

INSPECTOR STATEMENT

Aircraft # 315LK

PILOT NAME: Larry D. Erickson

Narrative Statement:

David Stockdale
[REDACTED]

Mr. David Stockdale was contacted by phone at the suggestion of the Sheriff. Mr. Stockdale is a retired Sheriff's deputy. Mr. Stockdale also owns and operates a similar model of aircraft.

Mr. Stockdale stated that he saw Mr. Erickson and Mr. Chapman depart on the accident flight from the airport. Mr. Stockdale spoke with the men prior to the accident flight and believed they were going out to take pictures of Mr. Chapman's property.

Mr. Stockdale stated that he saw no unusual issues as the pair taxied out to the runway to take-off. It was noted that Mr. Stockdale stated that Mr. Erickson encountered difficulty in starting the engine and utilized a spray can of ether to get the power plant running. Mr. Stockdale stated that this was common with Mr. Erickson's aircraft and the subject of some humor among the pilots. NOTE: A can of spray ether was noted at the accident site.

Mr. Stockdale stated that he sold the Subaru engine to Mr. Erickson and that Mr. Erickson attempted to convert the engine to fuel injection. Mr. Stockdale stated the engine never ran properly and Erickson put the carburetor back on. Mr. Stockdale noted that Mr. Erickson installed a homemade horizontal stabilizer. Mr. Stockdale also stated he noted a lot of wear on the prop tips of the propeller but he could not say how much and did not know how old the propeller was.

Mr. Stockdale suggested I talk to the airman's brother or his cousin who both owned gyrocopters and hangered them together. Contact information was exchanged and the conversation terminated.

Inspector Name:
Jeffrey F. Rock

Work Address:
DSM FSDO CE01

Work Phone: [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Date:

9/24/2015

INSPECTOR STATEMENT

Aircraft # N315LK

PILOT NAME: Larry Erickson

Narrative Statement:

Spud Colwell

Spud Colwell was interviewed by telephone on August 10, 2015. Mr. Colwell was across the street from the accident site at his own residence at the time of this accident. Mr. Cowllell was watching the aircraft fly over his property and reported that this was a common site on Sundays when "Larry was flying". Mr. Colwell stated that the aircraft flew over the houses across the street at least once prior to the final pass. Mr. Colwell stated that the aircraft flew over and headed South. The aircraft then flew around the East side of Mr. Colwell's house before approaching the accident site from the Northeast. Mr. Colwell stated that the aircraft flew by and then he heard the engine throttle "way back" the aircraft descended below the trees and Mr. colwell thought they might be trying to land. At that point the aircraft descended below the trees the engine revved back up and was loud. Mr. Colwell heard an impact and immediately went across the street and found the wreckage of the aircraft in the front yard. He called 911 and attempted to aid the occupants until help arrived. He stated that he heard no statement from either occupant about what had occurred.

Mr. Colwell was provided contact information and asked to call this office should he locate any parts of the aircraft on his farm. The call terminated at this point.

Inspector Name:
Jeffrey Rock

Work Address:
Dsm FSDO CE-01

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Signature:

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INSPECTOR STATEMENT

Aircraft # N315LK

PILOT NAME: Larry Erickson

Narrative Statement:

Mike Chapman
[REDACTED]

On September 10, 2015 Inspectors Rock and Konig conducted a telephone interview with Mr. Mike Chapman. Mr. Chapman was still hospitalized and recovering from his injuries sustained in the accident at the time of this interview. Mr. Chapman was in an unconscious state and unable to be interviewed for several days after the accident. Mr. Chapman agreed to be interviewed and this interview was arranged through his wife.

Mr. Chapman stated that he had flown with Mr. Erickson many times and that they were good friends. Mr. Chapman stated that the purpose of the flight was to take some pictures of Mr. Chapman's home and just to fly around. Mr. Chapman stated that the flight began with no issues. The two men took off from the Humboldt airport OK7. They had been flying around for 30 minutes or so and stated they were having a "good time" Mr. Chapman stated that just prior to the accident they were flying over his home and did not think he had taken any pictures with the camera he brought along for the flight.

Mr. Chapman described the final pass over his property at perhaps 400 feet above the ground. He stated that he heard Larry say "Oh Shit " and then the aircraft started to descend. Mr. Chapman stated that he saw Larry struggling with the controls as the aircraft continued to descend. Mr. Chapman stated that the aircraft was still headed in a Southwesterly direction when they went below the tall trees on his property. At this point Mr. Chapman stated that Larry revved up the engine but the aircraft did not climb and started to turn to the right. Mr. Chapman stated that the aircraft had already passed the pine tree that it would eventually strike when the right turn started and the aircraft turned back to the Northeast and struck the tree in question. Mr. Chapman further recounted seeing a silver object fly past his side (right) of the aircraft but could not identify the item with any certainty.

Mr. Chapman stated that he would frequently help Larry with the aircraft. He stated that he was not aware of any mechanical issues with the aircraft and that Larry in the beginning of 2015 had converted the engine to fuel injection. The purpose of this was to get more power from the engine. He stated the engine did not run well with the fuel injection so Mr. Chapman assisted Larry in re-installing the carburetor to the engine. Mr. Chapman stated that this process went well and the only issue he knew Larry was having with the aircraft was some problem with the com radio.

The interview terminated at this point.

Inspector Name:
Jeffrey Rock

Work Address:
Dsm FSDO CE01

Work Phone: [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Date:

9/24/2015