



NEWS



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Daredevil 'Mad Mike' Hughes Killed In Crash Of Self-Made Rocket In Mojave Desert

Julia Paskin, LAist

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FILE: Mike Hughes stands beside a steam-powered rocket, which he built from salvaged parts. (Waldo Stakes / AP)

Mike Hughes, a daredevil known by his nickname "Mad Mike," was killed Saturday when the self-made rocket he was riding in crashed after launching in the Mojave Desert south of Barstow.

The fatal crash took place shortly before 2 p.m. and was witnessed by about 50 people, including a film crew from the Science channel show *Homemade Astronaut* and a freelance journalist working on a profile of Hughes.

The 64-year-old Hughes drew attention for telling people he believed the Earth is flat. He performed dangerous stunts including setting a Guinness World Record for the world's longest jump by a limousine.

More recently, he set his sights on DIY rocket launches. He'd made previous unsuccessful attempts to launch himself some 5,000 feet into the Earth's atmosphere.

THE CRASH SCENE

Journalist Justin Chapman has been profiling Hughes for the past year. He'd spent time with Hughes at his home in Apple Valley and was at the scene Saturday.

Chapman said Hughes's team argued against him using a steel ladder to climb into the rocket's cockpit, worried the rocket would hit the ladder on launch.

"The rocket did in fact hit the ladder and ripped off one of the parachute cans," Chapman said. "And the parachute deployed and got caught in the thrust of the rocket and pulled the rocket off course. It shot up extremely high and then it did an arc and then nosedived straight down into the desert floor."

The crash site falls within the jurisdiction of the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department, but officials there said they had no communication from the launch planning team.

"We were not notified that there was a planned event that was going to take place nor that a crash had taken place," said spokesman Eric Sherwin. "Therefore we had no response because we weren't aware that the incident had occurred."

Sherwin said they first learned of the crash in a call from the San Bernardino County Sheriff, although sheriff's officials ultimately recovered the body without help from fire authorities. He said they are looking into whether his department should have had prior notice of the launch.

FLAT EARTHER?

Chapman said Hughes "first and foremost described himself as a daredevil."

"He said that his ultimate goal was to go to the the edge of space to see what shape the planet was," Chapman said.

But whether Hughes was sincere in his "Flat Earther" beliefs is unclear. Chapman said after the crash, Hughes' longtime publicist told him that stance was all about getting noticed.

"His publicity representative told me yesterday that that was just a publicity stunt and just to gain more attention and more sponsors for the rocket launches, " he said. "Others believe that he was genuine. It's kind of hard to say for sure."

Chapman said Hughes had shared a range of conspiracy theories with him but was "a really sweet guy."

"He was quite a character a really interesting, really interesting guy," he said.

Chapman who was at the launch with his wife, a photographer, was filming when it ended in disaster [WARNING: graphic content.]

"It was very surreal, almost cartoonish and a pretty traumatizing thing to witness," he said. "The crowd...they were just stunned and didn't know quite what to do. You know, people were crying and wailing. You can hear them screaming out in the video and it becomes clear that he's not going to make it. So yeah, it was shocking, although not wholly surprising that it ended this way."

<https://laist.com/2020/02/23/mike-hughes-daredevil-flat-earth-killed-rocket-crash.php>

County firefighters knockdown early morning carport fire in Hesperia

Hugo Valdez, Victor Valley News

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HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) — Firefighters knocked down an early morning carport fire at an apartment complex in Hesperia Sunday.

At about 6:35 am., **San Bernardino County Firefighters** responded to the 17500 block of Lemon Street reference a commercial fire at an apartment complex.

Firefighters arrived and reported a carport with three vehicles well involved with fire, adjacent to the apartment complex.

Fire crews conducted a primary search of the apartment units and ensured they were evacuated. Firefighters kept the fire contained to the carport and no apartments were affected.

The fire was reported to be out just before 7:00 am., on February 23, 2020.

A fire investigator has been requested to respond and help determine the cause of the fire. Representatives from the utility companies were requested for a laundry room that was also damaged in the fire.

Crews are expected to remain on scene for an extensive cleanup.

Additional updates will be shared as they become available.

<https://www.vvng.com/county-firefighters-knockdown-early-morning-carport-fire-in-hesperia/>