
		NTSB ID: DCA01MA034		Aircraft Registration Number: N303GA	
		Occurrence Date: 03/29/2001		Most Critical Injury: Fatal	
		Occurrence Type: Accident		Investigated By: NTSB	
Location/Time					
Nearest City/Place Aspen		State CO	Zip Code	Local Time 1901	Time Zone MST
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip		Distance From Landing Facility:			
Aircraft Information Summary					
Aircraft Manufacturer Grumman		Model/Series Gulfstream III		Type of Aircraft Airplane	
Revenue Sightseeing Flight: No			Air Medical Transport Flight: No		
Narrative					
<p>Brief narrative statement of facts, conditions and circumstances pertinent to the accident/incident:</p> <p>The Board's full report is available at http://www.nts.gov/Publicctn/publicctn.htm .</p> <p>HISTORY OF FLIGHT</p> <p>On March 29, 2001, about 1901:57 mountain standard time, a Gulfstream III, N303GA, owned by Airbourne Charter, Inc., and operated by Avjet Corporation of Burbank, California, crashed while on final approach to runway 15 at Aspen-Pitkin County Airport (ASE), Aspen, Colorado. The charter flight had departed Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) about 1711 with 2 pilots, 1 flight attendant, and 15 passengers. The airplane crashed into sloping terrain about 2,400 feet short of the runway threshold. All of the passengers and crewmembers were killed, and the airplane was destroyed. The flight was being operated on an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan under 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 135.</p> <p>The captain and first officer for the charter flight reported to the Avjet facility at the Burbank-Glendale Pasadena Airport (BUR), Burbank, California, sometime before 1300 (1200 Pacific standard time) on the day of the accident. An Avjet captain stated, in a postaccident interview, that he saw the captain checking the ASE weather on a computer display and discussing the ASE weather with an Avjet charter department scheduler while at BUR. Another Avjet captain stated, in a postaccident interview, that he saw the first officer performing what appeared to be a routine airplane preflight inspection on N303GA on the ramp at BUR.</p> <p>About 1200 (1100 Pacific standard time), the first officer contacted the Hawthorne, California, Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS) specialist for a weather briefing. A review of the audiotape indicated that the specialist informed the first officer of three National Weather Service (NWS) AIRMETS [Airman's Meteorological Information] pertinent to the flight to ASE, an 1141 weather observation for ASE, and the ASE forecast for 1300 to 1900. The specialist also informed the first officer that the approach procedure had been updated and that circling minimums were no longer authorized at night. During the briefing, the first officer filed the flight plan, identifying Garfield County Regional Airport in Rifle, Colorado, as the alternate airport.</p> <p>The captain and first officer departed BUR at 1538 (1438 Pacific standard time) for a positioning flight to LAX, arriving there 11 minutes later. While at LAX, the captain and a charter department scheduler discussed the status of the passengers' arrivals (none were at the airport when the airplane arrived) and the weather currently being forecast for the flight's arrival time at ASE. Also, the captain and another Avjet captain discussed the nighttime landing restriction at ASE that required the airplane to land within 30 minutes after sunset. ASE's nighttime airport operating hours, according to an airport chart dated November 1, 1994, indicated that aircraft that did not meet FAA stage III noise criteria were not authorized to land at the airport on March 29 after 1858.</p>					
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Narrative (Continued)

The airplane's departure from LAX at 1711 (1611 Pacific standard time) was 41 minutes later than originally scheduled because of the late arrival of the passengers, including the charter customer. The flight was planned for 1 hour 35 minutes, so the estimated arrival time at ASE was 1846-12 minutes before the airport's nighttime landing curfew.

Statements early in the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) recording indicated that the flight crew was aware of the nighttime landing restriction at ASE. The CVR transcript indicated that, about 1831:06, the captain stated, "well, there's the edge of night right here." About 1831:24, the first officer asked the captain about the time of official sunset for ASE. The captain replied "six twenty eight" and then stated, "so we get thirty minutes after sunset. so six fifty eight...about...seven o'clock."


About 1837:04, the first officer called for the approach briefing. The captain then stated, "we're...probably gonna make it a visual...if we don't get the airport over here we'll go ahead and shoot that approach" and "we're not going to have a bunch of extra gas so we only get to shoot it once and then we're going to Rifle." The first officer acknowledged this information. About 1839:56, the flight crew began to receive automated terminal information service (ATIS) information Hotel. Afterward, the first officer read back the wind, visibility, sky condition, and temperature information, and the captain acknowledged this information.

About 1844:22, the first officer made initial contact with ASE approach control. About 1844:43, the flight crew heard, over the ASE approach control frequency, the request of a Canadair Challenger 600 airplane, N527JA, for another approach to ASE. The approach controller then cleared N527JA to continue on the published missed approach procedure. About 1845:00, the first officer stated, "I hope he's doing practice approaches." About 3 seconds later, the captain asked the controller whether the pilot of N527JA was practicing or had actually missed the approach. The controller replied that the pilot had missed the approach and indicated that he had seen the airplane at 10,400 feet. The controller also informed the captain that two other airplanes were on approach to ASE. About 1845:32, the controller instructed the flight crew to turn to a 360° heading for vectors for the approach sequence.

While the airplane was descending into the terminal area, the CVR recorded the flight crew discussing the location of a highway near the airport. About 1845:45, the captain stated, "where's that...highway? can we get down in there?" About 11 seconds later, the captain stated, "can you see?" and the first officer stated, "I'm looking I'm looking...no." About 1846:26, the captain indicated, "I got it," and, about 2 seconds later, he asked the first officer, "can't really see up there can ya?" The first officer replied, over the next several seconds, "nope not really" and "I see a river but I don't see nothing else." About 1847:19, the first officer stated, "I see...some towns over here and the highway's leading that way but I'm not sure."

About 1847:30, the approach controller made a blanket broadcast that the pilot of an airplane (a Cessna Citation, N900MF) saw the airport at 10,400 feet and was making a straight-in approach, to which the first officer stated, "ah, that's good." (This airplane landed without incident at the airport about 10 minutes before the accident.) About 1847:41, the captain informed the controller that, "I can almost see up the canyon from here but I don't know the terrain well enough or I'd take the visual." About 1847:51, the first officer stated, "could do a contact but...I don't know," followed by his statement, "probably we could not...." The first officer also stated, about 1848:04, "remember that crazy guy in this Lear[jet] when we were...on the ground in Aspen last time and he [stated that he could] see the airport but he couldn't see it." The captain did not respond to either of the first officer's statements.

About 1848:51, the captain stated, "there's the highway right there." The first officer then asked the captain if he wanted to be set up on the approach, and the captain indicated that he was ready. About 1849:28, the captain asked the first officer whether he could see the highway, to which the first officer replied, "no it's clouds over here on this area I don't see it." About 1850:42, the

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captain stated, "but it's right there." About 6 seconds later, he stated, "oh I mean we'll shoot it from here I mean we're here but we only get to do it once." About 1850:54, the captain indicated to the flight attendant that, if the attempt to execute the approach was not successful, they would have to go to Rifle because "it's too late in the evening then to come around."

About 1851:54, the approach controller instructed the flight crew to turn to a heading of 050°. About 1853:09, the approach controller instructed the flight crew to turn to a heading of 140° to intercept the final approach course and maintain an altitude of 16,000 feet. Afterward, the controller made a blanket broadcast that the last airplane (a Canadair Challenger 600, N898R) had missed the approach, to which the first officer remarked, "that's...not...good."


About 1853:57, the flight attendant asked whether a male passenger could sit on the jumpseat in the cockpit. About 11 seconds later, the flight attendant instructed that passenger to make sure his seatbelt was on, and the CVR recorded a sound consistent with a seatbelt buckle. About 1855:05, the flight crew heard, over the approach control frequency, the pilot of N898R transmit his intention to execute a missed approach. Afterward, the captain stated, "the weather's gone down they're not making it in," and an unidentified male voice in the cockpit stated, "oh really." The approach controller subsequently cleared N898R to continue on the missed approach procedure.

About 1856:06, the approach controller cleared the flight crew for the VOR/DME-C approach, advised the crew that the airplane was 5 miles from the Red Table VOR (the initial approach fix), and instructed the crew to cross the VOR at or above an altitude of 14,000 feet. The first officer acknowledged this information.

About 1856:23, the first officer said, "after VOR you are cleared to twelve thousand seven hundred." About 1856:42, the approach controller made a blanket broadcast that ATIS information India was current and that the visibility north of the airport was 2 miles. The approach controller then instructed the flight crew to contact ASE local control, and the crew established contact with the local controller about 1857:28. The local controller informed the flight crewmembers that they were following a Challenger airplane (N527JA) that was 2 miles from the runway, reported the wind at 240° at 5 knots, and cleared the airplane to land on runway 15. About 1857:55, the first officer acknowledged the clearance to land. The captain then asked the first officer for the DME at the 12,700-foot step-down fix. The first officer replied, 3 DME (south of the Red Table VOR).

About 1858:00, the local controller asked the pilot of N527JA whether he had the airport in sight, to which he replied, "negative, going around." About 1858:13, an unidentified male voice in the cockpit asked, "are we clear?" The captain replied, "not yet" and "the guy in front of us didn't make it either." About 1858:27, the captain asked the first officer about the next step-down altitude, and he answered that it was 12,200 feet. The first officer also indicated that the next step-down fix was at 6 DME (south of the Red Table VOR). (This step-down fix, ALLIX, is the final approach fix and the beginning of the final approach segment.) About 1859:11, the captain asked the first officer about the next step-down altitude, and the first officer answered, 10,400 feet.

About 1859:30, the captain called for the landing gear, and the CVR recorded the sound of two "clunks" and an increase in background noise immediately afterward. The captain called for landing flaps about 1859:34, and the CVR recorded a "click" and a "clunk" sound about 2 seconds later. About 1859:39, the first officer indicated that the step-down fix at 10,400 feet was 9.5 DME (south of the Red Table VOR). About 1859:46, the first officer stated, "three greens." About 1900:04, the first officer indicated that the missed approach point was 11 DME (south of the Red Table VOR). About 1900:08, an unidentified male voice in the cockpit stated, "snow." About 1900:22, when the airplane was at an altitude of 10,400 feet, the captain stated, "okay...I'm breaking out," and asked the local controller, about 5 seconds later, whether the runway lights were all the way up. The controller indicated, "affirmative they're on high." About 1900:30, the first officer said, "okay you can go...ten thousand two hundred [the minimum descent altitude]."

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About 1900:43, the captain asked the first officer whether he could see the runway, and the CVR recorded an unintelligible statement made by the first officer about 2 seconds later. About 1900:46, when the airplane was at an altitude of 10,000 feet, the captain asked the first officer whether he could see the highway, and he replied, about 1 second later, "see highway." The local controller asked the flight crewmembers, about 1900:49, whether they had the runway in sight. About 2 seconds later, the first officer stated, "affirmative," and the captain stated, "yes now yeah we do." About 1 second afterward, the first officer advised the controller that the runway was in sight. About 1901:13, the first officer stated, "...to the right is good." According to radar data, the airport was to the left of the airplane at this time.

About 1901:21, the CVR recorded a sound consistent with the airplane's configuration alarm, which continued for 9 seconds. About 1901:28, the CVR recorded the airplane's flight profile advisory (FPA) unit announce the 1,000-foot callout, and the first officer stated, "one thousand to go." About 1901:31 and 1901:34, the CVR recorded the sound of the FPA's 900- and 800-foot callouts, respectively. About 1901:36, the captain stated, "where's it at?" The CVR recorded the FPA's 700- and 600-foot callouts about 1901:38 and 1901:42, respectively. About 1901:42, the first officer stated, "to the right," which the captain repeated about 1 second later. Radar data indicated that the airport was still to the left of the airplane at this point.

About 1901:45, the CVR recorded the airplane's GPWS and FPA unit simultaneously announce the 500-foot callout. According to radar data, the airplane started a turn to the left about 1901:47. About 1901:49, the GPWS announced a sink rate alert, and the FPA announced the 400-foot callout. About 1901:52, the CVR again recorded a GPWS sink rate alert and the FPA 400-foot callout. Also, the CVR recorded a rumbling noise that continued until the end of the recording. According to the CVR Sound Spectrum Study performed for this accident, the engines increased to maximum power about 1901:53. The FPA 300-foot callout was recorded about 1901:54, and the GPWS and FPA 200-foot callouts were recorded about 1 and 2 seconds later, respectively. About 1901:57, the CVR recorded the GPWS bank angle alert when the airplane was banked about 40° left wing down.

The airplane crashed into terrain while in a steep left bank about 2,400 feet short of the runway 15 threshold, 300 feet to the right (west) of the runway centerline and 100 feet above the runway threshold elevation. The accident occurred at 39° 14.315 minutes north latitude and 106° 52.637 minutes west longitude. The time of the accident was 34 minutes after official sunset. The CVR stopped recording about 1901:58.

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Landing Facility/Approach Information					
Airport Name	Airport ID:	Airport Elevation	Runway Used	Runway Length	Runway Width
ASPEN-PITKIN CO/SARDY FIELD	ASE	7815 Ft. MSL	15	7004	100
Runway Surface Type: Asphalt					
Runway Surface Condition: Dry					
Approach/Arrival Flown: VOR/DME					
VFR Approach/Landing: Unknown					
Aircraft Information					
Aircraft Manufacturer		Model/Series		Serial Number	
Grumman		Gulfstream III		303	
Airworthiness Certificate(s): Normal					
Landing Gear Type: Tricycle					
Amateur Built Acft? No	Number of Seats:	Certified Max Gross Wt.	70300 LBS	Number of Engines: 2	
Engine Type:	Engine Manufacturer:	Model/Series:	Rated Power:		
Turbo Fan	Rolls-Royce	Spey MK 511-8	11400 LBS		
- Aircraft Inspection Information					
Type of Last Inspection	Date of Last Inspection	Time Since Last Inspection	Airframe Total Time		
Continuous Airworthiness	03/2001	90 Hours	7266 Hours		
- Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) Information					
ELT Installed?/Type	ELT Operated?	ELT Aided in Locating Accident Site?			
Owner/Operator Information					
Registered Aircraft Owner		Street Address			
AVJET CORP		City	State	Zip Code	
		Burbank	CA		
Operator of Aircraft		Street Address			
AVJET CORP		City	State	Zip Code	
		Burbank	CA		
Operator Does Business As:			Operator Designator Code: ABFR		
- Type of U.S. Certificate(s) Held:					
Air Carrier Operating Certificate(s): On-demand Air Taxi					
Operating Certificate:			Operator Certificate:		
Regulation Flight Conducted Under: Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter					
Type of Flight Operation Conducted: Non-scheduled; Domestic; Passenger Only					

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First Pilot Information

Name	City	State	Date of Birth	Age 44
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Sex: M	Seat Occupied: Left	Occupational Pilot? <input type="checkbox"/> Civilian Pilot <input type="checkbox"/>	Certificate Number:
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Certificate(s): Airline Transport

Airplane Rating(s): Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land

Rotorcraft/Glider/LTA:

Instrument Rating(s): Airplane

Instructor Rating(s):

Current Biennial Flight Review? 12/2000

Medical Cert.: Class 1	Medical Cert. Status: With Waivers/Limitations	Date of Last Medical Exam: 10/2000
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- Flight Time Matrix	All A/C	This Make and Model	Airplane Single Engine	Airplane Multi-Engine	Night	Instrument		Rotorcraft	Glider	Lighter Than Air
						Actual	Simulated			
Total Time	9900	1475								
Pilot In Command(PIC)	7900	175								
Instructor										
Instruction Received										
Last 90 Days	87									
Last 30 Days	21									
Last 24 Hours	2									

Seatbelt Used? <input type="checkbox"/>	Shoulder Harness Used? <input type="checkbox"/>	Toxicology Performed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Second Pilot? Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
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Flight Plan/Itinerary

Type of Flight Plan Filed: IFR				
Departure Point	State	Airport Identifier	Departure Time	Time Zone
Los Angeles	CA			
Destination	State	Airport Identifier		
Same as Accident/Incident Location				


Type of Clearance:

Type of Airspace:

Weather Information

Source of Wx Information:

Flight Service Station

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Weather Information

WOF ID	Observation Time	Time Zone	WOF Elevation	WOF Distance From Accident Site	Direction From Accident Site
	1853	MST	Ft. MSL	NM	Deg. Mag.
Sky/Lowest Cloud Condition: Few			1500 Ft. AGL	Condition of Light: Night	
Lowest Ceiling: Broken		2500 Ft. AGL	Visibility: 10	SM	Altimeter: 29.96 "Hg
Temperature: 4 °C	Dew Point: 2 °C	Weather Conditions at Accident Site: Visual Conditions			
Wind Direction: 250	Wind Speed: 3	Wind Gusts:			
Visibility (RVR): Ft.	Visibility (RVV): SM				
Precip and/or Obscuration:					

Accident Information

Aircraft Damage: Destroyed	Aircraft Fire:	Aircraft Explosion
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- Injury Summary Matrix	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	TOTAL
First Pilot	1				1
Second Pilot	1				1
Student Pilot					
Flight Instructor					
Check Pilot					
Flight Engineer					
Cabin Attendants	1				1
Other Crew					
Passengers	15				15
- TOTAL ABOARD -	18				18
Other Ground					
- GRAND TOTAL -	18				18

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Administrative Information

Investigator-In-Charge (IIC)

Al Dickinson

Additional Persons Participating in This Accident/Incident Investigation: