



TRIBUTE-FALLEN AVIATOR

The story of Captain Jerome Renck



I am a thirty year veteran flight instructor and aviation mechanic. It has been one of my most beloved honors to have trained some of the new generation of pilots. At this stage of my aviation career I see the need to protect our young pilots. Our airlines are collapsing due to the pilot shortage. Struggling to not cancel flights, having frequent delays, and pressures from all directions.

I have been placed directly into this controversy. A controversy that has many injustices. In June, 2019 a parachute jump plane in Hawaii suffered a fatal crash. This accident took the lives of 11 people. The pilot of this plane was a Captain Jerome Renck. The other ten individuals were sky divers. Many of which were just doing something exciting on their vacation. Sky diving on the North Shore of Hawaii? What a wonderful excursion. Seeing the lush green island. The beautiful blue ocean, and to have the warm air rushing through you face as you parachute down to earth. Who could say no to that?

During the investigation of this accident the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) came to some very startling conclusions. They determined that Captain Jerome Renck was a "reckless and negligent pilot" that he stalled the plane on take off. That Captain Renck was a bad pilot because of the "bad flight instructor" he had two to three years before the accident. Then the NTSB made the absurd recommendation to solve this problem by going after all flight instructors! When will the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and NTSB make good decisions? Probably not during our lifetimes.



Sky Diving on the North Shore of Hawaii

The new policy of the NTSB and FAA was to go after any and all flight instructors. Those CFI's who got below a 70% pass rate on their student's check rides were to be destroyed! Mind you that this is not going after pilots that are not qualified, but just those that do not pass on the first attempt on a check ride. Armed with this new policy FAA Inspectors could target any CFI and ruin his life. Most CFI's are now terrified of this. We are not talking about the flight instructors personal actions or abilities. We are holding him/her responsible for someone else's performance. Can you imagine ruining a young person's life over a driving test at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)? And to make it worst, you punish the young kid for how someone else did on the driving test! Parents and student drivers would be appalled and fighting mad! Yet this is the unfair policy and procedures that the FAA takes! Of course no one says a word. Too afraid of the FAA coming after them and making up false charges against them. We have all seen this done to others that the FAA decides to target.

Can you imagine having your son or daughter being subjected to this? Investing over \$100,000 thousand dollars in training costs. Taking over two to three years of hard training to become a flight instructor. To work a very difficult position of training other young adults to become pilots. Most times this is their very first job. To then have all of this stripped away from them in an instant! Not because of their actions, or anything in their own control, but because of the actions of someone else. Student loans maxed out, in debt hundreds of thousands of dollars, and simply no way to start over. In this situation the young son or daughter is just ruined! He or she can no longer afford to become something else. There is no more financial resources for medical school, engineering, law school, or any other training. Only getting a subsistence job to start paying back the student loans for the next 30 years. Loans which can not be removed even by bankruptcy. I can not think of a more unjust and cruel policy. This is causing serious harm to our sons and daughters who choose aviation. I do not see this punitive and unfair practice being done in any other profession.



There is nothing magical or mystical about a pilot check ride. Just like a driving test, the requirements are clearly defined, and the tasks are straight forward. Take offs, landings, doing steep turns, and handling emergencies. Just like a driving test. But now we are suppose to destroy a career, ruin a life, and take away a person's dream over what is basically a driving test. I can not get over how short sighted, mean spirited, and unjust this new policy is to our youth.

I am very familiar with this new policy. For I am that “bad flight” instructor the NTSB spoke of. The NTSB determined that I was the main cause of that fatal crash in Hawaii. I could not believe that years after someone graduated my flight school, a person who did exceptionally well, would be killed in an accident. That the blame would be placed on my shoulders. Even the several lawyers involved in litigating this case could not think of a reason to come after me! And that's saying something! Captain Jerome Renck was completely trained by me. He lived at my home, we flew almost every day together for two years, and he left my school as a Commercial pilot with over 700 hours. Even the FAA Legal Department ruled that I had done nothing wrong. This letter is in the NTSB report. This was the first and ONLY time I have seen FAA Legal be on the side of a pilot!

I would like to introduce you to Captain Jerome Renck. Jerome was not some young reckless kid wanting to be a pilot. He was a well seasoned and successful investment banker from France. Jerome was very intelligent, a talented financial broker, and extremely well educated. As Jerome entered into his forties he decided that he had earned enough money. It was time for a change! Without hesitation he followed his life long dream to become a pilot.

When Jerome applied at my flight school I was completely booked. This did not slow down Jerome one bit. I told Jerome that I did not have a room available for him, so he said he would sleep on the floor. When advised that I may not be able to fly with him everyday, that my current students had priority, he calmly said he would sit in the back of the plane and observe. At this point I had to give up! I happily accepted him to my flight school. I asked when he would be arriving, but he did not reply.



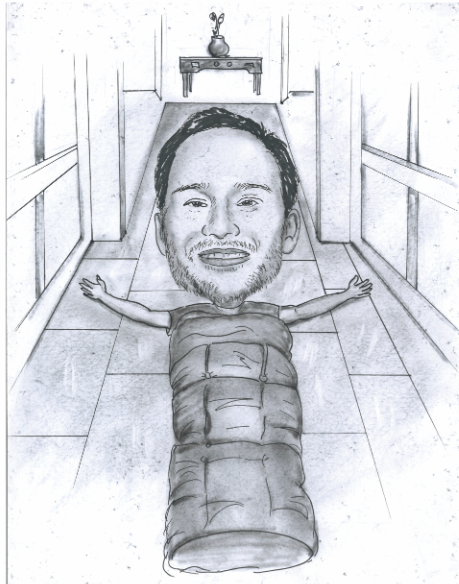
Captain Jerome Renck always warm and caring to everyone.

Three days later he was at the front door! He had just drove non-stop from Florida to California! We made a little bedroom for him in the living room, and the next day he was part of the team. Being in his 40's the training was difficult for Jerome. He endured the long days at the airport, and slept on my living room floor without complaint. I do not know of many 40 year olds with this type of devoting to becoming a pilot.

It seems that over the age of 35 our ability to learn slows down tremendously. Jerome countered this with extreme discipline and dedication. Within two months he had his Private Pilot's license, another two months his

Instrument Airplane license,

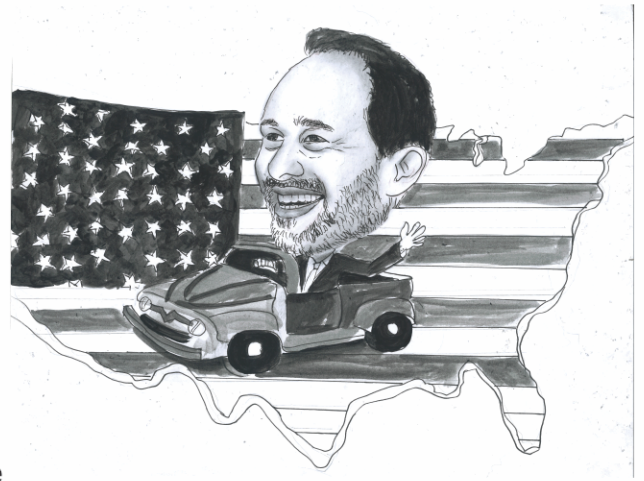
and then his Multi-Engine Commercial license in another month. I recall that he earned a 100% test score on his written test for Instrument Airplane. This sounds like a exceptional student! Not many of us can claim such success at obtaining our pilot certificates! Jerome was an exceptional student and aviator. His training record stands on its own! The NTSB investigator David Lawrence had all of this information. This did not fit the narrative he was told to promote. Mr. Lawrence made sure this information was not mentioned in the NTSB report. Despite all setbacks Jerome excelled as a pilot! Jerome was a very dedicated and decent person. Jerome became a dear friend of mine!



Sleeping on the floor in living room.

Jerome I was going to hit him if he drifted left again. He nodded his head in agreement and said, "that actually sounds appropriate!" The next take off he had his face locked in total concentration, eyebrows forced together, lips pressed together, and I think he was not even breathing. This had no affect as the aircraft slowly drifted left. I took my knuckles and popped him in the ribs, you know, right between the bones, where it hurts the most. In shock he looked over at me and said, "You...You...You Hit Me!" You have to know that this was said in a very French accent which made it sound adorable. Kinda like being scolded by Minnie Mouse. I smiled and replied, "Get on centerline or I am gonna pop you again!" Jerome got on centerline! He never had a problem holding centerline again! Afterwards we laughed about it. He admitted that it hurt his pride more then anything else. I told him that's the worst kind of pain there is!

One of the highlights that Jerome had was when his daughter would Skype him. We would all be sitting around the dinner table after a hard day of flight training. Jerome's little daughter would pop up on the computer screen, and then a torrent of beautiful gibberish in a French accent would fill the room. One could feel the little hearts of love floating up into the air. Jerome's face would light up radiating the love and affection he had for his little girl. No



Florida to California non-stop!



Jerome's little girl filling the house with love via Skype.

one in the room could escape the love that his little girl brought to the house! We all looked forward to seeing her. After a long hot day in the cockpit of a plane she made the end of the day special. She came to the house and stayed with us for a short visit. I recall that was the best thing that happened at my flight school that year!

During the two years Jerome was with me we did many things together. We quickly became good friends. Riding motorcycles to the airport for training flights. Flying to Mexico to go sailing on the Sea of Cortez. We had many international flights together in a King Air. Flying into the remote farms in Mexico, going to Northern California, and just being two dumb cowboys riding our horses (ie. planes) around the country. Pilots are just dumb cowboys. We have traded in our horses for planes, but still have the desire to be on the open plains in the sky.

Jerome graduated my flight training school with over 700 flight hours, and well over 50 hours of multi-engine turbine time. This is double the amount of flight time normal pilots graduate with from any other flight school. He was immediately hired by a aerial survey company. After about a year he moved on to flying the trusty King Air, which he was so familiar with from my school, for a parachute jump school at Dillingham Field, Hawaii.

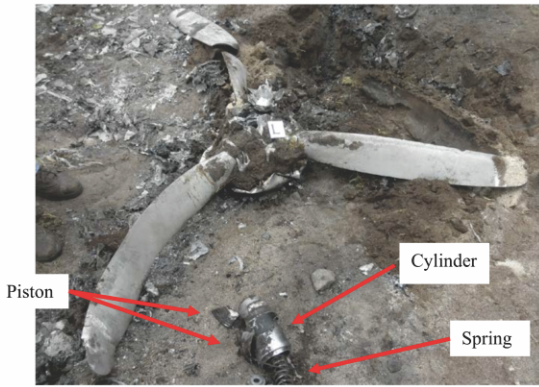
I spoke with Jerome shortly before the accident. He was so happy to be living at the North Shore of Hawaii. For Jerome flying was never about money. He had a true passion for flying. We agreed that I would fly out there and sleep on his living room floor! Jerome agreed as long as I did not “pop him in the ribs.” I replied, “No promises cowboy!” It was obvious Jerome was living his dream! I was so happy for him.

Shortly after this phone call Jerome's aircraft lost the left engine and went into a VMC event. The aircraft violently flipped inverted and went down at a 45 degree angle to the ground shortly after take off. This is called a Minimum Controllable Airspeed or Vmc event. It is when one engine fails, and the operating engine takes over the airframe flipping it. Once the aircraft has flipped there is no chance of recovery, and this happened to Jerome within seconds. The evidence at the crash scene showed the left propeller with little to no damage. The NTSB stated that this propeller was on a fully running engine at the time of impact. The picture of the propeller and the narrative of the NTSB do not match up.



Captain Renck dropping skydivers . Living his dream!

Then the NTSB quoted witnesses that claimed Jerome was a reckless pilot. One even claiming Jerome did a barrel roll in the King Air. This is not the pilot I knew. All of these witnesses had just barely met Jerome, and had little to no knowledge about aviation. This was not the retired conservative investment banker from Europe that I knew. It was not the loving and dedicated father whom loved his daughter more than anything. The father that warmed our hearts at the dinner table Skyping with his daughter. Definitely not the pilot that excelled at his flight training at my flight school. How easy it is to defame someone you know nothing about. I do not know of a “reckless” pilot that is able to keep his position for years. Much less make it through the hardships of flight training. Captain Renck stood the rigors of training with me for over two years. Then faithfully preformed his duties for a year at a aerial survey company. At the parachute jump school many witnesses testified that Jerome was a solid pilot. These individuals were ignored. The narrative put forth by the NTSB is nonsense. One can read the NTSB report and make up their own mind. The NTSB report at: [NTSB Aviation Accident Database](#) under case number WPR19MA177.



Undamaged propeller reflecting failed left engine.

I pray for the family of Captain Jerome Renck. A family that were told he was a reckless pilot that killed himself, and took the lives of ten passengers. I pray for the ten families who lost a loved one that day. Only to be lied too that their loved one died at the hands of a bad pilot, and a bad flight instructor. Maybe we should also pray for our young flight instructors being unjustly punished for someone else's performance. Having their lives ruined over a false and misleading narrative. A narrative put forth despite the overwhelming evidence at the crash scene.



Looking at the evidence of Jerome's accident I do not believe I could have saved that flight, or that any other pilot could for that matter. This was just a horrific accident. Many times aviators are placed in impossible positions which can not be corrected. I believe this was one of those situations. Let us pray for our fallen aviators, and ask for courage and guidance for those still in the cockpit.

I miss my friend. I grieve that he has been defamed by faceless bureaucrats that never even met him. That the ten families were deliberately lied too, and were led to believe a bad pilot had killed their loved ones. I miss hearing the voice of that little girl blowing kisses from across the ocean from France.

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God Bless! Keep Flying Speed!

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*I miss my beloved friend.
May the angels hold him in the heavens.*