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Hearing 890

NEW ORLEANS AP - A cockpit voice recording heard Wednesday indicated a DC8 jetliner lost flying speed during a practice landing with two engines out back here last March and stalled before it plunged to the earth, killing 19 persons.

The last desperate words of a pilot instructor, his captain pupil and two pilot engineers are contained on the tape recovered from the charred wreckage.

Less than two minutes before the Delta Air Lines aircraft smashed into two homes and plunged into the Hilton Inn, there was no indication of trouble.

The transcript, released during a hearing conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board, showed that Capt. Maurice Watson, 45, of suburban Harahan, was putting another captain, James W. Morton, 47, of Covington, La., through a simulated emergency reduced power landing when disaster struck.

The tape also carries the voices of Delta pilot George Piazza II, 30, a New Orleans attorney, and David E. Posey, 25, of suburban Metairie, both of whom were acting as pilot engineers.

Another pilot, William P. Jeter, 33, of Metairie, and a Federal Aviation Administration inspector, William J. Snow of Houston, Tex. was aboard.

The following is the last minute and 42 seconds of the flight with the time given in Greenwich Mean Time:

648:31; Capt. Watson: One twenty-nine is approach. Twenty-four threshold. Unidentified voice O.K., Bud, looks good. Unidentified voice How about that? Unidentified voice Now we're straightened out.

649:46; Capt. Morton: Call my air speed for me.

649:47; Capt. Watson: One forty. Background voices unintelligible. What? O.K.

649:51; Sound of engine beginning slight spool up.

649:52; Capt. Watson: One thirty five.

649:58; Watson: See, you're letting her out-put the rudder in there-you're getting your speed down now, you're not going to be able to get it.

Capt. Morton: Uh, uh.

650:5; Capt. Morton: CAN'T HOLD IT BUD loud.

Capt. Watson: NAW. DON'T LET IT UP, LET IT UP, LET IT UP, LET IT UP, LET IT UP, LET IT UP.

Capt. Morton: Oh - God Damn.

Capt. Watson: JIM, LET IT UP - LET IT UP - LET IT UP - LET IT UP.

650:11; Posey: GOD DAMNIT.

650:13. . . End of recording.

Minutes earlier, the recording showed Capt. Morton was learning how to land the big jetliner with two engines out back. Capt. Watson had told his student: "Don't let that thing get below 160." He meant to hold the flying speed above 160 miles an hour.

Conflicting stories were told by witnesses as the examining board began the two-day public hearing into the crash in a New Orleans suburb last March 30. All six men aboard the craft were killed. The victims on the ground included nine high school girls from Juda, Wis., on a senior class trip.

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