



The National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety
Central Region
Memorandum for the Record
Statement of Aberdeen Flying
Service DOM
CEN20FA010
Aberdeen South Dakota
October 9, 2019

The following statement was provided to the NTSB IIC:

[REDACTED]
Director of Maintenance, Aberdeen Flying Service
[REDACTED]

On 9-23-19, I received a call from Gerald Seliski asking if the Aberdeen Flying Service had time to come to the Oakes, ND airport to help get his Cessna 172 running. We assured him that it wouldn't be a problem, and made our way up to Oakes, approximately 65 miles north of ABR. Upon arrival, myself and our mechanics helper, Rylan Abel, spoke with Mr. Seliski about what the aircraft was doing when he tried to start it. He said that it would run at near full power for 1-2 seconds, and then stop running. We removed the engine cowling, and immediately took note of the excessive amount of water in the gascolator. Rylan and I drained the gascolator and carburetor bowl of water. Water continued to flow from the wings into the gascolator, so we continued to let it drain. Once clean fuel was seen flowing continuously, we closed the gascolator and carburetor drains. In my estimation we retrieved approximately 1 quart of water from the aircraft. With the drains closed, we asked Mr. Seliski to get in the aircraft and try to start it. He attempted 3 engine starts, all with the same result of the engine running at near full power for 1-2 seconds, and then stopping. I went to the cabin door to watch Mr. Seliski's start procedure and noted that he was using the wrong engine controls for the start procedure. Instead of leaving the appropriately labeled mixture control in the full rich position, he left the throttle in the full power position, and was varying the position of the mixture control to start the engine. Once I informed him of the proper start procedure, he performed this procedure and the aircraft engine started and ran immediately without trouble. I safety-wired the carburetor drain plug, and Rylan and I re-installed the engine cowling. Mr. Seliski was grateful for the help and spoke briefly about bringing the aircraft to Aberdeen Flying Service for an annual inspection but was unsure of when that would happen due to some impending weather. Rylan and I left Oakes and drove back to Aberdeen.

On 9-30-2019, while working in my office, I was informed by a co-worker that Mr. Seliski had just arrived. I went out to the aircraft, and Mr. Seliski was the only one present. It was a clear day with VFR conditions. Mr. Seliski told me that he would like the Aberdeen Flying Service to complete an annual inspection. I briefed him on how many man-hours an annual inspection on his type of aircraft usually takes, what our shop rate is, and offered him a ride home in one of the Aberdeen Flying Service's aircraft with a pilot employed by the Aberdeen Flying Service. He accepted, and our pilot and Mr. Seliski departed ABR for Oakes, ND.

I started the annual inspection on N6483B on 9-30-2019, the day that it arrived in ABR. I was assisted by another A&P technician employed at the Aberdeen Flying Service, Broderick Everson. We made our way through the inspection in accordance with the inspection checklist provided in the Cessna 172 maintenance manual. The discrepancy list that Broderick and I generated can be found on work order # 10283. Among other items, the more serious of discrepancies were items 12, "landing gear brackets are cracked", and 13, "Cylinders #1, 3, 5, and 6 are pitted and grooved." Upon discovering the cracked landing gear brackets, I contacted Mr. Seliski by telephone and informed him of what we had discovered, and gave him a rough, informal estimate of the scope of work, amount of labor, and cost of the replacement of the two affected brackets. He declined the

repair. I informed him that it is my obligation to make note in his maintenance logbook that the aircraft was found to be in an unairworthy condition. While unhappy with the result, he was not rude or unpleasant on the phone. He instructed us to stop working on the aircraft, re-assemble the aircraft, and to tie it down on the ramp in ABR.

Mr. Seliski drove down to ABR on the morning of 9-31-2019, to look at the cracked landing gear brackets himself while we were re-assembling the aircraft. Mr. Seliski met briefly with myself and my employer, Mark Caven, to discuss repair options and cost. I again made him aware that I was obligated to make an entry in his maintenance logbooks stating the unairworthy condition of his aircraft if he chose not to proceed with the necessary repairs. He left the office and told us that he would be back to pay his bill and figure out a plan of action regarding his aircraft. Broderick and I finished putting his aircraft together, and tied it down on the ramp in ABR.

During the week of 9/30 – 10/4, I had been in communication with Mr. Dwight Pladsen of the Rapid City FSDO regarding a standard, upcoming maintenance base inspection. During one of our conversations, I asked Dwight if he had heard much about Mr. Seliski. Dwight then informed me that Mr. Seliski had drawn substantial attention from the FAA through other actions he had taken, so I informed Dwight of all that had transpired between Mr. Seliski and the Aberdeen Flying Service. Dwight strongly advised me to report our maintenance findings and suspicions of Mr. Seliski's unlicensed, or otherwise unauthorized flights in N6483B through the hotline on the FAA's website. I took Dwights advice and filed a report. Several days later, Dwight sent me an Aircraft Condition Notice that he instructed me to attach to the pilot's yoke of Mr. Seliskis aircraft. I complied with Dwights instructions and installed the notice on the pilot's yoke.

On the morning of 10-10-2019, when I arrived at the Aberdeen Flying Service for work, N6483B was not on the ramp where it had been the day before. I called Dwight Pladsen at the Rapid City FSDO to let him know that the aircraft was gone. Shortly thereafter, the Brown County Sheriff had two deputies stop at the Aberdeen Flying Service. I gave them copies of logbook entries, and work order # 10283, and answered all the questions I could for them. I provided a picture of the aircraft to the Civil Air Patrol and offered up access to any information that they may have needed to aid in their search for N6483B.

Alexander Lemishko

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