

Mark Ward
ASI
Alaska Region

Date: 10/06/2022

Subject: ANC23FA001

Contact: Mark Hasner eyewitness

I talked to Mark at the accident site.

I asked Mark what he saw. This was his response.

I was working in front of chena marina air service and heard an airplane power up and saw him coming out of the channel on takeoff, full power, just a huge spray behind him. So, I knew he was making power, kind of kept watching him, and he just kind of started to come over on step, but never really made it to the step. Stayed on the heels the whole time. Was on the aft section of the float the whole time. Just kept going. He had a lot of speed, looked like he was going to be able to lift off. He got straight out in front of me but there was really no correction on trying to change to get on step. It was just stayed the same, he went past his house at the end of the pond and the power came off. I figured he was just going to make another run at it, he made a turn to back taxi. I watched the turn and then he starts heading on this side of the pond. I'm just watching, I'm listening to it. It's got a lot of power, extreme amount of power, like 2000 or higher rpm, and I thought, wow, that's weird, but gets in front of me. I'm looking at the tail and looking at the floats. The airplane is probably pitched, about five or six degrees or more nose down, elevators are full back, stabilizers are full nose up, and it just kind of goes by me and Paul Keech was standing next to me. We're talking about it looks very unusual. There's something going on there. We just continue to watch. He goes by. We hear the power come off, we see the tail come up and you hear the power come back on and the airplane flipped over, and we just started running. We got to where the airplane was, and it was already basically sunk. It sunk very, very fast. I couldn't believe how fast it sunk

and everything was underwater. He wasn't quite underwater yet, but it felt pretty fast. We had no boat here. We had one coming, so Paul and I jumped in that airplane which was right there and paddled out to it. I got a rope tied to a float and hook the rope to a truck to bring the airplane closer to the shore, but it was still too far out. We all tried to wade in there, but it was too far out, Fire Department showed and was able to get the airplane to the shore. That's when we could see that there was so much stuff on him (pilot). So much, so much. I couldn't believe all the stuff. The fire department got him out. That's what I saw.

One other note, once we got the airplane pulled up to the shore, both floats had 4 big streams of water coming out the front of them. There should be no water coming out of those things. So, I think there something going on there. I have 20 years of flying and even if you have 2000 pounds in this airplane, it will still sit tail low. So, something in the front of this airplane is heavy, very heavy. I don't think the pilot even realized it until somewhere towards the end. I think he probably thought something was wrong, pulled the power off slightly to see if the nose was down that low and the nose was down that low. I think once the toes of the floats went under the water they are going to continue to go under the water. It was unusual, I have never seen anything like it. I've been here 16 plus years, watched multiple planes almost crash here from takeoff and this was unusual, I've seen one like this with a big tailwind. I mean, I've seen planes with plywood on them and a big tailwind ride like that, but there was no wind. There was zero wind and usually there's little bit of power. This thing had massive power in it. It ran good. It sounded good. It was making full power on takeoff for sure, and very loud. I think the engine was working perfectly until it hit the water. I've never seen one sink that fast. Yesterday when I went to lunch, I saw him land in his yellow Super cub. So, he must have just landed. This airplane was on the bank. He parks it and he pulls it out of the water and then later on I saw it in the water. He must have been loading it is all I can think. One thing that flashed through my mind last night, if you have your floatplane on the bank, you know there's no water in the floats. So, if you put it in the water, you're not going to pump the floats typically. So, if they did get put into water and it has a really bad leak, because I mean, I've seen a rivet fill up a compartment in six hours or 7 hours. So if he's got a really bad leak, I could see maybe filling up and he would have no idea. If he is taxiing, it's pulling more and more water into the float. He did a long taxi. Could he get that much possibly. He has not had this airplane very long. I went over and talked to him last week. He had a little bit of a fuel leak that I went to look at on the engine, which was nothing. Yeah, I mean, he had to get it fixed on the road. There's no big deal, he said. He had one more flight to make. I saw the whole taxi, takeoff, and back taxi. Paul saw most of the taxi by because we kept commenting on how odd it was, we had never seen anything like it

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Contact: Riley Schaefer Witness

I talked to Riley on the way to the accident site.

I asked Riley what he saw. This was his response.

Riley - I am a mechanic here at Alaska land exploration. I was working on the hangar door when somebody drove up to our neighbor asking if they had a zoom boom (extendable forklift). Saying that somebody was drowning. Eventually we figured out somebody flipped over in an airplane in the pond. I got in our zoom boom with the big forks on and went down to the water. At that point, I did not realize someone was still in the airplane. But everybody was making effort to get the airplane out of the water. I hooked on to the tail of the airplane and was lifting and waiting so the water would drain because the weight of the airplane with all the water was too much for our zoom boom.

I asked was the gear in the airplane secured?

Riley - Obviously, the gear wasn't very secure, there was a significant amount of cargo that had to be removed to get the pilot out of the airplane. Everything you see on the beach had to be removed to get the pilot out. Obviously, the gear was not very secured.

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Contact: Vincent Stansel (Pilot's son) eyewitness

I talked to Vincent in a hangar near the accident site.

The son of the pilot came over and collected all the gear we had weighed from the accident airplane. He said he watched his father's takeoff attempt and saw him taxiing back. When the airplane was taxiing back in front of his house the son said, "the floats were damn near submerged as it passed by."