

11/24/2014

Witness: Andrew Kading - Francis Aviation Employee

Interviewer: Geary Monckton

Location: Las Cruces Airport-Manager Office

Phone#: [REDACTED]

Time: 8:10 pm

Andrew stated that Tyler entered the airplane for departure. Tyler had a hard time starting the engine but was successful and as he taxied to runway 26 the engine sounded normal. When he got to runway 26 did do a run up –Andrew heard the engine sound change as the mags were tested. Tyler rolled onto the runway and stopped added full power and lifted off in about 800 feet. Tyler immediately started a steep angle of climb. Andrew stated the wings were shuttering in the climb. Over B taxiway Tyler turned left cross wind using a 90 degree bank. When Tyler leveled the wings wobbled and the airplane was in a nose high attitude but not climbing. Over Zia Blvd the airplane was still in a nose high attitude, Tyler turned downwind using a 90 degree bank, the wings were wobbling. Andrew stated that he thought that Tyler attempted a 45 degree bank left turn to fly over the terminal but it looked like the airplane stalled but Tyler got the wings level and then started another left turn over the terminal, the left wing dropped into a spin and impacted the ground. Andrew stated he was one of the first to get to the airplane crash. He also stated during the 90 degree bank turns, he could see that the controls were being moved. Andrew estimated that the airplane was traveling about 65 knots from takeoff through the last turn. Andrew stated Tyler was returning to Santa Teresa to practice. He thought the winds at the time were SE at 15. He stated the engine sounded normal from takeoff to impact.

Andrew is a student pilot with about 40 hours and has flown a RV-7. He also flies RC airplanes. He compared Tyler's nose high attitude to flying an electric RC airplane with a low battery.

11/24/2014

Witness: Jose Ornelas – Francis Aviation Employee

Interviewer: Geary Monckton

Location: Las Cruces Airport-Manager Office

Phone#: [REDACTED]

Time: 8:40 pm

Jose stated he was out side with four other employees watching Tyler's departure. The airplane was hard starting but when he got it started it sounded normal. Tyler taxied to runway 26. He didn't know if Tyler did a run up. Tyler took off with a very nose high attitude to 400 to 500 feet and made a steep left turn crosswind around taxi way B and another steep turn downwind over Zia (street) and the wings were rocking. It appeared that the airplane was turning back over the terminal when the left wing dropped into a spin and impacted the ground. The engine sounded good until the spin and then sounded like power on and off a couple of times before impact. He thought power was off at impact. Tyler did not get fuel in Las Cruces and did not know if he got fuel in Santa Teresa. Thought there was 10 or less knot tailwind at takeoff. Jose spoke to Tyler before he left and Tyler sounded normal.

Jose stated Tyler traded a 182 for the RV 3 on Saturday (11/22).

11/24/2014

Witness: Jose Ortiz Las Cruces Airport Fireman

Interviewer: Geary Monckton

Location: Las Cruces Airport-Manager Office

Phone#: [REDACTED]

Time: 9:00 pm

Jose stated he was in the living room of the fire station watching TV when he saw Mike Lopez returning from lunch. Jose went to the glass door to unlock it for Mike. When he got to the door, Jose saw the airplane vertically nose down, wings horizontal impact the ground. Jose stated he heard no sound as the glass door was not open yet and the TV was loud. Jose was one of the four fireman 1st responders to the crash site. There was a fuel spill and they sprayed foam on the ground.

11/24/2014

Witness: Robert Fresquez Las Cruces Airport Fireman

Interviewer: Geary Monckton

Location: Las Cruces Airport-Manager Office

Phone#: [REDACTED]

Time: 9:15 pm

Robert stated he did not see the airplane crash. He was in the living room watching TV. He did hear the airplane impact the ground. He was one of the four fireman 1st responders. He stated there was no fire. There was a fuel spill and guessed about 15 gallons. They sprayed foam on the fuel spill.

11/24/2014

Witness: Lt. Michael Peters Las Cruces Airport Fireman

Interviewer: Geary Monckton

Location: Las Cruces Airport-Manager Office

Phone#: [REDACTED]

Time: 9:35 pm

Lt. Peters stated that he did not see the accident. The firemen responded to the scene where the aircraft crashed. The life flight paramedic, Eric Palma, pronounced Tyler dead. Lt. Peters estimated about 15 gallons of fuel on the ground that they foamed before approaching the airplane. The four firemen helped the coroner remove the body from the airplane. Lt. Peters stated they took pictures as they removed the body to preserve evidence as they had to move parts of the instrument panel to free Tyler.

11/25/2014

Witness: Major John Arnold – Osprey V22 pilot

Interviewer: Geary Monckton

Location: Las Cruces Airport - telephone interview

Phone#: [REDACTED]

Time: 8:45 am

Major Arnold stated he was in his aircraft with engines running. He saw the RV 3 taxi to runway 26, Tyler made a radio call departing on runway 26 and took off. After liftoff, Tyler made an aggressive climb to 500-600 feet, estimating a speed around 70 knots. Tyler made a second radio call departing south. Major Arnold stated he saw the left wing drop and the nose go vertical down, spin 1 and ½ turn and impact the ground. He stated the airplane was really slow when the wing dropped and started the spin.

11/25/2014

Witness: Rich Clayton Las Cruces Airport tenant

Interviewer: Geary Monckton

Location: Las Cruces Airport – telephone interview

Phone#: [REDACTED]

Time: 8:55 am

Rich stated he was at the west end of the ramp on a tug pushing a King Air in the hangar. He heard an airplane and looked up and saw a RV in a steep climb heading 10 degrees left of the runway centerline (26). He said he thought to himself “another RV hot dogging around”. Rich estimated the aircraft at 500 feet and on a heading of 270. Rich said he then turned his attention to towing the King Air in the hangar. He did not see any turns or the accident.

32°16' 57.36"N 106° 55'14.93"W
82° magnetic heading 4344' MSL

N625ZH
LRU-5T6
Lawrence Tyler Francis

PRIVATE PILOT

Date: 11/24/14

Witness: Eric Gensheimer, VP of Operations Francis Aviation, [REDACTED] STUDENT PILOT & [REDACTED] MECHANIC

Interviewer: David Jones

Time: 8:10pm

Location: Las Cruces Airport Francis Aviation Office

Phone #: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Eric stated that Tyler Francis flew his Cessna 182 (N735AK) to Lamar Colorado on Saturday 11/22/14 to trade it with NX625ZH. His primary purpose for purchasing the RV-3 was to use it as a commuter aircraft between 5T6 and LRU. He had a total of 10 hours in tail dragger aircraft and obtained his tail wheel endorsement in a Cessna 180 at the beginning of 2013 from Bill Schmidt who is an examiner at 5T6. He also had some time in a Citabria, Bonanza's, Musketeer's and King Air's. His total time in aircraft was estimated at 1500 hours. He was excited about getting an RV-3 because he wanted an aerobatic aircraft. Eric stated that Tyler made a comment that he took off with the mixture full rich and it took him 2,000 ft. to get airborne, however the next takeoff he leaned the mixture and it increased the performance. Eric mentioned that Tyler noted that he needed to work on his landings and that he flew from 5T6 to LRU and back on Sunday and wanted to gain more experience in the aircraft. On Monday Tyler departed 5T6 and arrived in LRU at 11:25 to meet with Hale from Southwest Aviation. He also spoke with Lisa Murphy for a short time and then with Eric to discuss the Thanksgiving schedule. He stated that Tyler was going to fly to Durango, CO to celebrate Thanksgiving with his wife on Friday. Eric stated that Tyler discussed using a call sign for him while flying the RV-3 and then Tyler got in the plane and taxied out to runway 26. Eric couldn't recall if Tyler did a run-up and mentioned that on Saturday Tyler mentioned that there was a discrepancy with the vacuum pump getting full suction. According to Eric, upon take off of runway 26 the tail looked soft and at 600 ft., he began his crosswind turn and the tail swaged from side to side. The aircraft then appeared to turn left and then it appeared that the left wing stalled and the aircraft went into a spin and made one revolution and hit the ground. During the spin, the engine sounded like it became louder and it was if Tyler added full power. Eric stated that he thought there was a quarterly tailwind on takeoff and that the wind might have had an effect on the stall. I asked Eric if Tyler filed a flight plan and obtained a weather briefing and his answer was no. He also stated that Tyler kept electronic pilot logbooks and did not keep accurate records so obtaining his flight time in the last 90 days would be difficult. He stated that he flew every other day for the last few months and he was unaware of when his last flight review was. He also stated that prior to Saturday, Tyler did not have any time in RV aircraft and had about 4 hours at the time of the accident. Eric requested that we look at the mixture control and accessory casing to see if there were any engine problems.

Date: 11/24/14

Witness: Vince Vigil, Line Technician-Francis Aviation,

Interviewer: David Jones

Time: 8:40pm

Location: Las Cruces Airport Francis Aviation Office

Phone #: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Vince mentioned that this was his first day on the job and that he had no aviation experience. He came on duty at 1045 and began learning how to marshal aircraft and how the fuel trucks worked. When Tyler Francis showed up in his RV-3 he was able to meet him and then went back to learning his job. Prior to Tyler's departure, Vince thanked Tyler for the opportunity to work for Francis Aviation. Vince said that Tyler taxied out to runway 26 and it took him a minute before he took off. He said that the aircraft started turning past Southwest Aviation got 300 feet into the air before making its turn to the south. He said that the aircraft made another turn to the east before the left wing dipped and then started spinning toward the ground. Once the aircraft hit the ground, a cloud of dust rose from the site. He said that his coworker Beto got to the aircraft first then Andrew and then himself. The Fire Department and the life light paramedic responded quickly to confirm that Tyler was not alive. The police and coroner showed up and with the help of the Fire Department, the coroner pulled the body from the aircraft.

Date: 11/24/14

Witness: Mike Lopez, Fire Fighter-Las Cruces Fire Department

Interviewer: David Jones

Time: 9:10pm

Location: Las Cruces Airport Francis Aviation Office

Phone #: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Mike stated that he came on duty at 8am and was called down to the city to attend a driver course. He said that he was on Crawford Blvd. (road into the airport) at 1245 and witnessed a plane in a steep angle of climbing off runway 26. He then parked his vehicle and proceeded to enter the Fire Department building and heard a loud sound like a swarm of bees and then saw the aircraft impact the ground. He said that the nose hit first and he could see the belly. He stated that Eric Palma who was the life flight paramedic responded to the scene about the time that he got there and gave the sign that the pilot was dead. Mike stated that the instrument panel was moved off the pilot because it had covered him in the accident. He stated that they had to cut 3 to 4 wires during the extraction.

Date: 11/25/14

Witness: Tyler Selby, Mechanic in training who works for Oscar Reyes

Interviewer: David Jones

Time: 10:00am

Location: Las Cruces Airport at the accident site

Phone #: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Tyler stated that he was a student pilot who had 42 hours and had also been working as a mechanic apprentice for 4-5 years. He was parked just south of the intersection of where N625ZH impacted the ground. He stated that the aircraft had a high angle of attack on departure and he noted that the flaps were down and it appeared to be a short field takeoff. He stated that the aircraft began a 60° bank turn to the crosswind leg to the south at about 500 ft. (approximately between the windsock and Southwest Aviation). He described the turns to crosswind and then to the downwind as a snap rolls. After making the downwind turn to the east, he stated that the aircraft was at about 400 ft. and the flight controls appeared to be moving erratically and were fluttering. He stated that the aircraft began twitching in flight and then nosed down and impacted the ground at a 45° angle. The spinner hit first and fuel splashed everywhere. He concluded his statement by stating that he thought Tyler Francis seemed knowledgeable concerning piston aircraft and was going to have Oscar Reyes start doing the maintenance for Francis Aviation.