



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

John M. Brannen II
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: Various dates from
Person Contacted: Jefferson Riff (FSDO Inspector on-scene)
NTSB Accident Number: CEN14LA527

Narrative:

Mr. Riff confirmed that he was one of the FSDO inspectors that was dispatched to the on-scene investigation of the accident involving N809RD, a homebuilt RV-9A airplane that crashed near Shepherd, Texas (XS99), on September 27, 2014. He said that the airplane had taken off from XS99 and the pilot owned a home on the airpark. It was returning when the accident happened. He said that witnesses reported hearing the airplane take off and then make a pass down the runway at XS99 sometime later, but they did not see or hear the actual accident. He said that friends of the pilot and passenger actually located the airplane wreckage when they had gone outside waiting for the airplane to return. He told me that the pilot was fatally injured and the passenger received serious injuries and was flown by helicopter to a nearby hospital. He told me the pilot held a private certificate with ASEL rating and an expired medical for the airman was found at the accident scene. He said that the airplane impacted trees short of the intended runway (RWY 29 at XS99). He said that the damage to the wreckage indicated that the airplane struck the trees, 30 feet up from the ground which were 75+ feet tall, and approximately 300+ feet from the approach end of the runway in an inverted (upside down) attitude. He said that the ground slopes down away from the runway. He noted that the right wing had a circular dent, vertically through the wing structure that was evidently made by a tree impact. He said that this wing appeared to have hit first and then the left wing and then the fuselage looked as if it went through a gap in the trees before hitting the ground. He said that the dent went from the leading edge back past the main spar and that the spar had wrapped around the tree. He said that both wings and the tail of the airplane had separated from the fuselage but were located in close proximity. He said that he didn't see any obvious evidence that a part of the airframe had failed prior to impact. He said that the fuel tanks were ruptured, but there wasn't any evidence of a large fuel spill and there was no evidence of any fuel blight on vegetation in the area of the wreckage. He said that the control system of the airplane was examined and that except for damage that appeared to be caused by the impact, no other preexisting damage was found. He said that he wasn't able to examine the engine as it was buried a few feet into the mud, but from what he could see

there wasn't any external evidence of any failure. He said that he would send pictures of the airplane wreckage to me via e-mail.

In another conversation I informed Mr. Riff that an attorney had brought up the possibility that a bird strike had occurred and asked him if his on-scene examination showed any possible evidence of such. He said that he did not remember anything that would have caused him think that a bird strike had occurred. I told him that the attorney had mentioned possible blood stains from a bird strike on the vertical tail. He said that he did not recall seeing anything that he believed was blood from a bird. He said that there was blood staining on various parts of the airplane that could be attributed to the injuries to the occupants, or from EMS personnel moving the aircraft part to reach the occupants, but did not specifically remember anything that he thought was bird strike evidence.

In another conversation, I again discussed the possibility of a bird strike with Mr. Riff and informed him that the attorney had sent a portion of the airplane to the Smithsonian institute for DNA testing for avian blood. He again said that he did not think that there was a bird strike but could not rule it out.

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