my role is to learn what can about this accident and to assist the investigation, and hopefully prevent this from recurring. And as part of the process we invite parties to participate in the investigation to provide the technical expertise, and for this we have Midwest ATC as a party. And so, I'm going to go around right now and if -- have you state your name and your company.

Amy?

So, Amy St. Pierre, Midwest ATC.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay, and?

MS. LEGGE: Rhonda Legge, controller for Midwest ATC.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right, as part of the regulations, you can have a representative, anybody that you would want to be here, and did you want to have anybody else here with you?

MS. LEGGE: No, I'm fine, thank you.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. All right, and as part of the process, I'll record the interview and we'll have a transcript made, and that will be eventually part of the factual report. The audio

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 will not be part of the public docket. Do you have any questions
2 about that process?

3 MS. LEGGE: No, ma'am.

4 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And during the interview, if you don't
5 understand a question, ask for clarification. If you don't know
6 an answer, just say you don't know or you don't remember.

7 MS. LEGGE: Okay.

8 MS. KOSCHIG: If you need a break or anything, let me know.
9 If you need water or something, we can make sure you get that.
10 And if you have any questions to me at all, you can ask that as
11 well. If I'm not saying the question right, just say, you know,
12 what do you mean?

13 MS. LEGGE: Okay.

14 INTERVIEW OF RHONDA LEGGE

15 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

16 Q. First of all, state your name and spell your last name?

17 A. Rhonda Legge, L-E-G-G-E.

18 Q. Okay, and how old are you?

19 A. I am [REDACTED]

20 Q. Don't you hate saying that?

21 A. Yeah, I know, right? It's still raw. It just happened in
22 May, so it's still raw.

23 Q. Yeah. [REDACTED], so it's still raw.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. What are your operating initials?

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 A. SE.

2 Q. Okay. And how long have you been working for Midwest?

3 A. I'm a -- this is -- I am actually full time now, but I've
4 been seasonal for four years. I usually work Memorial Day to
5 Labor Day.

6 Q. Oh, okay.

7 A. So, that -- when I hired on this year it was with that mind
8 and then somebody left, so they moved me into a full-time
9 position.

10 Q. Oh, okay.

11 A. So, four years -- this is like my -- I think this is my
12 fourth year.

13 Q. Oh, okay. And where did you work before that?

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. Your ATC experience?

16 A. ATC experience? Okay. Well, I was in the Air Force for four
17 years, worked at Ramstein and Cannon. Then I came to the FAA,
18 worked for Palo Alto, Stockton, Oakland, San Francisco. Then I
19 went to NORCAL and did about six -- no, I went to SAC TRACON and
20 then I went to NORCAL. I was about six different positions at
21 NORCAL, most of them -- traffic management supervisor in three
22 different areas. And then I went to Hillsboro, Oregon as a
23 manager, and then I went -- then I retired out of there -- oh,
24 wait, no -- yeah, I was manager at Sac International, went back to
25 NORCAL, and then I was a manager at Hillsboro and retired out of

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 Hillsboro in 2016.

2 Q. Okay. A lot of experience.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Do you have any -- you have military time?

5 A. I do, yeah, four years of Air Force.

6 Q. And do you have any other aeronautical ratings like pilot's
7 license? Anything like that?

8 A. No, ma'am.

9 Q. Do you have a college degree?

10 A. I do not.

11 Q. Is your medical current?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Do you have any restrictions?

14 A. Just vision, I wear glasses.

15 Q. Okay. Did you have them on at the time of the incident --
16 accident?

17 A. Oh, yes, absolutely.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, I don't walk across the room without my glasses.

20 Q. Okay. Do you recall your schedule the week prior to the day
21 of the accident?

22 A. Yes. We just -- I think just rotated into -- like, the week
23 prior to the week? Or the start of the week?

24 Q. Yeah, the start of -- like the day of the accident. So, the
25 week -- that week.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 A. Okay. So, I normally -- I think we were just rotating into
2 this schedule. So, I normally have Thursday, Friday off, so I
3 would've have probably a day shift on Wednesday, and then midweek,
4 like 9:00 to 5:00. I don't have it exactly, I'm sorry. But I
5 think we just rotated. After my days off when I came back, I have
6 Saturday and Sunday swings, closers 12:15 to 8:15, and then this
7 day was a 10:00 to 6:00.

8 Q. Okay. So, the day of?

9 A. Yeah, the day of was the 10:00 to 6:00.

10 Q. Okay. And what position were you working?

11 A. Local control.

12 Q. Okay. Were you combined with another position?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. How many positions are in the tower?

15 A. Two, local and ground.

16 Q. Okay. Is there a supervisor position?

17 A. No. They'll -- no.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Not specifically as, like, in the FAA, no.

20 Q. Oh, okay. Yeah, things are different in FCTs.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay. Just some -- before we get into a lot of the questions
23 I need to ask, here's some -- just a few little health and general
24 questions. How is your overall health?

25 A. Very good. I'm fat, but I'm very healthy. And my doctor

1 told me I'm fat but you're very healthy. Yeah -- no, I have --
2 I'm healthy.

3 Q. Okay, great. Any changes in your health over the past few
4 months?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Do you drink --

7 A. Do you want to hear my UTI? No major healthy issues it would
8 impact, no.

9 Q. Okay. Do you drink alcohol?

10 A. I do.

11 Q. And how often about?

12 A. Three or four times a week, a glass of wine with dinner,
13 yeah.

14 Q. Good. Tobacco -- do you use tobacco products?

15 A. No tobacco.

16 Q. Take any prescriptions?

17 A. I take simvastatin for, I think, cholesterol and then I just
18 started taking this -- it's some kind of something sodium and it's
19 for an osteo issue that we're trying to ward off.

20 Q. Oh, okay.

21 A. That's it.

22 Q. Any changes financially?

23 A. I'm making more money now than it was in April. No, I'm on a
24 retirement, so no money issues. Just more when I come to work.

25 Q. Great. That's all good. Any other big changes in your life

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 for the past few months?

2 A. Just started working here in May or June -- I don't know when
3 that I started -- sometime in April. Yeah, no changes.

4 Q. So, do you live in the area?

5 A. I live in Reno -- Northwest Reno.

6 Q. Oh, okay. How long does that take you to get to work every
7 day?

8 A. 30, 35 minutes depending on traffic.

9 Q. Oh, okay. That's not too bad.

10 A. No, it's nice. It's an easy commute and it's beautiful.

11 Q. Yeah, it is. The drive is pretty here. So, now I want to
12 ask you about what occurred the day of the accident. We're really
13 trying to pick your brain on what you saw visually. So, the more
14 detail you can give us, the better. And I do have a lot of
15 questions from the other guys, but I want to get your story.

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. So, starting at whatever point you want to start at from --
18 for this aircraft coming in, just give us your story.

19 A. We'd had an aircraft come in -- the timeline's not maybe
20 exact.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But generally, there was a fellow that came in on the 11
23 approach -- landed runway 11. I knew about the inbound strip, I
24 can't remember -- sometimes we get inbounds 15 or 20 minute in
25 advance. So, I -- when the inbound strip was there, I knew he was

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 coming. On a day like that we're one in, one out, and we share
2 with another -- with South Lake Tahoe. So, we're one in, one out,
3 sharing one in, one out with South Lake Tahoe, they can only have
4 one airplane at a time in their airspace for us coming or going.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So, it was very slow, like, every ten or 15 minutes we would
7 get either an arrival or a departure. A citation had just landed
8 11 when 5TR checked in. He came right over, telling me exactly
9 what he wanted, he said I want to make a -- he goes I need runway
10 11 for the runway length. So, I offered him -- I told him to
11 report breaking off the approach and the airport in sight. I
12 offered him the downwind for 11 or the downwind for 29 and he --
13 and then the next -- and he said okay, looking forward to seeing
14 you. And then he said I'm starting my right turn and I cleared
15 him to land runway 11, gave him the wind, told him he was not in
16 sight. And I was kind of keeping an eye out for him, it was, you
17 know -- so I was keeping an eye out for him.

18 And then I -- by the time I picked him up -- it's kind of
19 hard to pick him up at the cloud. So, I kind of picked him up and
20 he appeared to be on a downwind. What I -- just from my
21 experience, it appeared to be a little tight for something as big
22 as him. But he reported on the downwind, he was kind of a beam
23 foxtrot. I don't know if you know where that is, but it's a
24 little bit past midfield on 29. So, he looked a -- so, I remember
25 pointing him out to ground and he goes man, I can't see him, and

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 he goes look at the windsock. So, we both saw him on a downwind
2 and then he turned a base -- a left base and we both immediately
3 started a commentary of like that kind of close. And Steve being
4 a pilot, I'm like can he get stable out of that?

5 So, we just were kind of discussing it and then he overflowed
6 the final and we were like oh, man how's he going to get -- and
7 then he -- and then we saw him do a left turn back. He looked
8 like he was still descending and we were just like man, I don't
9 know. There was that kind of like I don't know how he's going to
10 save this, which I hate to say. But anyway, this conversation's
11 going on and then his -- and I saw his wingtip dip below the trees
12 and then he was -- he just disappeared that fast. And then
13 longer -- I've never seen a ball of explosion before. I would say
14 four or five seconds maybe and we just saw this massive fire ball.

15 And then I did not gather my thoughts before I called center
16 to tell them the airport was closed. I didn't get my information
17 across to them, so they called back and I then I told them that
18 that was indeed the aircraft because we have to call down every
19 aircraft that arrives, we have to give them an arrival time -- or
20 a downtime -- or that they landed.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. So, I -- we confirmed that was who it was and talked to a
23 couple of -- you know, people on the field that were curious of
24 the status of the field, the jump people specifically. And then
25 by that time, Larry had already come up. He heard the

1 conversation, so as soon as he heard us going oh my god, he was
2 right the tower real quick. And then they relieved me and then I
3 just kind of hung around and -- you know, I just hung around,
4 there wasn't too much I could do after that. I mean, a couple
5 people asked, you know, what I saw just within our ranks. So,
6 that's it in a nutshell.

7 Q. Yeah. So, when you said the wingtips, describe -- did he
8 bank at all? Was it both? Describe the position of the aircraft
9 when you saw him coming in.

10 A. So, when he came into his left turn, he was obviously in
11 wings up and it -- this is just my perspective having watched them
12 land several times.

13 Q. Yeah, right.

14 A. An airplane that large wouldn't necessarily turn a base in
15 that close in my opinion.

16 Q. Right.

17 A. So, he's wings up and it seemed close and we have a little
18 piece of equipment we can use for a reference in the tower and my
19 first thought was like dude, that's close. So, I looked at this,
20 you know, reference this and it looked like it was about two miles
21 away. So anyway, so then he's in a -- he never really leveled out
22 and, in my perspective, he just came across -- like here's the
23 runway, he just came across and then he started a left turn back.
24 I never saw him in anything that appeared it be level, it always
25 seemed to be in some sort of a turn.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 Q. Right. So, his right wing was up and left wing down?

2 A. That's what it appeared to me -- that's what it looked like
3 to me, yeah.

4 Q. Yeah, okay.

5 A. So -- and then, like I said, the wing just kind of dipped
6 below the trees and then he was just -- it's like it just grabbed
7 him and he was just gone that fast.

8 Q. Right. Could you describe maybe the bank angle of that wing?

9 A degree?

10 A. Not of -- not to anything that would be helpful to you.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. It just -- it looked -- you know, it wasn't like this, but it
13 was a very defined turn. But no, I couldn't even begin to guess
14 on that, I'm sorry. I'm not a -- yeah.

15 Q. No, that's fine. Also, with the weather that day -- or I'll
16 put the visibility that day, describe what you were seeing and
17 when you saw him finally come in sight because you didn't have him
18 in sight at first?

19 A. I did not. So, he was -- I think when he broke off his
20 approach, I think it was somewhere between three and four miles
21 just based on our -- the airboss that we use for reference. The
22 weather -- okay, so we were calling seven miles prevailing, but
23 the ASOS was reporting four or five or something. So, we have,
24 like, this system on our field that was giving, like, seven miles
25 and whatever clear below. And then, you know, looking at it I was

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 like, you know, I don't think we have seven miles, and we had
2 discussed it, but three to four seemed okay -- reasonable.

3 It seemed a little pocketed, you know, on -- it just seemed a
4 little pocketed to this area, which is where a lot of the pilots
5 come in. It's a nice, natural way to come in, you know, where
6 there are mountains and stuff. So, it's not uncommon. So, it
7 just looked a little murky in there to me. So, about -- I think
8 the time -- because I was watching for him, I thought he would be
9 on a wider downwind, so I really didn't expect to see him for a
10 bit.

11 And then I -- you know, I'm look around and I'm looking kind
12 of distanced and then was like oh, he was a little bit closer to
13 me, so it took me -- you know I didn't see him right away. But he
14 did appear to be a little close in on -- established on a
15 downwind, that was my perspective of it. But then I saw him, you
16 know, and he went -- he was just on the downwind, pointed him out
17 to ground control and then he turned base. So, it was scuddy
18 (ph.) and there was smoke out there for sure.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I had a -- we had an earlier aircraft; do you want me to talk
21 about that? We had a jump aircraft that went up earlier while it
22 was on position. And I -- and we had some conversation about --
23 they come off the airport and they go to the northeast and they do
24 a climb there and I have IFRs coming in that way and IFRs going
25 out this way.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 So, I told him -- I said I'm not really comfortable with
2 this, let's try one because it was my first time working him that
3 day. So, he went out and I did not see him, and so I was telling
4 him I need you to go over here to protect for this because I
5 couldn't see him. And I was thinking to my -- you know, I was
6 just kind of thinking to myself, like, yeah, I can't -- and I just
7 told him -- I said if I can't see you, I can't separate you and
8 I'm not really comfortable when he came back in.

9 So, anyway, just -- but he's out there and he drops jumpers
10 and they said they could see the ground, and I couldn't see him,
11 and I couldn't see the jumpers. So, I was a little -- I was
12 uncomfortable with it, so I just asked him not to -- I can't tell
13 me not to do it, but I just told him I can't see you, I can't
14 separate you and I -- whatever they do amongst themselves. So, I
15 knew -- it just looked hazy out there or smoky out there and it's
16 just not good visibility in any distance more than, like, you
17 know, three -- I think we probably had three miles based on the
18 shadows. I would feel comfortable with three miles to four miles
19 just with the shadows with the hills, that's how we base a lot of
20 our visibility.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Tell me when to stop, I do ramble. I ramble, I'm a Rambler.

23 Q. That's good.

24 A. You're like okay, enough. Okay.

25 Q. Let's see, so I'm going ask some of these. You described the

1 movements, okay, and the stability. Did you happen to know it to
2 wobble or anything? I mean, you described --

3 A. No. Not that I noticed, no.

4 Q. All right. Where were you standing in the tower?

5 A. Let's say that as you're facing the tower, I would be on this
6 side. So, I was sitting on the tower -- as you come up stairs,
7 the local's on the right, ground's on the left, so I was in the
8 far corner of one -- 29 is this way and 11's here, so I was in the
9 right side of the tower.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. So, you had a clear view out to --

13 A. Oh, yeah.

14 Q. Let's see, we talked about the weather. Was it common to
15 have aircraft come in over runway 20 and circle to 11?

16 A. It's not uncommon. We -- it's not uncommon. I mean, I would
17 say the vast majority if they're too large to land on 20 and
18 that's the approach they have the take, the majority of them will
19 go over the top and go down 29. We tend to -- 29 is our
20 predominant runway, so there's usually a lot of activity on 29.
21 So, over the top to 29 is really normal, I would say predominately
22 what we would do.

23 Coming into 11, not so much. If they're coming into 11,
24 they'll take that RNAV to 11 approach. But when the visibility's
25 low, they're kind of forced to take 20 because it is the lower

1 minimums of the other approaches. So, we have it, I don't think
2 it's common in my experiences.

3 Q. Okay. There was something I was going to ask. I'll think
4 about it again because you said something that keyed onto me, but
5 I can't think of what it was. Do you remember -- as far as the
6 altitude of this aircraft -- describe what the altitude was, was
7 it normal?

8 A. You know, I couldn't see our -- the reference that we use is
9 not hard altitudes, it could be off two or three hundred feet.
10 So, when he broke off -- you know, I just could not tell you. I
11 do not remember the attitude he was at. When he came on the
12 downwind -- when I got him in sight on the downwind, he didn't
13 seem particularly low to me. He seemed a little bit close, but he
14 didn't seem abnormally low. But, you know, he was close in and
15 it's a bigger aircraft so it may have looked closer than he was
16 too.

17 Q. Yeah. Oh, and I remember what I wanted to ask you. Have you
18 worked this aircraft before?

19 A. I've worked that type of aircraft.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. I don't know if I have or not. Some people can tell you like
22 yeah, you're late and I'm like I don't know -- I don't keep that
23 -- I don't have that memory capacity.

24 Q. Yeah, because there's -- yeah, some of them just come in very
25 regularly.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay, let's see. This question, did you see the aircraft in
3 a right turn maneuver, break off in -- break off the straight end
4 portion of the approach at any time?

5 A. He had -- no, that's when I told him he was inside. Yeah, he
6 broke off the approach; I didn't see him until he was on the
7 downwind.

8 Q. Right. And where was it in relationship to the aircraft
9 conducting the same approach? And I think you -- the other
10 aircraft that conducted the same approach, I think you described
11 that.

12 A. I didn't have anybody do that approach that I could -- not in
13 any timeframe -- things were -- we were -- you know, like I said,
14 it's like every ten to 15 minutes before we had an arrival due to
15 other stuff. So, the guy that had landed before him -- and I may
16 have had another 20 arrival, but I don't remember. But the one
17 that landed before him was not on 20 approach, he was on the 11
18 approach.

19 Q. Right, and based on that type of aircraft, you -- did you
20 expect that aircraft to be further out? I think you explained a
21 little bit a few minutes ago, doing the circle where you'd expect
22 him to --

23 A. I have seen them enter the downwind and four miles -- three
24 to four miles away from the airport, go out, like, six, seven,
25 eight miles, an aircraft that would go way out, come in. And I

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 don't know if it's terrain, I know why, but they typically go out
2 further, make that -- make a nice, solid turn, and set up on a
3 good five to seven mile final. That would be typical for that
4 type of aircraft in my view, right, from what I would've expected.
5 Why he didn't do it, I -- you know, visibility, maybe he was
6 afraid to leave too close to the airport. I don't know. But I
7 thought that his pattern that he flew was unusual. It was not
8 what I would expect to see for an aircraft that large.

9 Q. Do you know if he -- did you give him a PIREP on the haze and
10 smoke?

11 A. No, I did not.

12 Q. Was it on -- was that on the AWOS?

13 A. I think the AWOS was saying four-to-five-mile smoke.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So, yeah, he would've been aware of the smoke I would think.

16 Q. Okay, let's see here. Okay. Were you aware that the RNAV 20
17 circling minimums for category D airplanes -- were you aware of
18 those minimums?

19 A. No.

20 Q. No? Okay. The speed -- was it the normal speed?

21 A. No idea.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I didn't recognize him as being on the circling approach. He
24 didn't say he was circling, he just said he was breaking off the
25 approach or making a right turn. So, the circling approach

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 minimums and type aircraft and stuff like that, I mean, I'm
2 vaguely aware of them, but I'm not knowledgeable because I don't
3 -- I'm not a pilot. So, I don't know what -- you know, I couldn't
4 call a guy a liar if he said he was doing 180 for the circling and
5 I'm like I don't think so. So, yeah -- so, no. The circling
6 approach, it wasn't until after the fact that people started
7 talking about he was on a circling approach and I'm going that's
8 not what I saw.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. So, yeah, I have nothing to offer for that.

11 Q. Okay. Weather stuff, I did ask the ground control latest --
12 but were LAWRS certified?

13 A. I have been in the past. I mean, I have had a LAWRS
14 certification, yeah, but it's been -- probably been a while.

15 Q. Okay. Do you have -- let's see -- because you've answered
16 some of these here, I don't want to ask you the same thing. Oh,
17 visibility markers -- do you have visibility markers that you use
18 as far as telling how far out everything --

19 A. Yeah, we do. We have a chart up there and if you can see
20 Boca Hill, it's this many miles and this hill, this many miles.
21 So, we do have one in the tower, it's not -- yeah, we do. So,
22 we'll use that as we're estimating our visibility.

23 Q. Oh, okay, great. And as far as with the smoke that day, do
24 you recall -- the smoke and haze, do you recall if it was limited
25 to a sector or was it all quadrants?

1 A. It was all around. I found myself more focused on the final
2 because that's where the 20 approaches were coming to. But just
3 in general, I felt like it was a little bit worse to that
4 particular position. But it was in all quadrants for sure, but in
5 my opinion, I thought it was a little bit more -- a little bit
6 heavier there. Maybe I was just more focused on it before I knew
7 aircrafts were going to be coming through it.

8 Q. What time did you leave the tower that day after this --

9 A. 6:00.

10 Q. Okay. Did you notice if -- did it -- was there any
11 thunderstorms that afternoon afterward?

12 A. I'm trying to remember what the -- because we do have a scope
13 that will -- I didn't see any lightning myself. I don't recall.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Do you recall if there were SIGMETs, AIRMETS -- anything?

17 A. No. Not that I'm aware of, no.

18 Q. All right. Did you get any PIREPs?

19 A. I did not. I had -- I'm trying to remember how long I was on
20 position. I know I didn't talk to very many aircraft. There was
21 a PIREP on the board that somebody had written from earlier in the
22 day and it didn't -- but no, I did not solicit any and I did not
23 have any.

24 Q. Okay. All right, I think that covers all those questions.

25 Let me see, I'm trying to think of some more. Okay, so after the

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 accident occurred -- so, what was going on in the tower? Describe
2 what happened after that.

3 A. It was frustrating because I got relieved and there were
4 several calls to try to call 911 and the circuits were busy. So,
5 there were -- you know, so then we're on the handheld mic we have
6 that goes to Unicom and said hey, can you call 911, circuits are
7 busy? Apparently, their circuits were busy. The airport safety
8 officer called on the outside line, which is on our position
9 recorded, and she said hey, have you guys been able to -- I'm just
10 going to kind of roughly -- hey, have you called -- have you guys
11 called 911? I said we're trying, circuits are busy, I said can
12 you drive over to the fire department, which is, like, right here.

13 Q. Uh huh.

14 A. And she says I'm on my way. So anyway, that was kind of the
15 end of that conversation. And it was just trying to -- you know,
16 it was like Steve's going okay, I've got the times, you know,
17 here's the strip, here's the weather. So, everybody was -- you
18 know, we all kind of have enough experience to go okay, you're
19 going to need this.

20 So, people were just trying to gather information as they
21 can. Larry's on the phone answering phones and talking to
22 everybody. And then I said -- then we just kind of just did what
23 we could and then it was -- there's was really just nothing else
24 we could do at that point other than, you know, just answer
25 questions if people had them. I was just sitting there on the

1 stairs, I didn't really -- there was nothing for me to do at that
2 point.

3 Q. Yeah. That's -- yeah, I'm trying to think of anything else.
4 Can you think of anything else that I didn't ask that would be
5 helpful?

6 A. No. I have played this through in my mind many times and I
7 just don't have any -- you know, if there's anything else you want
8 to ask, but I just don't -- I can't think of anything else to
9 offer that would not be repetitive of what we've already talked
10 about.

11 Q. I have one question I didn't ask.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Do you recall any loud -- any noises, any --

14 A. I didn't even hear the explosion, which I thought was
15 unusual. I don't know, I just felt like I probably would've heard
16 an explosion. I thought about that after the fact, like, I didn't
17 even hear anything. Noise wise, no. We hear airplane noise,
18 taxi, and by -- every now and then but the airport was at a -- we
19 shut everything down, so there was nothing moving. So, no, no
20 noises that I can --

21 Q. I'm trying to think what else would -- I'm trying to get the
22 eyewitness, you know, stuff down because we're still trying to put
23 the pieces on this one.

24 A. Sure, it was just --

25 Q. Did you see -- can you think of -- did you recall if there

1 was anything with the speed being different? Any --

2 A. At the time, no. But then -- you know, then immediately the
3 internet is full of, you know, like oh, he was doing a hundred and
4 70 or whatever. I mean -- but I just -- I got to tell you, I'm
5 not a pilot, I have a great sense of that looks right, that looks
6 wrong, I have a really good sense of that because I have a lot of
7 experience in towers. But, you know, I don't know if he was going
8 too fast when he made that turn; I don't know if he was going to
9 slow when he came back. I just don't know. I'm trying to --
10 yeah, we do get a speed read out on some of the aircraft, but I
11 just have nothing to offer for that. I'm sorry, I just --

12 Q. What kind of -- do you have a radar scope?

13 A. We have two systems -- two internet based systems that we use
14 for reference. I mean, we can't call traffic -- we can call
15 traffic, but it's like ahead to your right.

16 Q. Right.

17 A. But our altitudes are not confirmed, or verified, or
18 certified. So, everything we do is appears approximately, we'll
19 use terms like that. We can't give vector headings, turn right,
20 turn left. We can do -- suggest a left turn to blah 20 degrees.
21 We get -- it's just very generic. But one is airboss and I can't
22 remember what the other one -- the name of the other one is. But
23 one has certain information, one has another information, one will
24 have speed. You know, sometimes we'll see a target on this one
25 but we won't see it on that one. But anyway, it's just super

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 helpful, but it's just two independent systems that are just
2 internet based.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. You know, one's got some ADSB on it, so that's kind of cool.
5 That gives us a little more --

6 Q. Oh, yeah.

7 A. Yeah, but nothing -- you know, we don't have, like, a D-BRITE
8 or anything like that.

9 Q. Oh, okay. Yeah. Nothing -- yeah, it sounds cool. I can't
10 wait to see that.

11 A. It -- I mean, it's super helpful. You know, it's really --
12 you know, you get a really good idea of where they're coming from.
13 Some do have speeds -- oh, I can't remember which one -- one has
14 speed, one doesn't. The airboss was the one I was looking at when
15 -- because we have two-mile range marks on the airboss and we have
16 five-mile range marks on the other one. It gives it more of a big
17 picture. So, I just -- when he turned base, I just remember going
18 the guy looks really close, and so I looked the scope and it was
19 right around -- it was at the two-mile range give or take a
20 little. That was my perception of it anyway.

21 Q. Yeah. But staffing was normal?

22 A. Yeah, staffing was good. Larry was downstairs doing Monday
23 Larry work; he's always got a stack of paper on Monday. So, he
24 was doing that, I was on position, Steve was on position, and
25 Todd, I relieved -- I think I relieved Todd to go take a break.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 So, yeah.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Everybody was there.

4 Q. Yeah. Can you think of any questions that I didn't ask? I
5 know that sounds crazy, but anything that you could --

6 A. I'm pretty good about offering stuff. So, I just -- I'm
7 sorry, I've just got nothing else.

8 Q. Oh, no, we're good.

9 A. But, you know --

10 Q. We're trying to get our head around this as well.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I have noticed pilots are a little more tentative here
14 though. We've had, like, a lot of go-arounds lately.

15 Q. Oh, really?

16 A. Yeah. I think there's something to that, coming in on a
17 stabled approach.

18 Q. So, when did you work again?

19 A. The next day.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Was the smoke still there?

23 A. I feel like it was a little -- it's been gradually getting
24 better. Last Saturday and Sunday were just killers, man, it was
25 just -- it was horrible. We were in all kinds of -- it was just

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 really bad the two days before and I think for the last week or so
2 it's been varying stages of bad and no so bad. We -- it's kind of
3 started clearing up Tuesday, Wednesday and yeah, you know, it's
4 getting -- like this is probably the nicest day we've had in a
5 while, yesterday was a little worse. It just seems like it's
6 clearing out very slowly.

7 Q. Oh, okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Well, I can't think of anything else, so I'm going to go
10 ahead and -- unless you have anything else?

11 A. No, ma'am.

12 MS. KOSCHIG: I'll end the interview at 11:41.

13 MS. LEGGE: Okay.

14 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: N60TR CHALLENGER FATALITY
 IN TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA
 ON JULY 26, 2021
 Interview of Rhonda Legge

ACCIDENT NO.: WPR21FA286

PLACE: Truckee, California

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber

Interviewee: Steve Ingebretson, Ground Controller
Representative: None

Date / Time: August 2, 2021/ 1012 PDT to 1047 PDT
Location: TRK ATCT
Present: Amy St. Pierre
Investigator: Betty Koschig

Interview transcript of Steve Ingebretson:

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

N605TR CHALLENGER FATALITY *

IN TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA *

Accident No.: WPR21FA286

ON JULY 26, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: STEVE INGEBRETSON, Air Traffic Control
Midwest ATC Service, Inc.

Truckee, California

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

APPEARANCES:

BETTY KOSCHIG, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

AMY ST. PIERRE, Area Manager
Midwest ATC Service, Inc.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Steve Ingebretson:		
By Ms. Koschig		6
By Ms. Koschig		9
By Ms. Koschig		24

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

I N T E R V I E W

(10:12 a.m.)

MS. KOSCHIG: All right, it's now 10:12. All right. So, I just wanted to read this to you. Good morning, my name is Betty Koschig and I'm an air traffic investigator with the National Transportation Board.

MR. INGEBRETSON: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: I'm the ATC investigator for N605TR, that accident occurred in Truckee, California. My role here is to learn what we can about the accident so we can assist the investigation and hopefully prevent this from reoccurring.

MR. INGEBRETSON: Okay.

MS. KOSCHIG: As part of the process, we invite parties to participate in the investigation to provide us technical expertise. For this, we have invited Midwest ATC and what I want to do right now is go around the room and get everybody's name.

We'll start with you, Amy.

MS. ST. PIERRE: Okay. Amy St. Pierre.

MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Midwest --

MS. ST. PIERRE: Midwest ATC.

MR. INGEBRETSON: Steven Ingebretson with Truckee Air Traffic Control Tower.

MS. KOSCHIG: All right, and can you spell your last name?

MR. INGEBRETSON: Sure, I N G E B R E T S O N. Yeah, R E T, there you go.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 MS. KOSCHIG: R E T.

2 MR. INGEBRETSON: Yeah, there you go.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: Sorry.

4 MR. INGEBRETSON: Inge-bretson.

5 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Is that German?

6 MR. INGEBRETSON: It's Norwegian, but --

7 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh.

8 MR. INGEBRETSON: That's right.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. Of course, I offered the opportunity to
10 have a rep.

11 MR. INGEBRETSON: Uh huh. Yeah, I don't need it, thank you.
12 I'm not worried.

13 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay. And so, as part of the process I'll
14 record the interview and we'll have a transcription made that will
15 be eventually part of the factual report.

16 MR. INGEBRETSON: Okay.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: The audio will not be part of the public
18 docket. Do you have any questions about that process?

19 MR. INGEBRETSON: No.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay.

21 MR. INGEBRETSON: I was wondering about that.

22 MS. KOSCHIG: No, the audio, we -- it will not go out to the
23 public and we will destroy it because it's not under FOIA yet, so
24 we can destroy it before FOIA is placed. If FOIA had already been
25 placed we would've had to keep it just for our records. But it

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 would never have come out.

2 MR. INGEBRETSON: Okay.

3 MS. KOSCHIG: During the interview if you don't understand
4 something, ask for clarification.

5 MR. INGEBRETSON: Okay.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: If you don't know something, you don't know it.
7 If you don't remember something, you don't remember it.

8 MR. INGEBRETSON: Okay.

9 MS. KOSCHIG: We're not asking you to give us any answers
10 that you just don't know. I know sometimes it seems like we're
11 trying to get you to say something and we're not. We just want to
12 hear your side of the story and what happened.

13 MR. INGEBRETSON: Okay.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Okay?

15 INTERVIEW OF STEVE INGEBRETSON

16 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

17 Q. We got your name, what is your age?

18 A. I'm 63.

19 Q. 63. Okay, and what are your operating initials?

20 A. SI.

21 Q. Okay, and when did you start working for Midwest?

22 A. It was the 2nd of April of 2018.

23 Q. And where did you work before that?

24 A. Over San Carlos SQL and that was about -- a little over three
25 years there.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 Q. And was that with --

2 A. That was with Serco.

3 Q. Serco?

4 A. Uh huh.

5 Q. Okay. Where did you work before that?

6 A. I was managing and flying a corporate jet, an old diamond
7 jet.

8 Q. Uh huh.

9 A. And then I -- before that I did ATC from 1985 to 1999 with
10 the FAA and most of it was over at Concord CCR.

11 Q. Okay. And do you have any other aeronautical ratings,
12 pilot's license?

13 A. Yeah. I've got a commercial multi-instrument, and type
14 rating in the beech jet, and I've got also some SIC types, and
15 lear 45, and a couple of citations, and then a degree in aviation
16 -- bachelor's degree in aviation. So, it's mostly professional
17 pilot stuff.

18 Q. Where'd you get your bachelor's degree?

19 A. Metropolitan State University in Colorado -- Denver.

20 Q. Okay. What year did you get that?

21 A. 1980. It's going to age me quick, but you already know the
22 age. And that was -- it took me five years to get it, but that's
23 okay. A minor in electronics, so there you go.

24 Q. Do you have a current medical certificate?

25 A. I do. It's at the tower -- in the basket there at the tower.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 So, it's not on me right now.

2 Q. Any restrictions?

3 A. Just I've got to have these with me for reading.

4 Q. Do you have to wear them? Or just with you?

5 A. No, just with me, yeah. I wear them a lot as you can see.

6 Q. Okay. Also, you indicated your eyeglasses.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Just so we can get that out there.

9 A. I'm sorry.

10 Q. Oh, no, that's no problem. Let's see. What was your
11 schedule the week before the accident occurred if you can recall?

12 A. Oh, the schedule?

13 Q. Yeah, your work schedule, you know, what days -- do you have
14 a normal work schedule? Is it --

15 A. Not lately. We've had -- that was actually day six for me on
16 Monday and I had an opener, 6:45 to 2:45. Yeah.

17 Q. And the other days before, you don't recall? Or just --

18 A. Exactly what they were?

19 Q. Right.

20 A. There was -- usually what we do is we do a closer and then I
21 think I --

22 MR. INGEBRETSON: Thank you so much.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I apologize that it's warm, but I
24 brought you some ice.

25 MR. INGEBRETSON: No, that's all right. Thank you.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 I don't know the exact, but usually we rotate in from a
2 closer, like a later shift, you know, and then slowly work our way
3 in. I don't know exactly which days, what it was.

4 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

5 Q. Okay, all right.

6 A. So, sorry.

7 Q. Okay. Nope, no problem. And so, what position were you
8 working the day of the accident?

9 A. Ground control at that time.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. All right. Now just a few little human factor questions that
13 we ask. How do you describe your overall health?

14 A. Overall health?

15 Q. Uh huh.

16 A. I'm slightly overweight, but I walk about three to four miles
17 a day. I don't try to kid anybody, life's been good.

18 Q. Yeah, cool.

19 A. But yeah, no, I'm fine. Just like I said, I walk, exercise,
20 and do what I can to keep -- blood pressure's low, at least the
21 doctor keeps saying that. So, I'm happy.

22 Q. Yeah. So that's good.

23 A. Yeah, just got to have the reading glasses with me, that's
24 the main thing.

25 Q. Do you smoke?

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 A. Nuh huh.

2 Q. Drink?

3 A. Once in a while; I'm not a big drinker.

4 Q. Take any prescription drugs?

5 A. None.

6 Q. Good health, huh?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Financially, everything going good?

9 A. Yeah, we're great. Bought a house in Reno, been there, it's
10 gone up a lot. I'm really happy. It's gone up a bunch, it
11 totally shocked me. But yeah, we love being in Reno now.

12 Q. Yeah. Oh, so how long you been there?

13 A. Just nine months.

14 Q. Oh, okay.

15 A. Yeah. I've lived several places here in the Truckee area
16 part time because the family was in the bay area -- San Francisco
17 Bay area while my youngest was finishing high school. So, I was
18 going back and forth -- thank God for the three days a week off so
19 I could spend more time with the family and then as soon as she
20 was done boom, my wife came up here and then we bought a house.
21 So, it's been nice.

22 Q. Oh, great. So, I think that's about it on that. Mainly we
23 just want to ask you some questions.

24 A. Cool.

25 Q. So, have you heard -- listening to the audio?

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 A. Actually, to be honest with you, no, I haven't.

2 Q. Okay. That's good, actually, because then we get your total
3 recall from that day.

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. So, just start wherever you feel like starting before the
6 accident occurred and tell us your story of what was going on,
7 what you saw and we'll list.

8 A. Just like -- just moments before? Or you want, like, for the
9 whole day?

10 Q. Just moments before just concerning this flight unless
11 something was happening else in the tower that would -- you'd want
12 to include that in on? (Verbatim)

13 A. Well, the main thing was that, you know, obviously, ground
14 control is supposed to assist local in finding things and keeping
15 the runways clear. But most of the aircraft were coming in,
16 landing on 20, which gets the lowest approach. But because of
17 runway restrictions, this Challenger said he needed either 11 --
18 we offered him -- I think Rhonda offered him 29 also, but, you
19 know, he said no, I'll take 11. And visibility was, that we could
20 see, was probably around three to four miles at best, which
21 throughout the day there was at least once I know of that I told
22 -- I let the airport people know that. But, you know, we're not
23 seeing as good.

24 But -- and so, when the guy reported inbound, he said -- I
25 remember he said he had the runway in sight. He started to turn,

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 I couldn't see it, so I was trying to help Rhonda find it. She
2 was like I think I see it up by the windsock and I looked and
3 about that time I saw him just coming over the top of the
4 windsock, you know, the segmented circle we have over there. And
5 appeared -- to me it appeared he was like two-to-three-mile left
6 base. And, you know, then that what I observed and then he
7 started turning for the runway, but appeared to go through it,
8 which a lot of aircraft do. But in the correcting, it seemed --
9 then it seemed to start sinking and went underneath the trees and
10 disappeared. So, we -- I was -- I can only make an assumption, I
11 don't know if I should do that here or not?

12 Q. Sure. Your experience is great, go ahead.

13 A. Just, you know, got a little low and slow and then the next
14 thing I know -- I thought maybe it might've, you know, landed
15 someplace like on the road or dirt because it took a few seconds,
16 and then we saw the explosion and that was it.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So, could you describe, you know, maybe the pitch or the
20 angle, did you notice anything with that that was unusual? Or was
21 it -- did it look normal? Anything that you can describe?

22 A. Like I said, he went through the final and came back around.
23 It just -- you know, it was slowly sinking. My thoughts were -- I
24 said Rhonda -- I said, wow, I think the aircraft's more
25 maneuverable than they think. And then I thought for sure, you

1 know, that he might go around because that happens. We get that a
2 lot because the hills and stuff, people get nervous. And then
3 that was it, so from there it happened pretty fast, you know, it
4 was just like -- we were both just like this is unusual and that
5 was it. So, yeah.

6 Q. Yeah. Okay, let's see. Okay. Did -- okay, for this one,
7 we're trying to -- what we're trying to do is to understand if it
8 could be possibly unstable. Based off your experience, did it --
9 did the aircraft appear unstable? It's just -- that's an opinion
10 on.

11 A. Yeah, okay. It just appeared lower than normal. Again, I'm
12 thinking okay, he's going to go around because it was just trying
13 to set up and then from there -- because I -- we don't -- that low
14 I don't -- and we weren't paying attention -- we were looking at
15 him, so we weren't paying attention to any ground speeds or
16 anything of that stuff. So, I can't tell what he was flying.
17 And, you know, so it just appeared that way and it just -- as it
18 went down it just kind of went into the trees, and so I couldn't
19 tell much more from there. It just appeared low and slow, that's
20 the best I can't tell you. So, I just expected him to go around,
21 I really did. But I -- you know, that was it -- because we were
22 both going this is just -- we just were looking going it looks a
23 little unusual.

24 Q. Yeah. And where were you standing in the tower at that
25 point?

1 A. Ground control position which would be the west side of the
2 cab. And yeah, just right there on the west side of the cab just
3 looking out the window trying to observe.

4 Q. A real clear view?

5 A. Clear view except for the haze and stuff -- you know, the
6 haze and the smoke that was going on, so as best as possible. But
7 at that point, yeah, we could see him pretty well.

8 Q. Yeah. And how far -- with the haze and the smoke, can you
9 describe that to me? What was going on that was -- why this was
10 happening with the smoke? Or is this normal?

11 A. No. There was two fires both north and south and the winds
12 were just blowing right and reducing our visibility. I'd say
13 probably about three miles at best, you know, is at the very -- I
14 mean, in that position we were at and that's why we were --
15 everybody was on the approaches. So, yeah, pretty much -- I don't
16 think there was any -- at that time anybody VFR.

17 Q. Okay. Is it normal for them to come in for an RNAV 20 on
18 circle?

19 A. It is. Yeah, a lot of aircraft do this, they want the longer
20 runway. But we -- and a lot of times if they do do it, it's
21 something -- just a decision they make because the RNAV 11
22 restrictions -- the limitations on that as far as the altitudes
23 are so high that a lot of times they can get in underneath a layer
24 and say come around. Again, that's up to the pilot to make that
25 decision whether he feels safe doing it or not. But, you know --

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay, already described the weather, okay. Had other -- had
4 there been other flights coming in before that one that had done
5 the circle?

6 A. No.

7 Q. No?

8 A. No, everybody went straight in for 20.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. All right.

12 A. Unless they -- I mean, I think -- I'd have to look, I think
13 there was one aircraft that did the RNAV 11 approach and landed
14 that way. But the previous two days, there was a lot of them that
15 tried 11 and couldn't make so they came -- they either went to
16 Reno or came back and did 20. So, I can't remember exactly which
17 one, I'd have to go look.

18 Q. And so, why were the -- what was the wind? Do you recall
19 what the wind was?

20 A. Calm.

21 Q. Calm?

22 A. Uh huh. That's what made the smoke so dense, yeah, it wasn't
23 moving.

24 Q. So, is 20 the preferred runway?

25 A. Again, that depends on the airplane. You know, it's

1 preferred in the sense that it's got a VASI on it and it's the
2 lower approach. Not preferred for some because it's the shorter
3 runway, so others like to do the 11.

4 Q. All right.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And could you describe the height possibly? Did it -- did
7 he -- because you said he was lower, do you know about what
8 altitudes?

9 A. We saw him -- I mean, the altitude didn't look so unusual
10 when we first saw him. Maybe -- I'm guessing 800 to a thousand
11 feet, you know, on left base for there and that seemed pretty
12 normal, you know, from -- above ground level, of course. And then
13 it was just -- I wasn't sure as he was circling through or just
14 watching to see what he was going to do, you know, because I'm
15 going somebody report he's going around. Let them know because
16 he's technically still IFR and so, we're trying to figure out, you
17 know, what to do and that's why we were both looking and saying
18 okay, what's he doing.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah. We didn't want the next one coming in until we knew
21 for sure, you know.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And when they do circle, where do they typically turn for
25 final if they're circling 20 to 11?

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 A. Where do they typically -- and, you know, that's one that's
2 kind of -- it's all in the pilot themselves because some will go
3 -- well, they'll take out and circle out further towards the
4 northwest and come back in for a little more of a straight shot,
5 and some of them angle it in if there's a hill there that they try
6 and get around. It's not bad, but it just -- it can be, you know,
7 intimidating and stuff like that. But usually, just slightly
8 outside of the runway -- excuse me, the freeway there. So, three
9 to five miles, sometimes they go further north, though. I've seen
10 them maneuver way further north -- I mean northwest, you know, to
11 setup for more of a straight in from there. I don't blame them;
12 stable approaches are good.

13 Q. Yeah, exactly. So, when -- this guy, when he started his
14 turn it wasn't anything unusual?

15 A. Nothing unusual, it's just a matter of -- I think they were
16 trying to -- because of the visibility basically being three to
17 four miles that we could see -- I don't know what he would've seen
18 over there, he was, I think, trying to make sure he kind of kept
19 sight of the runway because, of course, you're required to do that
20 or else go around, you know, or do your missed approach. So, I
21 think that's what he was trying to do. That's just my assumption
22 only because I know what I'd have to do, you know, so -- yeah.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. When he was going down, did you notice any wing tipping

1 either side?

2 A. You know, that's the thing, they were pretty level when they
3 went towards the trees and just right towards the end, you know,
4 Rhonda said did he hit a tree? And that was it, we couldn't see
5 him and I didn't see anything from there of that. So, I don't
6 know if he did or didn't. I mean, I was just like what, you know,
7 we're kind of -- just at that point we're going oh my gosh, what
8 are we going to do because he was getting pretty low. Again, I
9 was hoping he would go around.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. To be honest with you, that's what I kept thinking go around,
12 but you don't want to tell him how to fly the airplane either, you
13 know.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. You know, it's just one of those -- yeah.

16 Q. Okay, let's see. Okay. Also, the speed, when they were --
17 before -- did you notice beforehand if it looked like it -- for
18 that type aircraft, they were doing the normal speed?

19 A. It appeared that way. I mean, even when we were looking for
20 them and we could -- but see, what we get on our displays are very
21 -- it's not official.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. So, we're seeing stuff that's their possible ground speed and
24 I'm usually looking for stuff -- to be honest with you, because of
25 my experience I'm going are they doing about 140, you know, that's

1 usually a safe speed for most of them. And that's -- at one point
2 we looked, you know, and there's -- nothing looking unusual at
3 that point, to be honest with you.

4 Q. Okay. All right. Are you guys LAWRS certified?

5 A. Not technically now, no. Have we been in the past? Some of
6 us, yes.

7 Q. Oh, okay.

8 A. Yeah. Is that the right answer?

9 Q. Yeah. Were you augmenting the Truckee AWOS?

10 A. No. There's nothing we can do with it other than just let
11 them know what we -- like, we can give a tower visibility from
12 (indiscernible) and that's about it.

13 Q. And who do you call for that?

14 A. Just the Unicom here and they put in the weather.

15 Q. Oh, okay.

16 A. But it's just automatically, from what I understand,
17 broadcasted from AWOS and they can put in comments, that's it.

18 Q. Oh, okay. It says was the smoke reported in the remarks
19 tower or surface visibility, do you recall?

20 A. I -- we don't report it. So, that's the best I can tell you.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. It wasn't shown on the screen for what was -- the AWOS
23 depiction, that doesn't mean -- on the recording, I don't know.
24 I'd have to see what they had, you know.

25 Q. And do you have visibility markers?

1 A. We have some we use, yeah. They're -- that we -- to try and
2 give us an idea, like is this accurate, you know, stuff like that.

3 Q. You guys have a chart of that?

4 A. Uh huh.

5 Q. Could we have a copy of that one?

6 A. Uh huh.

7 Q. Oh, that'd be great. Did the visibility restriction due to
8 smoke differ in any specific directions?

9 A. Not particularly, it seemed to be pretty much general. I
10 mean, there might've been places that they're seeing something
11 different coming in, but from us it was -- yeah, I meant it was
12 all quadrants. It was probably just about the same.

13 Q. All the quadrants?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. Were you aware of what specific wildfire was
16 specifically causing the smoke restrictions, Backbone fire to the
17 west, Beckwourth Complex fire to the north? Or do you know?

18 A. We were told that the Dixie fire to the north and the
19 Tamarack fire to the south both -- you know, it didn't matter
20 which way the wind was blowing it into us at the time. So, it was
21 kind of -- we were just kind of stuck there. So, I mean, I don't
22 know. I mean, the wind was calm, it wasn't really -- it just
23 settled in so there wasn't much we could do.

24 Q. Right. Did you get any PIREPs at all?

25 A. Yeah. Well, we get PIREPs a lot of times on aircraft,

1 especially the jump planes because when he tops -- you know,
2 because they wanted to go out. So -- and then anybody taking off
3 we were trying to get different -- and I got a variety of reports.
4 Anywhere from -- and I think it had a lot to do with the angle of
5 the sun, you know, anywhere from -- I can't see the ground down
6 from 85 hundred feet to somebody going oh, yeah, I got it, no
7 problem. And the tops are about -- they were under 12-5 and
8 they're still above me in the smoke. So, I don't know. It was
9 inconsistent but I just -- you know, the few times I gave what it
10 was people were departing out. But most people are IFRs so there
11 wasn't a lot of that information there -- given out.

12 Q. Right. And what do you do with the PIREPS? Do you send them
13 -- do you put them into some kind of program or do you just write
14 them down on strips? How do you handle PIREPS?

15 A. We write them down usually. We have a board there and when
16 we spot PIREPS we put them in there and then we transmit them for
17 -- well, they're required 25 minutes, but we just keep doing it
18 and we keep trying to get information as we go and see how it's
19 changing because we couldn't see above, you know, what's going on,
20 is there a ceiling? Any of that stuff, you know. And then
21 occasionally we would give the reports back to the center whether
22 we -- how much we did that day, I don't know. But the point was,
23 you know, we're trying to give it to people as much as we could.

24 Q. Are -- so that's -- you do give them the center -- the right
25 --

1 A. Yeah. Now, if it was -- how regular we were that day, I
2 don't know; I couldn't tell you for sure. But we were having a
3 hard time trying to get clearances and releases too. So, they
4 were busy. Yeah, they're going really, pilot report?

5 Q. Were there any National Weather Service inflight weather
6 advisory current for the area? Or do you know?

7 A. Not that I know of.

8 Q. Okay. Any SIGMETs, AIRMETs, anything that you can think of
9 at all?

10 A. Nothing that I know of. I mean, it wasn't reported to us if
11 there was.

12 Q. Right. Did the thunderstorm and rain reported after the
13 accident improve the visibility?

14 A. I don't know because it happened at 2:00 -- was at 2:18? It
15 was 2:18 so that would've been 1:18 and then I stayed on, Rhonda
16 got off, and then I was -- I got off work at -- you know, they let
17 me out probably around -- it was almost 11:00 -- almost 2:45 by
18 the time I got off and I went home and I didn't get any moisture
19 on -- from -- until I was heading back. So, it must've happened
20 after I left here because I don't remember anything happening
21 here. So, yeah, I'm just trying to -- it was an interesting
22 question. I remember the storm now that you said it, but then I
23 didn't remember it. But it was just very small, we've have very
24 little moisture.

25 Q. Okay. Do you graphically depict the advisory?

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 A. Graphically depict the advisories?

2 Q. If you're not sure, it's okay.

3 A. No.

4 Q. All right.

5 A. I just report what the pilots -- you're talking about the
6 pilot reports?

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. Yeah. I just report -- what they give me is pretty much what
9 I try to give back because I'm not up there.

10 Q. Exactly. Okay, so that's their questions. Okay. So, what
11 happened after you saw the crash? What was going on in the tower
12 then?

13 A. We were just -- I don't know why I did it, but I did it, I
14 just wrote down the time and then I -- and Larry came up and Larry
15 started calling -- trying to call 911 because that's our protocol
16 for the crash. I tried calling Unicom and let them know, see if
17 they could get through or get to the fire department. And then
18 that what -- we were just trying to go through the emergency
19 checklist from there and Larry did most of it. Thank God he was
20 there, I appreciated that a lot so we could just keep control of
21 things. And then the airport said close it down until we figure
22 things out, which was fine with us, you know, there was enough
23 going on.

24 Q. So, how did Larry know to come up to the tower?

25 A. Because as we were talking about it we just -- right as we

1 were talking about it like this doesn't look right and he heard
2 that and -- because he's right down below and he just came up
3 around the corner and saw it. I don't know when exactly he saw it
4 or what, but he saw at least the smoke, I know that. But how much
5 before that, I don't know. But he just knew enough to -- it
6 triggered him to come upstairs and take a look.

7 Q. So, he -- was he listening to the frequency or he was just
8 downstairs and he could hear it?

9 A. No, he's just -- yeah. Have you been up there in the cab?

10 MS. ST. PIERRE: No, she wants to go.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: No, not yet. Yeah, I want to go.

12 MS. ST. PIERRE: You'll get a very good picture when you see
13 it.

14 MR. INGEBRETSON: The whole cab's probably about the size of
15 this room and this much is the tower cab that steps down and
16 there's an office over here and he's in the desk right there and
17 he can hear everything.

18 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, okay.

19 MR. INGEBRETSON: So, he just heard probably our panic and
20 going -- you know, just knowing something's not right and he ran
21 up.

22 BY MS. KOSCHIG:

23 Q. Oh, okay. So, 911, that's normally how you'll do you crash
24 phone procedures is to say your alert?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. So, in this case though, you couldn't get through?

2 A. Yes. We could not get through so go ahead.

3 Q. And what was -- what part of -- so, you then called Unicom as
4 well to see if -- to let them know?

5 A. If they could get through, right.

6 Q. And you called -- then you call center? Who else did you
7 call?

8 A. Yeah. We advised center we had a -- let them know we had a
9 crash and to hold all inbounds and just kind of went from there.

10 Q. And who usually will respond to an airport accident? Is it
11 the local fire? Or do you have airport ARFF?

12 A. No, there's no ARFF here. It's just the local fire here and
13 then the airport people assist. But that's it, they don't have
14 any real fire training that I know of.

15 Q. And the local fire, are they close by?

16 A. Uh huh. Just right over on the other side of the trees
17 there.

18 Q. Oh, okay.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. On the other side by the terminal area.

21 A. And they can access different ways to come in.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Do you think it was a big issue that you couldn't get a hold
25 of anybody on 911? Is that normal? Has that happened before?

1 A. Nu huh. Anytime we've had any kind of incidents before we
2 could get through, you know, and they just relay it back. You
3 know, how much it would be, if it would make a difference time
4 wise, I don't know. I just -- somehow, they knew and took off.
5 So, I mean, I'm sure there was others. Nobody could get through
6 to 911 because -- I've heard maybe he clipped something on the way
7 in and that it did it, you know, shut some things down. I don't
8 know, maybe it was overloading the line with people calling. I
9 don't know. Yeah, so it could've been that too. So, all sorts of
10 theories but nothing's been confirmed with me. Not that it would
11 make a -- I mean, for me, it wouldn't make a difference because
12 it's however you want me to do it, I'll do it, I just want to
13 know.

14 Q. Yeah. Was anybody else on the approach after him?

15 A. To be honest with you, not that I remember. I don't remember
16 when it was -- and it wouldn't have mattered, we would've -- if
17 there was, we would've shut it down. But right away we let center
18 know, you know, we've got to shut it down because the airport
19 right away said to shut it down, which was fine with us, you know.
20 But I don't recall anybody immediately coming. We always have
21 strips set up for the potential inbounds because we see them
22 coming in, you know, but that's it.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Nobody had been called inbound that I remember because I was
25 working ground, I would've known of another one potentially coming

1 in if they just hadn't been called yet.

2 Q. I'm trying to think of anything else. What kind of
3 discussions were going on in the tower at that point? What were
4 you doing and what kind of coordination were -- because you can't
5 speak for the local controller or the traffic manager, but what
6 were some of the things just going on in the tower coordination?

7 A. Just -- basically when it all happened, you know, when we all
8 kind of got through the immediate shock was what do you need Larry
9 and then he would just -- you know, let them know this, you're
10 closing the tower -- closing the airport, closing -- no more
11 approaches, stuff like that. So -- and that's done, and then -- I
12 try and write things down so he had a record of things because I
13 knew he was busy and he started getting on the phone with people,
14 and then they asked for Rhonda to be relieved so I took over since
15 there was nothing going on, combining was not a big deal.

16 So, I just sat there and just tried to be there for them,
17 whatever they needed until such time. I didn't -- that was it, I
18 was just sitting there listening and anything of coordination that
19 needed to be done. But there really wasn't much of anything
20 because it was off the field so it wasn't like they were doing
21 things on the airport.

22 Q. Right. Can you think of anything else that you want to add?
23 Anything I didn't ask you? We always ask that.

24 A. It's just funny because we go through this and I'm going I
25 didn't think about that, that's why I wrote this down.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. Just trying to make it simple. But, I mean, that's pretty
3 much it. That's why I probably haven't changed a whole lot from
4 what I've said. I don't -- it's weird, you don't know enough -- I
5 mean, I have my theories as a pilot of what may have happened.
6 But again, that's my theory and that doesn't mean it's true. You
7 know, you guys get into it, you see things you'll know and it's
8 probably pretty close. But that's all, you know, it's an
9 assumption and just --

10 Q. But I got to tell you, the controllers -- I mean, you've got
11 the -- you know what looks right. You've got that experience; you
12 had that eyewitness account.

13 A. Well, you see it so much, yeah, it just doesn't look right.

14 Q. Yeah, so you know what doesn't look right. I mean, this is
15 so -- it's so valuable to our investigation. That's the reason
16 we'll interview controllers even when controller -- like this.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. It's not a controller, you know, issue, but you've got that
19 eyewitness of you know what is normal for here.

20 A. Right.

21 Q. So -- yeah, so your opinion is great. I mean, so many
22 investigations we've found things out just by asking controllers
23 questions.

24 A. I mean, I've got a lot of opinions about stuff. But right
25 now, that's -- I don't think it's going to help, it's not

1 important. So, you know, it's just something that need to be --
2 can be addressed later. You know, I can give Amy my
3 recommendations for things later and she could say that's good or
4 not or whatever. So, I want to work with the company and do
5 what's best for everybody at this point. But that's -- again,
6 that's just my -- this is what I think and that's all it's worth.

7 Q. Okay. Any questions for me?

8 A. Not really that I can think of. I mean, like I said, I
9 haven't heard anything, I haven't -- you know, I've have a lot of
10 people call me and stuff like that and I say look, all I can tell
11 you is it was ugly and that's all I can tell you; that's it. You
12 know, so until it comes out in public, I can't say anything more.
13 So, I've left it at that.

14 Q. That's the best bet, yeah.

15 A. I haven't seen videos, I haven't seen -- I hear all sorts of
16 stuff and I'm like right now, I just don't want to.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So, it was the first time in all my years that I ever saw a
19 fatality. I've seen all sorts of goofy things happen, but never
20 seen anybody die. I watched a guy cartwheel an airplane and fall
21 out and twist his ankle and that's the only thing he did. But not
22 there, it was just like wow, you know, see all sorts of things
23 but --

24 Q. Wow.

25 A. But I felt very fortunate. I didn't want to break that

1 record.

2 MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly. Unfortunately, it did happen. All
3 right, then. I'll go ahead and --

4 MR. INGEBRETSON: Anything from you Amy that you --

5 MS. ST. PIERRE: No, I'm good.

6 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, any questions at all?

7 MS. ST. PIERRE: No, I can't think of any right now.

8 MR. INGEBRETSON: I'm hoping I didn't over do it either. But
9 I didn't know what to say.

10 MS. ST. PIERRE: You're good.

11 MS. KOSCHIG: No.

12 MR. INGEBRETSON: There was just so much that was kind of
13 vague, you know, you don't -- things either are very vivid and
14 other things are, like, really vague like I don't remember anybody
15 coming in as far as on the approach.

16 MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly.

17 MR. INGEBRETSON: Normally I've got the strip ready to go oh,
18 this is the next one, as is I'm on ground. But I don't remember
19 anybody else.

20 MS. KOSCHIG: Yeah, because it's -- everything seems to move
21 in -- the time becomes different.

22 MR. INGEBRETSON: Oh, yeah. You're just sitting here --

23 MS. KOSCHIG: It's either fast or it just slows down or a
24 little bit of both.

25 MS. ST. PIERRE: Totally different aspects of it.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 MS. KOSCHIG: Exactly.

2 MS. ST. PIERRE: Some parts go fast.

3 MR. INGEBRETSON: We just looked -- Rhonda and I just looked
4 at each other and all of us look and almost welling up in tears
5 saying did we really just see this. And then it was like all kick
6 in and now go, you know, because that's what we've got to do. She
7 did a -- she was great. Rhonda was a rock, Larry was amazing, I
8 just sat there going I feel like a dummy, but just -- if we need
9 something, let me know. That's it, that's all I can do. Larry
10 said get her out, do this, that's fine, so that's what I did. So,
11 I was very appreciative of him being there. If he had, for some
12 reason, had been gone or something like that it would've been a
13 huge workload.

14 MS. KOSCHIG: Oh, yeah. It's good that he was there. I'm
15 going to stop the recording.

16 MR. INGEBRETSON: Sure.

17 MS. KOSCHIG: 10:47.

18 MR. INGEBRETSON: Okay.

19 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
20
21
22
23
24
25

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: N60TR CHALLENGER FATALITY
 IN TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA
 ON JULY 26, 2021
 Interview of Steve Ingebretson

ACCIDENT NO.: WPR21FA286

PLACE: Truckee, California

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber