

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

May 22, 2020

Attachment 2 – Accident Pilot’s Spouse Interview Summary

OPERATIONAL FACTORS

CEN20MA044

Interviewee: Mrs. Shannon Biggs, wife of accident pilot

Date: January 10, 2020

Location: via Telephone

Time: 1300 CST

Present on the Telephone: Katherine Wilson (NTSB)

Representative: Shauna Price, family member

During the interview Mrs. Biggs stated the following:

She knew her husband for about 35 years. Mr. Biggs worked full time for Global Data Services and also worked for Southern Lifestyle Development which shared ownership of the accident airplane. He would have been with Global Data Services 20 years in April 2020; he had been with Southern Lifestyle Development for several years. He was hired with Global Data Services primarily as a pilot but had also worked in some other roles. She knew her husband had several airplane ratings and certificates but did not know the specifics. He acquired his ratings and certificates while at Global Data Services. She was not sure if Global Data Services paid for him to get his ratings but knew that the company supported him and helped him in doing so. Prior to working for Global Data Services, he did seismic survey-type work in oil fields; he held no prior jobs in aviation.

Mr. Biggs primarily flew the Cheyenne II but flew other aircraft as well. She did not know what his total time flying. She had a pilot logbook of his dated 2001 through 2017, but nothing more current. He became interested in flying through his boss, Mr. Chuck Vincent, who had always been into aviation. They had known each other a long time and Mr. Biggs developed a shared interest in aviation. Mr. Biggs never expressed any concerns about working for Global Data Services or flying the Cheyenne.

Mr. Biggs did not fly outside of work. Mrs. Biggs had flown with her husband on occasion. During those times, they did not experience any abnormal or emergency situations. She did not recall if they had flown in instrument meteorological conditions together.

Mrs. Biggs was asked to recall her husband's activities in the 72 hours prior to the accident. They last spoke the morning of the accident before he left for the airport. Nothing was out of the ordinary and he appeared rested. The night before the accident, they discussed the accident flight. She asked him who would be on the flight and about the weather conditions, which she typically asked when he was scheduled to fly. He indicated who two of the passengers would be but did not mention specifics about the other passengers, just that it would be a full flight. He also told her the ceilings would be low for takeoff and landing but otherwise the weather was fine. He did not discuss any concerns. Asked if she knew whether the airplane was typically a full flight, she said it was not necessarily common but did happen.

Mr. Biggs did not have a regular work schedule, but he would often go to the hangar whether he had a flight or not. She was not sure what his activities were when he would go to the hangar. She did not know if he did any maintenance work on the accident airplane. She believed he last flew on December 18, 2019 and was home most of the time between then and the day of

the accident. She recalled he went out to his camp for a night and maybe to the hangar but not specific dates.

She did not recall when he woke up on December 28, 2019, the day of the accident but he awoke to an alarm and lounged in bed before getting up. His activities were normal; he had coffee and ate breakfast. She thought he left for the airport about 0800; it was about a 7-minute drive to the airport.

On December 27, she did not recall the exact time her husband woke up. She thought he left the house mid-morning but was not exactly sure the time; he had gone to the hangar; she left the house shortly after him. She received a text message from him about 1230-1300 and he was at home. He cooked dinner that night. She did not know exactly when he went to sleep that night as she went to bed before him, around 2100.

On December 26, she did remember the exact time her husband woke up but recalled they had a “lazy day” at home hanging out. She did not recall what time he went to sleep.

On December 25, she did not recall when her husband awoke. It was Christmas Day, they had coffee and breakfast and opened presents. They went to his parents’ house around 1200 or 1300 and spent the day there. She did not recall when they went to bed.

In general, she said the time he went to bed varied and when he woke up depended on what he had to do that day, like if he had an early flight. He only set an alarm if he had to be up for something. He would feel rested during the day and had never discussed any sleep issues with a doctor as far as she knew. He did not take naps. He typically did not have any problems falling asleep or staying asleep. He would watch TV after getting in bed, but for how long before he fell asleep varied. She did not know how many hours of sleep he needed at night to feel rested the next day. There was nothing remarkable or unusual about his activities in the 3 days prior to the accident.

Mr. Biggs had never been involved in any previous aviation accidents or incidents. She was not aware of him receiving any commendations or being disciplined for his performance. He had not had any changes, either good or bad, to his health, financial situation or personal life that might have impacted his performance on the day of the accident.

She described her husband’s health as good. He would sometimes exercise at home on an elliptical machine and a Pilates total trainer home gym. He had prescription glasses for farsightedness; they were bifocals that he wore most of the time. She was not sure if he was required to wear them when flying. He had no issues with his hearing. He did not take any prescription medications or nutritional supplements nor use illicit drugs. He drank alcohol occasionally, the most recently being on Christmas Day. He used tobacco products a couple times a week but did not know the last time he used it prior to the accident. He drank coffee most mornings and would sometimes drink a Coke. What he would eat while out flying varied and he would mostly eat at the hangar wherever he was. In the 72 hours prior to the accident, he did not take any prescription or non-prescription medications that might have affected his performance.

Mr. Biggs never complained about working for Global Data Services or flying the Cheyenne II. There were no external pressures from the company or his personal life to take the accident flight.

The accident flight was scheduled to leave around 0900 and Mr. Biggs was scheduled to fly back to Lafayette after the football game. During the game, he intended to watch the game on TV with other pilots that had flown in passengers for the game. She knew he had flown to Atlanta before but did not know if he had flown to Dekalb-Peachtree Airport specifically. He had never discussed with her his experience flying in instrument conditions. Regarding any preflight planning he did for the flight at home, she did not see him do it specifically but said he always did that. Asked if he checked the weather before he left for the airport, she said they always had The Weather Channel on the TV and he also used an app on his iPad; she did not know which app he used. He would have had his iPad with him. She was not sure if he had access to any weather information during flight or if only on the ground.

He usually flew passengers that were related to the business; he did not fly charter flights. The amount of time he flew in a given week or month varied. He often flew to Monroe but was not sure of other destinations. Sometimes he would stay overnight at a destination.

She had flown with her husband in the accident airplane and other airplanes. There was nothing she recalled being unusual about the accident airplane and its handling characteristics compared to other airplanes. She could not recall the last time she flew with her husband.

She added that her husband was a very conscientious pilot and would cancel a flight if he felt uncomfortable. He had canceled flights because of weather conditions before and there was no pushback from the company. She had nothing further to add to the interview.

The interview ended at 1345.