



Record of Conversation

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Investigator in Charge

NTSB Accident Number: WPR22LA061
Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: N9YY / RV-3
Accident Location: Bermuda Dunes, California
Accident Date: December 11, 2021

Nikolaus Messerschmidt
Witness

Mr. Messerschmidt stated that he was outside, on a ladder, hanging up Christmas lights. He lived near an airport and was used to hearing airplanes fly near his house. He heard an airplane and didn't give it much thought. He then heard the engine "sputter and cutout." He used his cell phone to take one photo of the airplane. See Figure 1. When enlarged the image showed one propeller blade.

Mr. Messerschmidt then took the 10-second video with his cell phone. The cell phone video was made available from Mr. Messerschmidt's private YouTube account. A copy was also provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's department.

The video image was oriented with Lima Hall Road running upper left to lower right. Runaway Bay was running lower left to upper right. A set of four power distribution lines ran parallel to Lima Hall Road. See Figure 2. The height of the power distribution lines above the ground was estimated to be about 30 to 40 feet. The airplane was in view at center frame and travelled from right to left. While there was sound available, but there was no engine noise that could be heard. The airplane appeared to be level, in a slight descent. At two seconds, the airplane made a slight right roll and the nose lifted slightly. At three seconds, the airplane was lost from view due to a tree obscuring the image. At 6 seconds, the airplane appeared from behind the tree and rolled to the right until the left wing was about 90° up and the right wing was about 90° down. At the same time as the airplane rolled right, the nose of the airplane dropped toward the ground. The airplane then descended in the same bank attitude until the image was lost due to a second tree that obscured the view.



Figure 1. Photograph of the accident airplane taken by the witness.



Figure 2. Capture from video showing the airplane in a right roll.

Mr. Messerschmidt provided a map to detail the estimated flight path that the airplane took. He identified the “X” as his location, and the circled X as the approximate location of the airplane when he took the photograph. The arrows point to the direction of travel of the airplane.

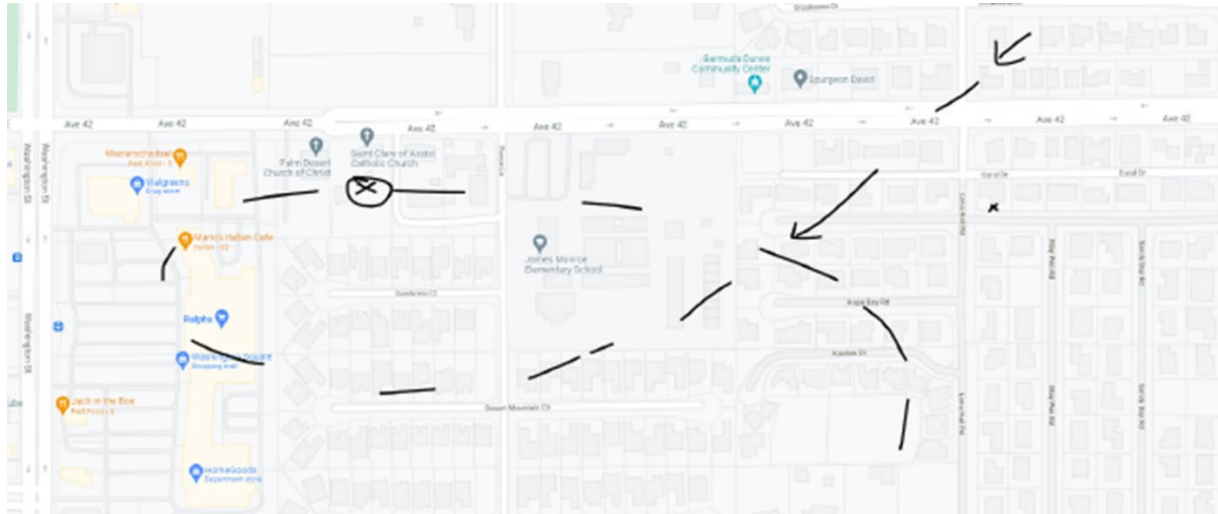


Figure 3. Map provided by the witness. The witness was located at the X. The photo was captured near the circled X.



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Michael McConnell
Retired Fire Chief / Witness

In an interview with Mr. McConnell, he stated that he had just pulled out of his driveway, located about 1,500 feet north of the accident site and was facing west on Orcabessa Drive. He observed an airplane travelling from north to south (right to left), and at a very low altitude. He could not hear the engine, but he thought it was due to him being inside his truck. He said that the airplane was in a normal attitude, with the wings level. When the airplane was about the ten o'clock position of his truck, the wings changed position to where one wing was pointed straight up, and the other was pointing at the ground. The airplane then descended nose down, at a steep angle of about 75°. He did not see the impact due to houses obscuring his view.



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Sabine Bryttegard
Witness

In a telephone interview with the witness, she stated that she was in her back yard, which was less than a mile (.7 mile) west of the accident site, when she heard a loud airplane. She looked up to the east and saw an airplane that initially she thought was very high up in the sky heading south. She saw the airplane turn to the west toward her location. She could see individual propeller blades spinning fast but not as fast as she thought it should be. She said that the airplane made a descending right-hand turn eventually getting as close as within two houses of her location. During the turn she saw the airplane made up and down wing movements and the airplane climbed and descended, as if it was caught in an updraft. She thought that the movements were not large, but noticeable. She said that the airplane continued to the descending turn until it disappeared behind some apartments. She stated that prior to descending behind the apartments the descent became steeper. She had begun to walk into her house when she heard a loud bang, and she turned back to look for smoke but saw none.

The witness provided a written account of events that is attached to this document.

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: witness to plane crash Bermuda Dunes CA
Date: Monday, December 13, 2021 2:45:37 PM

FYI

From: Grosos Erik [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 1:28 PM
To: Hogenson Dennis [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: witness to plane crash Bermuda Dunes CA

Meant to cc you on this.

Regards,

Erik

From: Grosos Erik
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 4:13 PM
To: Tom Littleton [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: witness to plane crash Bermuda Dunes CA

Tom,

This came into the witness email box. Not sure who is handling this accident.

From: Sabine Bryttingard [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 3:50 PM
To: eyewitnessreport [REDACTED]
Subject: witness to plane crash Bermuda Dunes CA

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

RE: plane crash near Bermuda Dunes, CA Dec 11, 2021

Hello,

I live in Palm Desert, CA just a few miles from the Bermuda Dunes airport. I was sitting in my backyard Saturday Dec. 11 when I heard a very loud plane engine. I looked up and to the east I could see a plane pretty high up heading in a southerly direction. The engine sounded so loud that I thought it was an old war plane. It turned west toward my area and I could see a propeller spinning so I thought it was actually a helicopter. It continued west then started to turn north and it was descending. It was coming toward me so I could see it was a single engine plane. The propeller was spinning but not as fast as I would have thought it should be. It was still descending and in the airspace about 2 houses away. I saw the plane list left and right and then up and down in short bursts. I knew that it did not look right as it was still descending over houses. The plane then turned east and was still descending so I thought it was heading

back toward Bermuda Dunes airport. It was going down at an angle but it was right side up. I watched it until it went out of my view. I was going into my house when I heard a loud bang. I went back outside and looked in that direction to see if I could see smoke or something. I felt like the plane was crashing but I did not see smoke. Later that night I heard there was a plane crash at Bermuda Dunes airport at about 12:30 pm. This was exactly when I was watching the plane so I knew it was the same plane. My understanding is that the plane was upside down when it crashed but I never saw it upside down. I am also sorry to hear that the pilot did not survive. From news stories I see that the pilot was James Wallace and the plane was a single engine Moul Willis RV-3.

I am happy to help with any information or questions if you are still investigating this accident.

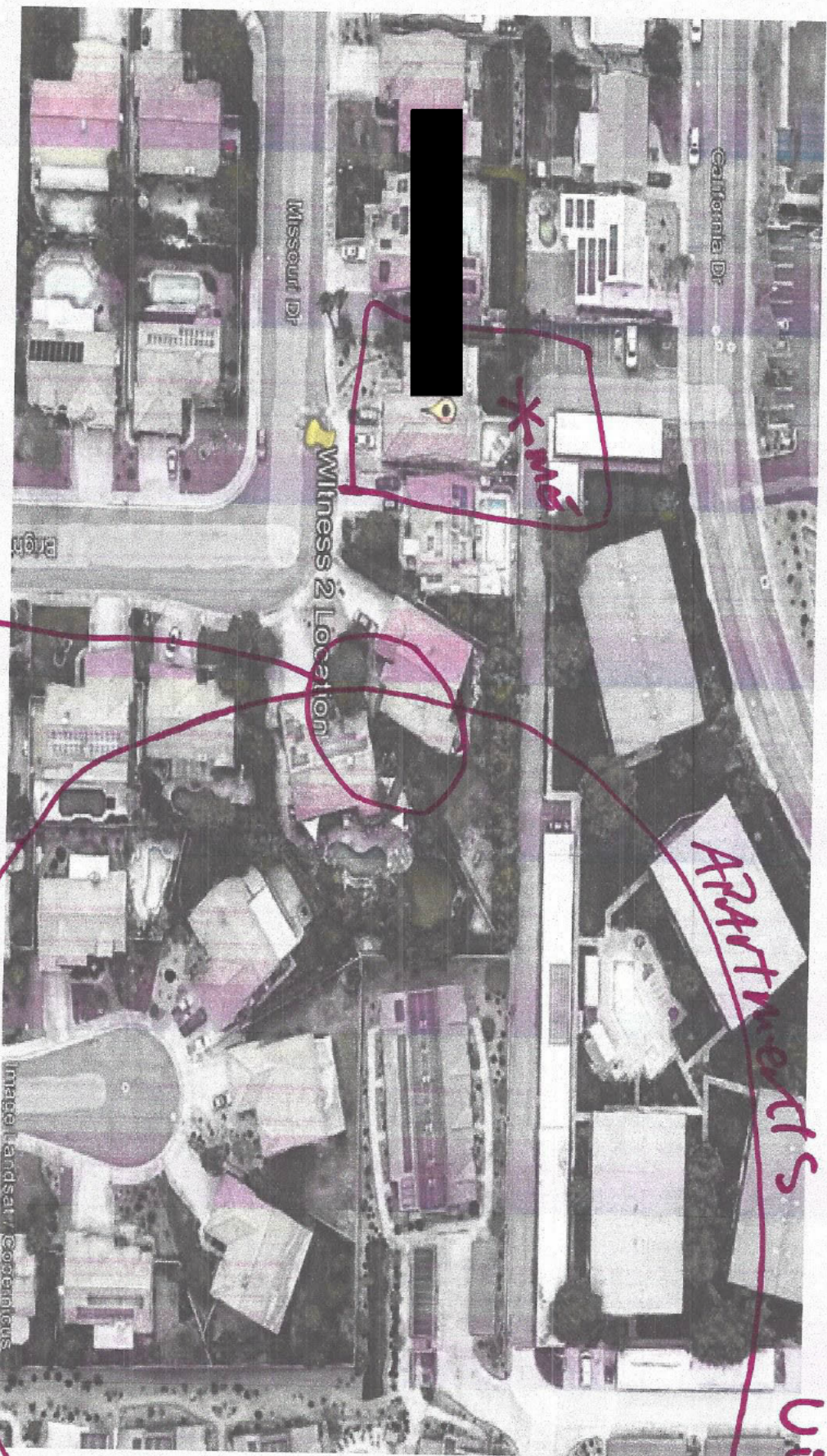
Thanks you so much,

Sabine Bryttegard

[REDACTED]

Palm Desert, CA 92211

[REDACTED]



Turn light on
Left to go on right
place + don't catch

not a protein

Long
Engle

Apartment's

out of
View

***ma**