

FAA looks for cause of small plane crash that killed 3, injured 1

AUBURN (AP) — Federal investigators worked Monday to determine what caused a single-engine airplane to strike a semitrailer truck as the plane landed, killing three passengers and critically injuring the pilot.

"The plane was too low, but whether it was a mechanical problem or pilot error, we don't know," said Nemaha County Attorney Charles Hahn. Federal Aviation Administration officials were investigating.

For 99-year-old August Norvell of Auburn, the tragic crash was her first time in an airplane. "As I understood it, she had never been in an airplane before in her life before yesterday," Hahn said.

Also killed in the crash were Norvell's daughter, Vera Mae Smith, 71, of Auburn, a retired grade school teacher; and Edward DeBourbon, 74, also of Auburn, Smith's ex-husband.

Seasoned pilot Fred Farington, 77, manager of the city-owned Farington Field, a World War II fighter pilot and retired crop duster, was in critical condition Monday at the University of Nebraska Medical Center with broken bones and internal injuries.

The plane was coming in for a landing shortly after noon Sunday when it clipped a semitrailer truck that was being driven on state Highway 136, officials said.

The airport was holding a promotional fly-in and a pancake-feed fund raiser for a local latchkey, after-school children's program. Farington was giving rides in his four-seat airplane, and was on his eighth or ninth flight when the crash occurred, Hahn said. About 30 pilots had joined about 280 people at the event.

The truck driver, Edward Drillon, 30, of Luray, Mo., was not injured.

Officials seek additional videos

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting on a tip, Senate investigators prodded the Clinton administration in early August to look for in-house videotapes that may have shown President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore at Democratic Party events inside the White House.

The timing is significant because administration officials said it was just Wednesday night that they discovered that 44 White House coffees, featuring the president, had been videotaped.

Clinton said Monday it "was just an accident" that the videotapes were not found sooner. "All I can tell you is, as soon as I found out about it, late last week, I said, 'Get this out and let's go on,'" he said.

The White House confirmed Monday that an intense search is under way for an unspecified number of additional recordings of White House political events. The opening minutes of the coffees were recorded by White House crews between Aug. 3, 1995, and Aug. 23, 1996.

Donald Bucklin, an attorney for the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, said he received information in late July or early August that the little-known White House Communications Agency may have taped political events.

Bucklin said that on Aug. 7 he passed the information on to Michael Imbrosio, a White House counsel, and followed up with a letter Aug. 19 to another administration lawyer, Lanny Breuer.

Despite the heads-up, Bucklin said that Breuer told Senate lawyers in September that there were no such recordings.

The Senate Governmental Affairs and the House Government Reform committees had issued subpoenas months ago for any videotapes of White House events connected to Democratic National Committee fund raising.

The chief White House counsel, Charles F.C. Ruff, on Monday wrote Senate committee chairman Fred Thompson, R-Tenn., and ranking Democrat John Glenn to provide his version of the tape discovery.

Ruff said the Senate committee asked on Aug. 7 "whether there was a practice of clandestinely recording Oval Office meetings or conversations." Bucklin's Aug. 19 letter inquired "more broadly into any recordings made by the White House Communications Agency (WHCA)," Ruff wrote.

At the Sept. 7 meeting with congressional investigators, Ruff wrote, the administration "informed them (committee staff) that no clandestine taping had occurred, but that WHCA had taped a number of DNC (Democratic National Committee) fund-raising dinners and similar events."

"We believed at that time, and so stated, that WHCA had not taped the coffees but said that we would inquire further," Ruff said the additional inquiry discovered the tapes last Wednesday evening.

The tapes of the 1996 coffees, released Sunday by the White House, show Clinton thanking his visitors without asking for money. In footage from one reception, then-Democratic National Chairman Don Fowler refused five checks offered by a guest, apologized and said the donations

could be discussed later.

Arief Wiriadinata, an Indonesian landscape architect whose \$450,000 in DNC donations were returned because he and his wife did not file a 1995 federal tax return, is shown on one tape greeting Clinton at a Dec. 15, 1995, coffee, a Senate investigator said.

"James Riady sent me," Wiriadinata told Clinton, referring to the son of Lippo Group founder Mochtar Riady.

"Yes," Clinton replied. "I'm glad to see you."

The Senate committee has been investigating any connections between Lippo and foreign money donated illegally to the Democratic Party.

The White House, while acknowledging the coffees were Democratic Party events for current and prospective donors, says no laws were broken because nobody was asked for money at the events on government property. Solicitations on U.S. property are forbidden by law.

"We don't know yet what the universe of the tapes is, but certainly there are more than these coffees," White House attorney Lanny Davis said.

"We are in the process of reviewing all possible Democratic National Committee fund-raising events that might have been taped by the White House Communications Agency. As soon as we have completed this process with some level of confidence ... we will immediately produce them" for the congressional committees.

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2. one that is associated with another as a helper

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