

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT NEAR
 KNEELAND AIRPORT IN EUREKA,
 CALIFORNIA ON JULY 23, 2024

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Accident No.: WPR24FA252

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Interview of: JOSHUA GOULD
 Cal Fire

Kneeland Helitack Base
 Kneeland, California

Wednesday,
 July 24, 2024

APPEARANCES:

KATHRYN WHITAKER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN STEIN, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

MS. WHITAKER: What I'm going to do is I'm going to say my name. I'm going to spell it out, and then I'm going to have you do the same.

So my name is Kathryn Whitaker, spelled K-a-t-h-r-y-n, W-h-i-t-a-k-e-r, and I'm with the NTSB.

MR. GOULD: My name is Joshua Gould, J-o-s-h-u-a, G-o-u-l-d. I work for Cal Fire.

MS. WHITAKER: All righty. So we are the Kneeland Helitack Base. We're on the helipad right now.

INTERVIEW OF JOSHUA GOULD

BY MS. WHITAKER:

Q. And so about what time were you and a lot of these things happened that we're asking about now?

A. We landed here at about 10:30 yesterday.

Q. 10:30 morning.

A. Yep, 10:30 in the morning. And then would you like me to just go into kind of --

Q. Yeah, just tell me everything that you feel like telling.

A. Okay. So we landed. It was about 10:30. I know that's not going to be exact. I -- we knew that the Amentum guys were coming up to work on 901, the other helicopter here. So I was -- I got out my phone, and I was tracking them on one of the flight radar apps.

Q. Okay.

1 A. And I saw them. I knew they were, you know, I anticipated
2 about 5 minutes out. That was after being on the ground for maybe
3 10 minutes, 15 minutes. So I was just kind of up here waiting to
4 them him, and I expected him to come out of the south which would
5 be kind of that direction. And then it kind of surprised me to
6 see him come from the southwest, but I didn't really think
7 anything of it. There was a little smoky here yesterday. So I
8 thought maybe they were just trying to avoid the smoke. So then I
9 got a visual on him, approximately right in that direction. I
10 guess this is where I can use this thing. Is that the idea?

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. Yeah, okay.

13 Q. Yeah, just show us.

14 A. They came up, you know, kind of directly towards me in this
15 direction, and then from what I remember, I was kind of surprised
16 to see this, but they did like a turn back to the south and then a
17 hard banking base turn into final with a pretty steep approach to
18 the southern end of the runway there, came into land. And then it
19 was pretty apparent that he was going to abort that landing,
20 throttled back up and then went around out to the north and made a
21 long left-hand orbit and came out. And then since we see this a
22 lot, I was just kind of like, well, and I was hungry. So I went
23 inside, and I was just getting a bite to eat.

24 Q. Did you hear anything?

25 A. I didn't hear anything.

1 Q. You didn't hear anything?

2 A. No, because I was inside. The air conditioner was running.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. I was in there for maybe 3 to 5 minutes, and then one of my
5 partners came in, kind of frantically letting us know that they
6 crashed basically. And so I came out of that red door right
7 there, the front door, and then immediately looked out to the
8 north and saw a black plume of smoke. So then we -- at that
9 point, I had a little conversation with my partner, came up with a
10 plan that I was going to call our command center, and just tell
11 them what we had, get a resource order, and then we were already
12 rigged up here on our helicopter for air rescue. Made the
13 determination that it was going to be the best plan for us to get
14 in the helicopter, do a recon and see if we could effect an air
15 rescue.

16 Q. I see.

17 A. So that's what we did. Got in, my partner made a call on the
18 radio to our command center, telling them our plan and what we
19 had. We lifted off out of here, went straight to the scene,
20 orbited it, determined there was no place to insert a rescue or to
21 try to effect a rescue. So the next best plan was just land at
22 the south end of the runway. So that's what we did. We landed at
23 the south end closest to the wreckage.

24 Another plan was made. I got out with two rescuers, and then
25 we had another guy, one of our other firefighters on the ground

1 here. So I got all three of them, and we just dove (ph.) off the
2 hill with the radio, and went down to see if we could see what we
3 could see.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Have I missed anything so far? You know, I can go into what
6 we did down the hill. Is that --

7 Q. I'm more interested in what you saw just with the airplane
8 when it was flying.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. So I might rewind a little bit on that.

11 A. Sure.

12 Q. I'm curious. I just want to be clear. So normally he comes
13 from -- you were saying normally he comes this direction, right,
14 but you were -- he came this direction this time to the southwest,
15 right?

16 A. Yeah, yeah. I mean I wouldn't -- and I couldn't tell you.
17 Maybe they do, I just happened to be standing here --

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. -- and I saw it today. So I was just kind of anticipating
20 more south.

21 Q. Okay. And when you said he did that first approach, about
22 how far out was he when he did that first approach but he turned
23 back?

24 A. Well, you know, he just came straight from, you know,
25 southwest I think, and he came like straight towards me, towards

1 us here, and then made a turn, you know, over this closest little
2 ridge, made a turn in kind of an "S" pattern and then tried to
3 come in.

4 Q. So did he come on this side of the hill or the far side of
5 the hill --

6 A. No, he was on this side of the hill.

7 Q. Interesting.

8 A. The west side.

9 Q. Okay. And you said he turned back around and did kind of
10 like a tight turn back around to set up a second approach?

11 A. Well, no, he did a long turn.

12 Q. Oh, I see.

13 A. So he came in, aborted, went way around and then --

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. -- he was about right here when I went inside.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And he was like way out over this ridge right here I'd say.

18 Q. Interesting.

19 A. Yeah.

20 MS. WHITAKER: Okay. Can you think of any other questions?

21 BY MR. STEIN:

22 Q. When you said it was apparent that -- sorry. Stephen Stein,
23 also with the NTSB, S-t-e-p-h-e-n, last name Stein, S-t-e-i-n.
24 When you said it was apparent that he was going to abort the
25 landing, how did you figure it was apparent?

1 A. Because I heard him throttle up and then kind of nose up and
2 start gaining altitude.

3 Q. Gotcha. How did you engine sound?

4 A. Nothing that stood out to me as abnormal.

5 Q. So, yeah.

6 MS. WHITAKER: And it sounded, everything was normal the
7 entire time you were out here? It didn't look like anything that
8 was out of place. Anything that was terribly unusual?

9 MR. GOULD: No, I mean I -- I've seen people do that most of
10 the time, plenty of times because I know it's not an easy place to
11 land. I'm not a pilot but as far as I can tell.

12 MS. WHITAKER: Yeah.

13 BY MR. STEIN:

14 Q. The go around or the "S" turn?

15 A. The go around.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Yeah. The "S" turn was I would say not normal because in my
18 eyes it appeared you would want -- I feel like as a pilot, you
19 would want to like do a big, wide orbit especially if you never
20 landed here before which I don't know if he has or not.

21 MS. WHITAKER: Yeah.

22 MR. GOULD: Just kind of like look at the wind socks, see
23 what you've got and then make an approach from there.

24 BY MS. WHITAKER:

25 Q. Do you have anything else that you think we should know?

1 Like any interesting tidbits that you can think of right now.

2 A. I don't know. What pops into my head is just that I've been
3 told he's a newer pilot, and it's not an easy place to land. You
4 can look at the runway and see where people have screwed that
5 landing up before. I don't know if there's anything you can do
6 about that but, you know.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. That's -- I don't know. That's about really all I can say
9 about that.

10 Q. Okay.

11 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT NEAR
KNEELAND AIRPORT IN EUREKA,
CALIFORNIA ON JULY 23, 2024
Interview of Joshua Gould

ACCIDENT NO.: WPA24FA252

PLACE: Kneeland, California

DATE: July 24, 2024

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.

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the transcriber.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

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Interview of: JORDY HART

Kneeland Helitack Base
 Kneeland, California

Wednesday,
 July 24, 2024

APPEARANCES:

KATHRYN WHITAKER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN STEIN, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. HART: Jordy Hart, J-o-r-d-y, H-a-r-t.

INTERVIEW OF JORDY HART

BY MS. WHITAKER:

Q. Okay. So, we're going to talk about what you saw yesterday. So why don't you just start from the beginning as you'd like to tell it to us.

A. Okay. So, we were over -- standing right around here, right by the entrance to the gate.

Q. Um-hum.

A. And, we pulled over Pete's truck, getting ready to give these guys a ride after they landed. As we were standing there, we saw them come in to do a low pass for the first time, and his approach was coming out of the west, took a sharp 90 degree, did his low pass over the runway. And then at that point, I think I wasn't looking, and then by the time I looked back up, he was starting his descent, coming in for final.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. At that point, touched down, right basically parallel with us, right in line with us, where we were standing in the gate. Came down pretty fast, hit his wheels, came up aggressively, almost hit his tail on the runway as soon as he hit.

Q. Okay.

A. Started going back up, and at that point, we were standing right over here. So, we started, you know, making our way down to

1 the runway so we could see what happened. By the time we got to
2 the runway to where we could see the end, we couldn't see the
3 plane, hear it, and that's when we saw a little wisp of smoke.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. So one of our guys broke off, ran over to the helicopter, and
6 then me and Pete got in his truck and drove to the end of the
7 runway to see if we could do anything at that point. And by the
8 time we got to the end of the runway, there was a much bigger
9 plume of smoke, and we realized it was further down the ravine.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So, at that point we realized we really didn't have the gear,
12 tools or -- to make a difference to do anything. So --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- we headed back and got gear, got on the helicopter and
15 went from there.

16 Q. Okay. So, when you observed the airplane coming in, did it
17 seem normal to you or was there anything different about how, in
18 your observation, watching planes come in, was there anything
19 different about how it came in?

20 A. The initial approach was different.

21 Q. How so?

22 A. Coming in from the west --

23 Q. I see.

24 A. -- and doing that sharp -- I hadn't seen that before. I
25 thought it was strange.

1 Q. Interesting. Did the airplane look and sound normal to you?

2 A. As far as I could tell, yeah.

3 Q. Did you -- were you able to hear the engine?

4 A. I do not recall.

5 Q. You don't recall?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. When you said he touched down about right out from
8 where we're standing right here, right?

9 A. If we were to look straight out --

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. -- it was right here.

12 Q. Right here.

13 A. By the time he touched down, I remember seeing his tail
14 almost hit the ground, and as he was coming back up, that's when
15 he went behind the hill for us. Right there, bounced, and then he
16 was past the hill --

17 Q. I see.

18 A. -- as his tail was about to hit. So.

19 Q. Okay.

20 MS. WHITAKER: Do you have any questions for him?

21 BY MR. STEIN:

22 Q. Could -- actually, would you mind using the airplane to just
23 kind of show me -- show us what the approached looked like?

24 A. Yeah, so he was flying from the west. As soon as he got to
25 the runway, he took a sharp for his low orbit coming in. When he

1 came in, he did a really low pass on the runway, and then he came
2 back out to do another orbit. And at that point, I wasn't
3 watching. So I'm not sure if his final was the same or if he
4 actually did a full go around and came straight in. By the time I
5 looked back up, he was about right in there, in that area.

6 MS. WHITAKER: Yeah.

7 MR. HART: And then that's when he touched down initially.

8 BY MS. WHITAKER:

9 Q. Okay. In your observation, is it typical for them to do that
10 initial low pass?

11 A. Yeah, they'll come in and do that first, the low pass, and
12 then come back around --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- and then land the second time --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- from what I've seen.

17 Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add that you think might
18 be helpful to us?

19 A. Nothing I can think of in the scenario.

20 BY MR. STEIN:

21 Q. Do you know about what time it happened?

22 A. I actually was -- so I just sent a text to somebody -- that's
23 why I didn't see his final pass. And so that was right around --
24 my text at 11:04, and by the time I looked back up, he was coming
25 back down. So it was right around in that time period.

1 MS. WHITAKER: Okay.

2 MR. STEIN: That's very helpful. Thank you.

3 MS. WHITAKER: That is actually. Okay.

4 MR. STEIN: All right. That's it.

5 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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Interview of: CARL LOGAN

Kneeland Helitack Base
 Kneeland, California

Wednesday,
 July 24, 2024

APPEARANCES:

KATHRYN WHITAKER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN STEIN, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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MS. WHITAKER: Okay. So would you say and spell your name please?

MR. LOGAN: Carl Logan, C-a-r-l, L-o-g-a-n.

INTERVIEW OF CARL LOGAN

BY MS. WHITAKER:

Q. Okay. So just tell us what you saw here yesterday.

A. Well, yesterday I was up here, kind of had my nose in the helicopter because we just got back from flying.

Q. Okay.

A. And what I saw was what I thought was a flyby initially. So it was like a low pass through here over the airport. And then the next thing I saw was basically the airplane popping up over towards kind of the gravel pile.

Q. Would you be able to show us that with the little airplane.

A. Yeah. Here in a sec.

Q. Okay.

A. But initially I noticed he kind of landed about midfield, just shy of midfield, kind of over by the wind sock. But there again, there was a helicopter in the way. So I couldn't really see it, but I noticed kind of out of the corner of my eye.

Q. Yeah.

A. So, kind of landing here. Like I wouldn't be able to see the airplane and it kind of popped up in front of, in front of the nose of helicopter there, 901, in front of the gravel pile.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And then I remember he kind of dipped down behind the fuel
3 tank there, and hit the runway again, but in between, there was
4 like -- you could hear the engine change tone. So it was like a
5 throttle input. And then it bounced up behind the fuel tank --

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. -- and then hit the end of the runway almost at the numbers
8 there, kind of behind that fir tree.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. And then kind of hit, nose low and then bounced up and then
11 transitioned to where I couldn't see it at the end of the runway
12 there past the oaks.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. There again, hear another throttle change at the end. That's
15 its call it second bounce, and then from there, trees crashing and
16 then eventually a plume of smoke.

17 Q. Okay. Those trees down there, did you see if -- did he stay
18 generally centered within the runway or did he deviate off of
19 either side in your observation?

20 A. The first bounce was centered.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. And then the second bounce at the end of the runway was
23 closer to the left if you're facing north.

24 Q. Okay. So on the side.

25 A. So it was kind of a sideways bounce, that second bounce. So

1 when he came up, he kind of, kind of bounced in this motion and
2 then it was quickly, quickly descending below where I couldn't see
3 it no more.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So it was kind of not centered at that end, but a little on
6 the left, you know.

7 Q. Yeah. Okay. During this time, how did the airplane's engine
8 sound to you?

9 A. As far as it running or --

10 Q. Yeah. Did it sound, did it sound normal, like generally
11 normal or did it sound like it was different or abnormal?

12 A. No, it sounded like everything -- it didn't sound like it was
13 running bad.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. Mostly I just noticed the input of throttle.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. And then, you know, throttling off.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 BY MR. STEIN:

20 Q. Did the sound go up? Like the harmonic --

21 A. Yeah. It was a tone change like higher RPM, like throttling
22 up I guess you'd call it.

23 Q. Got it. And then did you see the approach?

24 A. No.

25 Q. You didn't see it.

1 A. Nope, I didn't. I didn't see that because like I said, I was
2 -- we had just got back and I was -- I think I was doing paperwork
3 or something like that, kind of one the seat of the helicopter
4 like right -- my head right here on the approach. And then like I
5 said, I noticed or I heard like an airplane throttling down for a
6 landing. So that's what kind of cued me in, and then I started
7 seeing the aircraft bounce down the runway.

8 Q. About what time? Do you have a bead on that?

9 A. 11 -- I wrote down 11:10 or 11:13 on my sheet in the
10 helicopter, but I think that was, I think that was about when we
11 were lifting maybe. I'm not -- I don't know. I blacked out.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. It was pretty traumatic.

15 A. I would say, I would say around 11-ish.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Because we landed like 10, around 10:40, and the pilot that
18 was flying our helicopter had just got a text also, that they were
19 20 minutes out. So it was around 11.

20 Q. Okay. I assume you see probably a good share of approaches
21 in this airport?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And landings.

24 A. We'll hear them come in. I mean we're in aviation. So we
25 kind of poke our head out especially when someone lands up here.

1 It's not, you know, it's common but not very common.

2 Q. Do they usually go around?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. They do.

5 A. Yeah. This airport's known for just -- the winds are
6 different and then also animals on there.

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. So I'm assuming they're kind of, you know, seeing what the
9 runway looks like and seeing if it's open because it is remote.

10 Q. When they come -- when they're landing on -- what is it? 3-
11 3. What direction do they usually come from? Do they come in
12 straight over the hills or do they come from the west or from the
13 east?

14 A. For the most part, they'll come to the -- we call it the west
15 side of this mountain here at the end of the runway. So kind of
16 over that ridge there. They'll approach from there. But they're
17 typically -- for us, we have like a north, northwest wind. So
18 approach and departures from there. So they're usually coming and
19 landing this way.

20 Q. Gotcha. Great.

21 MS. WHITAKER: Okay. I don't have anything else.

22 MR. STEIN: That's it for me. I'm good.

23 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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Interview of: PETER MCMANUS
 Witness

Kneeland Helitack Base
 Kneeland, California

Wednesday,
 July 24, 2024

APPEARANCES:

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I N T E R V I E W

MS. WHITAKER: What I'm going to do is I'm going to say my name. I'm going to spell it out, and then I'm going to have you do the same.

So my name is Kathryn Whitaker, and I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board. My name is spelled K-a-t-h-r-y-n, W-h-i-t-a-k-e-r. And please state your name and spell it.

MR. MCMANUS: Yeah, Peter McManus, P-e-t-e-r, M-c-M-a-n-u-s.

INTERVIEW OF PETER MCMANUS

BY MS. WHITAKER:

Q. So please tell me about what you saw here today or yesterday?

A. Today -- yesterday, yeah. So I came to work. There had been a helibase set up at this airstrip. So we came down -- I had my pickup truck, and we came down to just check the safety of the runway.

Q. Yeah.

A. And there was some -- there was, you know, type 1 helicopters at the helibase. Like sometimes they make indents in the runway. And so they had been marked. I think -- I can't -- I don't remember who marked them, but I think it was the -- whatever companies who have them.

Q. Um-hum.

A. And so we scoped it out. We made them even more -- they're way at the end of the runway.

Q. Yeah.

1 A. So they weren't in the main strip. And then we just checked
2 to make sure there was no debris or anything, and then a mark
3 found to be more apparently with no marking, but they were at the
4 far end of the runway. There was nothing in the middle where they
5 would have landed. So we drove back and just like in Kneeland, we
6 know our mechanics are coming. So we usually have, you know,
7 we're going to greet them, give them a ride, give them some cold
8 drinks, you know. We just got off a ride from McClellan. So I'm
9 parked here, and then we're waiting. And I don't remember the
10 approach or anything like that, but the airplane does a low pass,
11 and so I think he's just scoping out the runway. And so he comes
12 down and is just scoping it out, okay, because he's not landing.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 MR. STEIN: Can you see the airplane?

15 MR. McMANUS: Yeah, he comes down, and I, you know, I'm not a
16 fixed wing pilot. We just work around rotorcrafts. So I don't
17 really know that much about the mechanics of pilots or what they
18 do, but he just did a low pass, I'm assuming, just to check -- I
19 don't know if he had landed here before or -- so, he came down,
20 checked it out. And I'm assuming he just did an orbit and then he
21 came down and I don't remember his flight path. He came down and
22 it seemed like a -- it seemed like kind of a high speed. I don't
23 know. I just -- I've seen a few airplanes land here, and it just
24 seems like it's kind of -- I don't know. I guess a tough airport
25 to land at. He came down, and he hit, and then he just kind of

1 screeched and bounced, then hit again. So I could see it like
2 it's -- so it was pretty much right in this field of vision.

3 BY MS. WHITAKER:

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. And I think there's skid marks right there --

6 Q. Uh-huh.

7 A. -- and right there. And so when he came down, he hit and I
8 remember a coworker saying, oh -- whoa, his tail got 4 feet and 2
9 feet from the ground.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. But I didn't see that. I saw boom, and then he landed and I
12 hear him like throttle up. So I'm assuming he was like this
13 because it's a long airstrip.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. You would think he would land back there. He landed right
16 there, bounced, another 30 feet, hit again, and so we can't see
17 the end of the runway.

18 Q. Yeah, yeah.

19 A. And we hear him like input throttle. So I figure like, you
20 know, it's a no go. He's going to, he's going to get some speed
21 and take off again and redo it.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. And then it's -- at that point, it was kind of quiet, and I'm
24 like what the heck. So we just, you know, we moved, kind of run
25 up, we run. We get as far as here, and we look down and there's

1 this, you know, there's nothing. I didn't hear any noise. I
2 didn't hear a crash. And, you know, I was just like where is he?
3 I'm like what happened. Did he make it? And then all of a sudden
4 we saw this like just, you know, a vertical plume of gray smoke,
5 and that's when the adrenaline, kind of like, oh, my God.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. No way, this guy crashed. It was unreal. So I hopped in my
8 pickup truck. I take one of the coworkers, and we speed as fast
9 as we can to the end of the runway, and just to see like, you
10 know, maybe the wreckage is like close enough that you can like
11 (indiscernible) somebody out but it was already in the drainage
12 like --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- 300, 400 feet down. And, we didn't have -- you know, I
15 just have a pickup truck. I didn't have a crash rescue kit.

16 Q. No. Yeah.

17 A. So we didn't have an extinguisher. We had no tools, and even
18 getting down. Like at that point, it was already -- there was
19 already black smoke. So it's already like --

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. -- going.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. And then that's when we just came back to the base. The
24 other coworkers were on the helicopter. So they were going to get
25 into air rescue mode, and I just threw a bunch of tools. I

1 already had a chain saw in the back of my truck. I grabbed a
2 bunch of tools, and a radio.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. No mic and helmet, and I just parked down there. And that's
5 when the helicopter was sizing it up, seeing if they can just put
6 in a couple of rescuers and then I think they just landed really
7 quick at the end of the runway, and that's when we kind of teamed
8 up, and the two rescuers that -- I had the crash rescue kit, and
9 the med gear and I was trying -- and a chain saw, and I was trying
10 to make my way down, but they were able to get down there in a
11 couple of minutes --

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. -- to size it up, and it was already an inferno. And that
14 was pretty much the story.

15 Q. Okay. When you first observed the airplane coming in for its
16 first approach -- well, at all times, how would you characterize
17 the sound and look of the airplane? Did it look pretty normal or
18 was there anything that stood out to you?

19 A. No, it looked normal.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. I don't know, these landings always seem kind of aggressive
22 here.

23 Q. Did it -- how would you describe the sound of its engine?
24 Did it sound okay or was it something you hadn't heard before?

25 A. I think it sounded fine.

1 Q. Would you describe the sound as like smooth and continuous?
2 I mean other than maybe him adjusting the throttle.

3 A. The throttle was the weird part.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. But I figured he was just it was a no go, and I'm going to --
6 maybe I landed too far.

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. And that's the skid marks up there where he landed. I don't
9 know where the halfway point is right now.

10 Q. I believe there's a sign but I don't see it.

11 A. The 1 mile.

12 Q. Oh, yeah, right there.

13 A. Or half mile in.

14 Q. Okay. So -- and you said he touched down first about right
15 here or was it further down?

16 A. It was like right in my field of view. So right there.

17 Q. His initial touchdown was right here?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay. And then you said he touched down a second time?

20 A. Yeah, he bounced.

21 Q. Did he? Okay.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And then you didn't hear anything and you couldn't see
24 anything because of the obstruction. You didn't hear anything
25 else after that?

1 A. No.

2 MS. WHITAKER: Okay. Do you have any questions for him?

3 BY MR. STEIN:

4 Q. What time did it happen?

5 A. I don't know.

6 Q. Can you approximate?

7 A. Just time -- like a minute before it got called in.

8 Q. Okay. All right.

9 A. I didn't have a watch or --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- I didn't have my helmet that might document anything like

12 that.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I kind of blacked out from -- not really blacked out, but it

15 was just a lot of adrenaline at first.

16 MS. WHITAKER: Yeah, for sure.

17 BY MR. STEIN:

18 Q. And you said that landings here are kind of aggressive. Can

19 you elaborate on that?

20 A. I don't see a lot of mountain flying airports. So it just

21 seems -- I don't know. Just planes in general, it seems like it's

22 -- I'm just used to commercial jetliners and we have long

23 airstrips. So I don't know how a plane slows down. Like do they

24 reverse the propellers and that's how they brake?

25 Q. Not this one.

1 MS. WHITAKER: No.

2 BY MR. STEIN:

3 Q. By aggressive to you mean like hard landings? Does it seem
4 like the landings are really hard typically or just, you know,
5 they brake aggressively?

6 A. FedEx comes in and it always seems like -- I always want to
7 watch it because it just seems like an interesting thing. I don't
8 know it's just crazy. The pilots are pretty skilled. It's crazy
9 to think that he's going in on an airstrip and stopping. This
10 airplane going really fast and, you know, they have to stop on an
11 airstrip.

12 Q. Did you happen to see the airplane approach?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay.

15 BY MS. WHITAKER:

16 Q. Is there anything that you can think of that you think we
17 should know like any other things you can --

18 A. No, I pretty much told my objective observations.

19 Q. Okay. All right. Well --

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT NEAR
KNEELAND AIRPORT IN EUREKA,
CALIFORNIA ON JULY 23, 2024
Interview of Peter McManus

ACCIDENT NO.: WPA24FA252

PLACE: Kneeland, California

DATE: July 24, 2024

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.

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber