

Narrative # 2**INVESTIGATOR: SCHUERER, ALISSA**

ORI: IA0520000

CASE NUMBER: J21000418

DATE: 05/04/2021

RELEASE TO PUBLIC: YES

On April 2, 2021 at 1609, I, Detective Alissa Schuerer, was contacted by the Johnson County Joint Emergency Communications Center about an airplane crashed that had just occurred near 250th St & Greencastle Ave NW in rural Tiffin IA. There was very little information given at this time, Lieutenant Hendricks requested a detective en route to the scene. I went en route at 1622, arriving on scene at 1639.

Upon arriving I witnessed a smoldering pile of an aircraft wreckage in a farm field, located on the SE corner of Greencastle Ave NW and 250th St NW. There were several North Liberty Fire Department trucks as well as other deputies on scene. Lt Hendricks' vehicle was parked in the farm field near the wreckage. All 4 road entry points had been blocked off, preventing any incoming traffic.

I observed a wooden power pole on the SW corner of the intersection of 250th St/Greencastle Ave, the power pole had been compromised and sheared off in the top portion of the pole. It was hanging from the wires and other wires from the power lines had been compromised. Linn County REC was also on scene and was in the process of disconnecting the live power to the compromised power lines. The power pole had wires connected from the west/east direction spanning over Greencastle Ave. There were also power lines connected from the north/south direction that spanned over 250th St. The power pole was 40 feet in length. The top 10 feet of the pole was broken off, then affecting the wires spanning in all directions. There was 25 feet of power pole remaining standing, with the additional 5 feet of pole in the ground. Images of the power and wires were obtained from REC and are available in the case file.

I was greeted near the crash scene, in the farm field, by Lt Hendricks and Lt Wisman. I was informed there were several individuals who witnessed the crash, they were talking with other deputies on scene who were obtaining their written statements. Including a farmer, Gary Swenka, who stated he was in his tractor and witnessed the plane touched down at Greencastle Airport, coming from the NW, the plane bounced back up, veering off the runway. Swenka said the plane was struggling to get high enough and its right wing hit the power pole on the SW corner of the intersection which caused the plane to nose dive into the field and immediately burst into flames.

I was informed the first responders who were first on scene were unable to rescue any occupants of the plane as the fire was uncontrollable and engulfed the entire plane and surrounding field crops. Once the fire districts arrived on scene and extinguished the fire, there was one deceased occupant in what appeared to be the cockpit of the plane.

The plane appeared to be upside down in the field, based on the appearance of the right wing. Over half of the left wing was either disintegrated in the fire or was dropped in the field prior to the final airplane crash. There were two pieces of the plane, that appeared to be from the left wing, laying in the field directly west and northwest of the rest of the plane. They were approximately 30 and 50 yards from the plane and were not affected by the fire, indicating they sheared off the plane prior to impact. Linn County REC said there were white paint transfer on the power pole and lines.

The front propeller was detached and indented in the field approximately 20 feet west of the plane. There was significant soil disruption just 5 feet west of the propeller and a soil disruption trail continuing to where the propeller finally landed. It appears the propeller made its initial impact with the ground and then traveled the five feet to where it stopped. There were multiple shards and chunks of clear glass, from exterior windows, located near the propeller and east of it.

The tail of the plane still had some portions of the metal remaining and appeared to be connected to the plane when it made its impact on the ground. A majority of it was burnt and no identifiable numbers were located on the metal.

Information was obtained by the Cedar Rapids Airport Tower ([REDACTED]), their personnel had spoken with a male at 1545 via radio communication. The male reported his aircraft tail number was 1215M, stating he was flying from the Iowa City Airport and doing "touch and goes" going to the Greencastle Airport. Lt Hendricks made contact with FAA Craig Decker, who reported the aircraft belonging to tail number 1215M was registered to Dale E. Bieber, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Coralville, IA, a 1977 Turbo Cessna 210, Tango 210M High Wing, 6 seater, serial number 21061924.

While on scene, I was approached by Brian Rohr, [REDACTED]. Rohr is the Chief Flight Instructor at Greencastle Airport. He had heard about the crash and wanted to confirm the plane was not one of the five planes belonging to the airport. At this point, I was not certain about the identity of the plane. Rohr said none of the airport's planes were scheduled to be used today. He said he had a flight lesson planned for the day, but he cancelled it because it was too windy.

At this point, Lt Hendricks directed Deputy Lenz to travel to Iowa City Airport to decipher if the plane took off from Iowa City.

I gathered the witness statements from Deputy Downes and Deputy Moses. Based on the written statements, Jason Matthews ([REDACTED]) and Lonnie Matthews ([REDACTED]) were travelling westbound on 250th St when they witnessed the events. They saw the plane travelling on the Greencastle runway and veer off the runway to the east. The plane was attempting to gain elevation, but was still very close to the ground. Jason Matthews believed the plane changed course to avoid colliding with his van it was that close to the ground. They witnessed the airplane strike the power pole/wires and the plane rolled into the farm field. Immediately causing the plane to start on fire. Jason Matthews said he ran up to the plane to attempt rescuing the occupant(s), but the fire was too intense to get close.

Another witness Gary Swenka ([REDACTED]) was in his farm field, which is directly adjacent to the Greencastle Airport runway. He saw the plane come in from the northwest to land. He saw the plane touch down and bounce back up again. Then saw the plane touch down again, this time bouncing up with the right wing to the sky. He said the plane came back down on the ground again, but this time it was east of the runway into the field. Stating all 3 wheels hit the corn stalks, estimating the plane to be travelling 35mph when he bounced down. The plane throttled back up again and lifted off the ground, still going fairly slow at about 25mph. Swenka described the plane taking off for the final time on the crest of the hill in the field. Swenka said he saw the plane's right wing hit the power pole and did a nose dive into the farm field. When he saw the plane go down, Swenka immediately picked up his phone and dialed 911, when he looked up the plane was already fully engulfed in flames.

Swenka recalls the windsock at the airport was pointing directly at the runway, indicated the winds were coming from the direct east and they were 20mph. Swenka said that was the first time that day anyone used the runway at the airport. Swenka also lives near the airport, he stated he sees planes coming and going all the time indicating he could estimate their speed and wind direction based on his familiarity with the area.

At approximately 1720, Deputy Lenz went to the Iowa City Airport and confirmed with Airport staff they did see Dale Bieber drive into the airport that afternoon and go to his hanger. Lenz was shown to Bieber's hanger where the overhead hanger doors were open and Bieber's van was parked there. The staff could not confirm who or how many people were on board, but did confirm they saw Bieber drive into the airport. The staff said they are very familiar with Bieber and said they see him at the airport about every day.

I requested Deputy Lenz accompany me to the Bieber's residence in Coralville. At 1730, I requested Detective Schneider to assist me with processing the scene, taking photographs, and assisting the Medical Examiner Investigators, he responded to the scene immediately.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
1953-Bagged up maintenance and gps logs found (PC Form 13776-01,02)

I took custody of the evidence and logged them onto a property control form.

Lt Hendricks had made the phone calls to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Traffic Safety Bureau (NTSB) while on scene. Hendricks informed me those agencies were given the important details and their representatives would be arriving on scene around 1000 the next day, May 3. I would be meeting with those individuals the following day.

I was given the contact information for Linn County REC Line Superintendent:

Dan Appelhans

5695 REC Drive, Marion IA 52302
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The field/land owner where the plane crashed is Mary Struzynski. Struzynski lives at [REDACTED]. The field does not have a numerical residential address. Struzynski's daughter, Vicki Struzynski-Olsen [REDACTED], owns the property and residence directly east of the crash scene at [REDACTED], Tiffin.

Prior to leaving the scene I called MEI Kristen Long, [REDACTED], at 2101. I relayed Bieber's medical and dental history obtained from his wife. Long stated an autopsy would most likely be conducted the next day and identification would probably be made via dental records due to the extensive nature of the injuries to the decedent. Long stated a wedding ring was found on the decedent, I relayed the descriptors of Bieber's wedding ring as relayed by his wife. I also confirmed Long would be calling Nester that evening, Long stated she would be calling her shortly.

I left the scene at 2113. When I left the scene, Reserve Deputy Edgar Lopez-Monzon remained on scene for scene security for the aircraft. He remained on scene until 2339, when relieved by Reserve Deputy Adam Johnston. Johnston was relieved by Deputy Chris Langenberg at 0558.

On May 3, 2021, I arrived at the plane crash scene at 1014. I was met by Deputy Langenberg and NTSB Senior Air Safety Investigator Aaron Sauer. Sauer's phone number is [REDACTED]. Sauer arrived at 1005. Sauer began conducting his investigation at the scene, we assisted with their investigation when requested. Sauer provided the NTSB case number as CEN21FA207.

Sauer also provided the insurance contact for Bieber's plane as, Global Aerospace, Adam Martz, [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. This information was later relayed to Mike Stoner, [REDACTED], who rents the farm field from Mary Struzynski. Stoner did have products planted in the field at the time of the crash that would have been

damaged by the wreckage, fire, and any chemicals spilled into the soil.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Representatives Tony Will and Luis Deliz arrived on scene at 1140. FAA and NTSB agents went through the evidence collected from the prior night, including the partially burnt maintenance logs, GPS logs, and other miscellaneous paperwork recovered from the cabin. They took photos of the information they desired from the logs, they did not request to keep the evidence. This evidence was returned to Johnson County Sheriff's Office evidence storage.

Wentworth Aircraft Inc. was arranged by Global Aerospace to retrieve the aircraft wreckage. Their staff came from Minneapolis area and arrived on scene at 1410. They cleaned up the field, removing the plane debris, and left later in the evening.

FAA Tony Will made contact with the resident at [REDACTED], Oxford. This home is located on the Greencastle Airport land and Mr. Will was familiar with the individual that lived there, Mike Hill. Hill informed Will he was at home when the crash occurred and saw the airplane on the runway and saw the airplane go off the runway into the farm field. The plane passed outside his view from his house prior to it taking off. Hill provided a written statement with more details that is included in the case file. This was emailed to me from Tony Will.

Also on scene was Andrew Hall, Chief Air Safety Investigator, Textron Aviation. Andrew's contact information, [REDACTED]

My contact information was given to all assisting agencies investigating the crash. This concluded my involvement for the day.

I have requested the drone footage from ISP Trooper Messerich. He will send those when available. NTSB agent Sauer also requested this information. Sauer's contact information was forwarded to Messerich with a request.

On Monday 4th, I received a phone call from the Medical Examiner Department late in the day, stating the decedent had been positively identified as Dale E. Bieber.

On Tuesday May 4, I received an email from Kate Bengston, Investigative Supervisor, Johnson County Medical Examiner Department. Bengston stated the autopsy was completed and Deputy Medical Examiner Dr. Stephanie Stauffer has signed the death certificate for Dale Bieber. The cause of death was thermal injuries and inhalational injuries and the manner of death was accident. As stated by Bengston, "The decedent was found to have extensive flame artifact with dense soot deposition within the mouth, pharynx, and upper and lower airways, associated with mucosal injury and thermal inhalational injury. The decedent also had a slightly elevated carboxyhemoglobin concentration. No fatal blunt force injuries were identified." Toxicology was requested by the FAA and was sent for examination.

Linn County REC requested a copy of the call for service, this was sent on May 11 to Johnna Nunemaker.

This concluded my investigation of the accident.

Narrative # 3**ASSISTING OFFICER: DOWNES, CHRIS**

ORI: IA0520000

CASE NUMBER: J21000418

DATE: 05/06/2021

RELEASE TO PUBLIC: YES

May 2, 2021 I was dispatched at 15:52 to a plane crash near 2170 250th St NW Oxford. While en route, dispatch added that power lines were down on the road and a vehicle had run into them. I arrived directly behind a North Liberty police officer and I observed a fully engulfed plane, upside down in a farm field southeast of the 250th St/Greencastle Ave intersection. I also saw a red truck with its driver side door open stopped at the intersection with power lines laying across the hood. I exited my patrol car and retrieved my fire extinguisher. I ran into the field and emptied my extinguisher near the wing and cockpit. Due to the flames and smoke I could not tell if the plane was still occupied. North Liberty and Oxford fire departments arrived on scene and extinguished the rest of the fire. As I walked back to my patrol car I noticed the red truck had been removed from underneath the power lines. I then began to coordinate with witnesses that had remained on scene. Numerous people I spoke with were unsure whether the pilot was still in the plane or if there were more than one occupant. I began walking the northwest field near the Greencastle air strip to look for signs of occupants that may have bailed out. I did not locate anyone but did notice fresh wheel tracks in the cornstalks that appeared to veer off the air strip towards the southeast end.

I spoke with Jason Matthews who was driving west on 250th when he noticed the plane acting out of control on the runway. He said he stopped his car near the intersection because he feared the plane would run into him. He described the plane as 'trying to take off from the cornfield, but it got caught by a gust of west wind which tipped the wings and prevented it from gaining enough altitude to clear the power lines on the south side of 250th. He said he watched it collide with the power lines and cartwheel into the southeast field where it immediately caught fire. Jason did not see anyone bail out of the aircraft and only noticed the one pilot inside the plane. I gave Jason a statement form which he filled out and returned to me before he left the scene.

I then spoke briefly with Shane Goss who lives at [REDACTED], the first residence north of the intersection. Shane advised that his father-in-law Gary Swenka had been in his tractor planting beans right next to the air strip, and witnessed the entire crash as it happened. I drove out to meet Gary in the field and he stated he observed the plane come in for a landing. He said the plane landed then bounced up about 8-10 feet off the runway. It appeared the pilot regained control and then Gary heard the plane power up again. As the plane regained power, Gary said one of the wing tips flew up in the air as if the wind hit the right side of the plane. The plane veered east into the cornstalks surrounding the airstrip and the plane began to approach the end of the runway. The plane started to gain altitude but did not clear the power lines and crashed into the adjacent field. He said he did not notice how many people were in the plane as he was intent on watching the actions of the aircraft. Gary stated that if the plane had not tried to power up again, he felt it would have rolled to a stop safely. I gave Gary a statement form to fill out and our contact information so we could pick it up whenever he was finished with it.

I returned to the crash site and met with Detective Schuerer and Sgt. Gingerich. Now that the fire had subsided, I observed the deceased pilot upside down in the aircraft. I informed Detective Schuerer of my witnesses accounts of the crash and handed over one written statement. I pointed out that two Greencastle Airport representatives had arrived on scene who may be able to help identify the pilot. I was then released from the scene by Lt. Wisman.