



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Central Region

Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: Benjamin Aleksander – Witness

Date: October 11, 2017

Subject: – CEN18FA003

Mr. Aleksander and another co-worker Richard Johnson were in the office at Hummingbird Aviation when they saw the homebuilt airplane taxi past their window. The airplane caught their attention because it was a homebuilt. They also had a radio in the office so they were able to hear the ATC communications with the airplane.

The airplane lined up on 28R for takeoff. The pilot applied full power and the airplane which was a taildragger “torqued” around. The tail was wagging back and forth about 90°. The pilot aborted the takeoff, stopping around the second taxiway and stated to ATC that he would like to try the takeoff again.

The pilot taxied back to runway 28R behind several other airplanes that were waiting to takeoff. After the other airplanes departed, he entered the runway and applied full power. It looked like he became airborne too soon as the airplane settled back to the runway. The airplane lifted off again and when it was about ½ way down the runway it banked hard to the left and dropped about 50’. The airplane leveled off and the pilot lowered the nose as if to pick up airspeed. The airplane then began to climb and it climbed out until they lost sight of it prior to it turning crosswind. He estimated the airplane was about 500’ to 800’ agl when they lost sight of it.

The next thing they recall was the tower controller stopping all traffic at the airport.

Pamela S Sullivan
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator



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Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: Chris Cooper – CFI

Date: October 11, 2017

Subject: – CEN18FA003

Mr. Cooper was the CFI that gave Mr. Schaffer his flight review in 2016.

They flew the flight portion of the review in a Jabaru LSA as it would be closest to his homebuilt and a better fit with his prior experience and skills.

Minimum required for Flight Review is 1 hour ground and 1 hour flight. They had 2 hours ground and 3.9 hours of flight time.

Mr. Schaffer was not proficient prior to the flight review and he needed additional flight training which is why they flew 3.9 hours. At the end of the training he was back to a private pilot proficiency level.

The Jabaru requires good stick and rudder skills as it is a very responsive airplane and Mr. Schaffer was able to fly it just fine by time they were done with the training.

They spent a lot of time talking about his homebuilt and first test flights. He recommended to Mr. Schaffer that he get an experienced pilot to make the first flight in the airplane. Mr. Schaffer responded that he built the airplane and he was going to be the first one to fly it.

Mr. Schaffer damaged his airplane earlier this year while taxiing it.

Mr. Schaffer was receptive to the training and suggestions that were given to him regarding his flying techniques.

Pamela S Sullivan
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator

Pam,

This is a follow up to the brief conversation that we just had in regards to the small airplane crash that I witnessed on Wednesday, 4 October 2017 in Eden Prairie.

It was just after 11:00 am when I left my daughters school Eden Prairie High School. I was traveling South on Eden Prairie Road while at a stop light I noticed a small white airplane flying very low. My first thought is the airplane had been practicing for stunt or an aerobatics show since it was flying very low. Based on my experience this is the only time I have seen planes flying that low.

The small white plane appeared to be twisting left with the nose at approximately 25% downward it made $\frac{1}{2}$ of a turn left then sharply went into another turn downward. I then thought it needs to quickly come back up since it was so low. But, the plane never came back up. That is when I saw black smoke. From the light where I had originally stopped when I first saw the plane I drove a few blocks to a church when I called 911. I turned left and drove into the parking lot. At the end of the parking lot I saw the airplane pieces spread across, mangled and on fire. It appeared that part of the airplane was on the parking lot and part of it would be in the back in a wooded area.

Shortly thereafter a man in a white truck stopped by and pulled an extinguisher out of his truck to put out some of the fire. Shortly within a few minutes the firetrucks, police and ambulance arrived.

A lady who also saw the incident spoke with the police officer asked if she thought anyone survived. I thought surely no one survived since it was all torn to pieces and scattered everywhere. I saw the ambulance drive away quickly with no one.

Officer Chris Millard took my driver's license and contact information.

I then left the scene.

Sonia Fernandez

[REDACTED]

Eden Prairie, MN 55347

[REDACTED]

From: [Wilson, Mike](#)
To: [Sullivan PAM](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Plane crash
Date: Thursday, October 5, 2017 5:09:18 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Halls, Bill" [REDACTED] >
Date: October 5, 2017 at 3:51:44 PM CDT
To: "Wilson, Mike" [REDACTED]
Subject: Plane crash

On 10/4/17 at approximately 11:00 am I watched the aircraft involved in the crash take off from runway 28R. As soon as the plane left the ground and started to climb, in my opinion seemed under powered. As the plane was climbing it kind of bobbed up and down a few times and dipped the left wing and shifted over to the south side of the runway. After the plane straightened out and gained more altitude it veered off crossing the end of runway 28L. After crossing 28L the plane started turning and heading towards the northwest and while still climbing twice I could see the top off its wings like it was straight up and down. At that point the plane started to turn to what looked like the southeast, kind of like he was coming back to the airport. The location of where he was making the turn in my estimation was about Eden Prairie Rd and Hwy 5. At that point I got out of the cab of the mower and by the time I got out and around the mower I couldn't see him anymore. If you have any questions feel free to call me. [REDACTED]. I could probably explain it better verbally.

I hope this helps
Bill



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Central Region

Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: Merne Hallwig – Witness

Date: October 10, 2017

Subject: – CEN18FA003

Her husband is an Airbus pilot so she is familiar with airplanes and the Flying Cloud Airport.

Mrs. Hallwig was driving west on Highway 212 when she saw the airplane. She was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away from it. It was about 75' to 100' above the trees when she first saw it. It was banking to the left with the left wing "severely" pointing toward the ground. The airplane then banked steeper and the nose "dove down." The airplane traveled below the treeline and she saw a plum of black smoke at which time she dialed 911.

She stated her windows were up and she was too far away to have heard any engine sounds.

Pamela S Sullivan

National Transportation Safety Board

Air Safety Investigator

From: [Wilson, Mike](#)
To: [Sullivan PAM](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Eden Prairie Airplane crash
Date: Thursday, October 5, 2017 1:33:30 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tim Howard <[REDACTED]>
Date: October 5, 2017 at 12:47:09 PM CDT
To: "Wilson, Mike" [REDACTED]
Subject: Eden Prairie Airplane crash

Mike,

I watched the experimental aircraft taxi past my window at Executive Aviation Between 10:30-11:00 AM on October 4th, It caught my eye because it was a unusual looking aircraft. It proceed to cross runway 28L on taxi way D. At that point I stopped watching until I saw it take off for the final time. Again it caught my eye because of its initial steep climb, but then immediately level off like he realized it would stall if he kept that angle. It was a very unstable take off for the first 200-300 feet, but I lost sight of it as it went around the corner. When I heard there was a crash, I knew it had to be that airplane.

Thank you,
Tim

Tim Howard
Chief Pilot / Aviation
Cell [REDACTED]



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10-5-17

NTSB

Merle Marshall

H- [REDACTED] W [REDACTED]

Too the best of my knowledge On Oct 4th 2017 I saw this plane taxi by waved my hand at pilot about 15:20 Z running fine when we were painting the numbers on 28L at 1500 Z at around 16:10 Z we had 10R closed down for painting number on runways. When I heard a small plane flying by as I drove around to see it came over at about 1,000 feet msl running I thought good. And then my Coworker drive up to me and said the plane went down as look N,W all I say was blacks smoke. Called ground control and said did you see that.

From: [Wilson, Mike](#)
To: [Sullivan PAM](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: FCM accident
Date: Thursday, October 5, 2017 1:32:38 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Bruce Olson [REDACTED]
Date: October 5, 2017 at 1:03:40 PM CDT
To: "[REDACTED]"
Subject: FCM accident

I witnessed an aircraft departing 28R struggling to maintain
Altitude as it was on
upwind. The aircraft looked like the one involved in the accident.
Bruce Olson
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Central Region

Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: Sharon Predovich – Witness

Date: October 6, 2017

Subject: – CEN18FA003

Ms. Predovich is a Pastor at the Resurrection Life Church. She was sitting in her office at the church when the accident occurred.

She heard a loud “thump” and initially thought they dropped the dumpster while emptying the trash. She looked outside and realized it was an airplane.

When she ran outside to see if there was anyone she could help, but the airplane was on fire. She stated they looked around the parking lot and wooded area to see if someone needed help, but she didn’t see anyone.

She did not hear or see the airplane prior to the impact.

Pamela S Sullivan
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator

REID E. PETERSON

[REDACTED], Minnetonka, MN 55345-5501

H [REDACTED]

C [REDACTED]

RE: NTSB Witness Statement
Plane Crash near KFCM, Eden Prairie, MN
October 4, 2017

- At approximately 11:05 I was driving northbound on Eden Prairie Road at the intersection of Highway 212.
- Clear skies, light winds with visibility more than 10 miles. Negative waterfowl in proximity.
- I observed an aircraft in the air about 1/2 mile from me in the northeast quadrant of that intersection. It appeared the aircraft was at an altitude of around 300 ft. descending in a nose low spiral. Approximately 40-50 degrees nose down and 60 degrees bank.
- Negative visible smoke or fire observed. Aircraft appeared to be fully intact. I remember seeing the complete upper surface of the white wing, structurally sound and normal in appearance, during the spiral maneuver.
- My vehicle windows were closed and I am unable to address if the engine was operating and making sound.
- I observed 1 ½ turns in spiral before I lost visual sight of aircraft below the tree line.

- After losing visual contact with the plane, I observed a black smoke cloud in about 5 seconds. I happened to be adjacent to the intersection where the church is located and turned east into the church parking lot. Doing so I observed the plane fully engulfed in flames.
- Time lapse from first observing plane in the air, to arriving on scene was 1 to 1.5 minutes.
- I was first on scene no more than 30 seconds after observing smoke plume. Jeff Slimmer, who was a passenger in my vehicle, and another gentleman from an adjacent building was also arriving at the same time.
- Smoke and flames prevented us from identifying anything in the plane's structure. We recognized the debris field and began a quick search in the event the pilot had been ejected from the aircraft upon impact. Nothing found. Returned to the plane and subsequently identified a severely burned deceased person in the plane.
- When fire and police arrived, I told them where the logbook and other aircraft papers were located in the debris field and the importance of securing them.
- Provided witness statement to Eden Prairie Police Investigator John Wilson.

Capt. Reid E. Peterson
B-767, Delta Air Lines (ret)
Active General Aviation Pilot, based at KFCM
FAA Pilot Certificate [REDACTED]

From: [Wilson, Mike](#)
To: [Sullivan PAM](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: NTSB
Date: Thursday, October 5, 2017 1:37:30 PM

David witnessed this from takeoff to the crash.

Mike

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Rodgers, David" [REDACTED] >
Date: October 5, 2017 at 12:55:19 PM CDT
To: "Wilson, Mike" [REDACTED]
Subject: NTSB

I watched the air plane taxi to 28R it sounded good when he passed me, he made it to A1 did a run up. He entered 28R tried to take off but slowed down shy of runway 18-36 and turned off to taxi back to 28R to make another try at taking off. The second time he made it into the air, I was working on the numbers of 10R at that time he then flew directly over the top of me. The engine still sounded good when he flew over the top of me, I continued to watch him head west bond then make a right turn heading north shortly after that then he went into a nose dive I lost sight of him once he got into the tree line I saw black smoke 5 seconds later.

David Rodgers
[REDACTED]

Attn: Pam Sullivan
NTSB

Jeffrey P. Slimmer
[REDACTED]
Minnetonka, MN 55345

Cert. [REDACTED]

Re: Aircraft accident Eden Prairie, MN on October 4, 2017

While a passenger in a car I observed the following;
We were heading north on Eden Prairie Rd. crossing Hwy. 212 at about 11:05 am. I looked out the passenger window and saw an aircraft at about 200 feet of altitude and about ¼ mile away. It was descending fairly rapidly with a bank angle of at least 45 degrees. The pitch angle was at least 30 degrees nose down. The aircraft was in a left turn. It continued the left turn as if in a spiral, but appeared to be still "flying". It made at least a 360 turn in that steady state. There was no change in attitude or bank angle that I observed. All controls seemed to be intact and no smoke or fire was seen from my vantage point.
The aircraft then disappeared over an area of trees and within a second or two observed a column of black smoke. We then proceeded ahead and turned into a parking lot where the aircraft was seen burning up. It had come to rest right side up. I then called 911 at about 11:08 and rushed over to look for survivors. I saw one shoe, a moccasin and the aircraft certificate and paperwork lying near the wreckage. Neither showed signs of fire. I then saw the charred body in the cockpit.

As an observation, when I saw the aircraft descending it looked to be flyable and recoverable.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey P Slimmer



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Central Region

Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: Chad Willard – Witness

Date: October 5, 2017

Subject: – CEN18FA003

Mr. Willard is a Funeral Director at the funeral home which is next to the church.

He was in his office at the time of the accident which he stated occurred about 11:00.

He heard the collision and thought it was an auto accident. He looked out the front door, which faces east and saw the fire behind the church.

He went outside toward the fire to see if there was anyone that he could help. He saw the tail section of the airplane and debris strewn about. He ran back into the funeral home and got a fire extinguisher to help extinguish the flames.

He did not hear or see the airplane prior to the impact.

Pamela S Sullivan
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator