



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Jim Silliman
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 12/30/14

Person Contacted: Jim Murphy

NTSB Accident Number: CEN15FA083

Narrative:

On highway 158 headed westbound. Aircraft was to the west of me – about 4 miles when I started watching it. Wasn't sure if it was a bird or plane at first.

It did a 180 degree turn back to the west and then another left hand turn back to the east. It was banking left and going to the north and the nose dropped more and more to a steep nose down attitude. There was no attempt to arrest it. Left turn and bank angle to about 80 degrees and nose attitude to nose down. It took only about 5 seconds. Lots of speed and gaining speed as he was going down.

When the plane hit the ground it was almost straight up and down with the left wing hitting first. I didn't see the impact. It looked like the left wing would hit first.

It went very quick – about 5 seconds from entry into the bank and ground impact. The nose just went down.

My first instinct – medical issue. Clear VFR day. Cool day. I don't see how anyone could get disoriented. Like he was unconscious at the time.

I'm a CFI. ASEL with commercial privileges for AMEL. 800+ total hours.

Still in disbelief. It went down so fast. Thought it might be a hawk.

Pipeline aircraft are very common. I've flown with a friend on his route. Numerous aircraft – 10 to 15 a day looking at pipelines and gathering systems. They communicate via air to air.

Any flat hatting? Sometimes they make steep turns to stay on their targets. Usually 500 ft. Sometimes lower. The ones I know stay at 1,000 ft. This one was at 500 ft. He was between 400 – 500 ft.

You never see pipeline guys getting that steep. There's a lot of people out in the oilfields. I used that area as a practice area. I stayed high because pipeline aircraft were in that area. There a lot of ground references for ground reference maneuvers.

I don't know anyone at American Patrol. He may have been new to that route. Maybe he was reaching for a map.

I don't think it was a stall. Not a stall. Everything was very smooth and no appearance of any correction. Nose dropped down and aircraft speed increased rapidly. It was moving when it hit the ground. Nothing abrupt. Not a wing drop. More like controlled flight straight into the ground.

Carbon monoxide.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Jim Silliman
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 1/5/15

Person Contacted: Ben Sorenson

NTSB Accident Number: CEN15FA083

Narrative:

On highway 158 headed east. Saw the aircraft about 2 miles coming north at 400 – 500 ft agl. It did a hard banking turn. Aircraft nosed dived; it went straight down.

I called 911. I got there within 2 minutes. The fire had consumed the front end of the aircraft. I left when the first responders arrived.

For a couple of seconds I saw him flying north. Then it turn a sharp left banking turn and just about out of the turn to “northeastish,” the wings started to level out and that’s when it plummeted.

I fly with my father-in-law in a C-182 twice a month. He’s told me some stuff. No formal flight instruction.

I didn’t see the impact. Going down too fast. I didn’t see him come out of the dive. Didn’t see the last 20 – 50 ft.

The wings were on the ground by the time I got there. It was on fire and the aircraft was consumed. The tail was still standing – cocked a little bit. It was up in the air. Wings were flat on the ground. Windshield was out in front of it.

It didn’t spiral out of the sky. Nose-dived straight down.

I didn’t talk to anyone else who saw it.

Banking pretty hard – real steep bank with the wings pulling some g’s.

I've see aircraft pipeline patrol. I've seen them do some pretty steep turns before. Kind of unusual to see them in higher angles of banks. I see them all the time out here. Sometimes I see 4 – 5 planes a day. Pipeline aircraft make hard AOB turns. Saw maybe 3 aircraft during the hour I was out there before the accident.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Jim Silliman
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 1/5/15

Person Contacted: Joel Flores

NTSB Accident Number: CEN15FA083

Narrative:

Jeff was almost here a year. 2 weeks away from completing his 1 year contract. I was a roommate with Jeff for about 1 year. He gets up around 5 – 6 am and get to the Skywest Airport around 7 am to get ready for flights.

Flight planning for routes to fly and fuel. Typically 4 ½ hours of flying a day. Longest day is 6 hours. Will stop about mid-day. Jeff would fly for about 6 hours or so.

Jeff was trying to get ready to go to the airlines. Passed ATP ground training. He had done some interviews.

Jeff flew on the weekends. His days off were Wednesday and Thursday. I didn't fly with him. The chief pilot flew with him. He was a very positive guy with a positive outlook.

I didn't see him that morning. I don't get there until 8 am and wait for the sun to get higher. He had already departed in the airplane.

American Patrol? I think it's a great company. Think they run it very well. She does a lot more for pilots than typical owners. Well run operation. They would help pull aircraft out of the hangar and check in at night to see if everything went well. Tom also flies in the event a pilot is sick or needs a fill-in.

I fly C-172s. No taildraggers. Pretty much the same performance. We each fly a certain aircraft.

Jeff was assigned N9922V. He'd be familiar with the aircraft performance.

Fly mostly production. Looking at well, batteries, and the lines throughout the system. Looking for black spots of oil or water. It's easiest in the morning from the reflection of the oil or water.

What kind of leak? Where it is? Call the pumper or the office with the location of the leak.

Pumper: guys on ground via phone – oil field guys. We'll get a call sheet with pumper on-call for which field.

Altitude? Depending on location. Congestion: 700 – 1,000 ft. Not congested: 1,000 ft. It's not uncommon to go to 500 ft to see. Lower altitude allows us to locate it more precisely.

Maps: Show number or name. Label where leak is. Give pumper the location. See numbers from air.

I make my calls at lunch. Most people do it during lunch break. Option to call in flight via Bluetooth so your hands are still free. I'm not sure how Jeff did it.

Leaks? It depends on the time of year and company. Frozen – a lot more leaks. Usually land and call in leaks after the flight.

Most of the stuff can be done with standard rate turn. Excess of 60 AOB not necessary. Usually 45 – 50 degree AOB at most. It depends on winds. If it's windy, you need to be careful with AOB. If looking at a map, 15 degree AOB, pretty shallow.

High wing day – wind in excess of 30 kts – turning back into the wind. 10 – 20 kts – not much of a factor.

The turns are not as aggressive as ag turns.

Total flight hours: 5,800. Normal month: 80-90 hours.



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Jim Silliman
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 1/5/15

Person Contacted: Tristin Thomas

NTSB Accident Number: CEN15FA083

Narrative:

Jeff had over 2,000 hours with 1,200 in C-172s. He flew different Cessnas, Pipers, and twins. We met at the Denver Jet Center years ago. Building flight time together - 3 ½ hours.

72-hour history? We both fly on Saturday and Sunday. Everything was routine. Nothing strange or out of place. Monday and Tuesday are my days off. Wakes normally. I heard him awake around 6:45 am. He might have eaten something. He wakes up and goes out the door. Pretty quick.

I don't know his exact sleeping habits. He would go to sleep around 10:30 pm usually, I'm guessing. He flew Sunday. A short flight about 3 ½ hours. He flew on Saturday for about 6 hours. Routine.

Drink? Casual drinker. He might have a couple of beers a week. Never intense. No medications – healthy guy. He was incredibly strong naturally. He'd occasionally work out.

Flying skills? He was better than me. I don't know what happened. He had a good sense about him. He had control over everything. He was ready to go to the airlines. I only flew with him once or twice in Texas. Not an aggressive guy; not pushing things.

My routine: Get weather. Know the route. Look at weather for Lubbock. Take care of paperwork. Get your stuff ready. Fly out to field. Go from one field to next. Grid the field and fly the lines. Know about what you're doing and where you are. Land for fuel. Then continue flying.

I don't know about his route that day.

Looking for oil and water leaks. Leaks more often in winter.

What's your procedures for leaks? I look for leaks and check for field boundaries. Look at maps using well head. Description 50 hards NE of well. At time – very easy to determine fields. Record it. Fly over it. Look at it. It becomes apparent if it's leaking. Bubbling or spray – leaking out of the well pump. If problem – circle looking at roads.

Not serious guidelines. I just like to wait until I'm on the ground. We're not pressured to make a phone call unless it's something really important – dramatic. Most of the time – casual and routine. Wait until lunch break to call it in.

Call it in while you're in the air? Maybe 3 times a week. Each week is different.

Total leaks per week? 15 per week.

What AOB would you use? 30 degrees AOB. No real reason for something greater. I'm comfortable at that.

Did Jeff talk about his flying technique? No. Never talked about it. Not aware that Jeff was doing too steep AOB turns. It really doesn't help. There was plenty of fuel and no rush.

He was a good pilot. I can't see him getting into that kind of situation.

Maps – which seat? Rolled maps are in Tupperware containers in back seat. Pull out maps for day and put them between seats. Area maps – smaller fields in binders. Put then on the seat next to pilot. Small field maps too small for rolled maps. Not hard to look at maps. Keep head outside. Not looking at map for a long time. Glance at map. "Connect dots" to figure out where you are. Maps will be accessible prior to flight.

If you're making a call – climb to make a call. Pretty easy and quick. It doesn't take long. 6 – 10 seconds. People like the climb.

Non-congested altitude. Probably 700 ft. Sometimes 500 ft. Terrain elevation: 2,800 to 3,000 ft. 3,700 ft is about right for the fields.

Anything else? Don't know what happened. He knew that airplane inside and out. I had not heard of any problems with that airplane.

Concerns about the company? I really like the company. Everything has been great. Hang out with bosses after work and just chat. Good days and bad days, but like family. Owners work hard and make it work. Surprised how well run it is.

Safety culture? Never asked to do anything I'm not comfortable with. Paid by the hour is not a problem if I turn flight down. Chief pilot makes suggestions for improvement but it stuff you already know. Minor stuff.