

Statement of James W. Bufford

Regarding aircraft N2913E accident February 16th, 2025

On the evening of February 16th, 2025, at Flying Tigers Flight School, Ellington Airport, I saw commercial student pilot George Hicks getting ready to conduct a night cross country flight. I asked him where he was planning on flying to and he replied, San Antonio. I asked him what the flight time would be, and he replied four hours. I told George to get fuel when he lands in San Antonio, he replied in the positive that he would get fuel there. At approximately 2250 I received a phone call from George, he informed me he was involved in an accident at Pearland airport and was not injured. I immediately drove to Pearland airport. Multiple police vehicles were on scene when I arrived. From the road (FM 127), I observed a red light and a white strobe light in the trees. It was immediately obvious the lights were coming from an airplane. I approached a police officer and recommended to turn off the airplane's master switch and close the fuel shutoff valve. None of the officers were familiar with how to turn off the master switch and shut off the fuel. I offered my assistance, the officers had a short conversation and agreed to allow me to turn off the master switch and shut off the fuel. An officer escorted me to the airplane which was located approximately 50 feet from the road. I observed N2913E upside down, suspended in the trees and a few feet from the ground. I was able to gain access to the flight deck through the broken wind screen. I turned off the master switch and turned the fuel selector to the off position. The officers then escorted me back to the road where the vehicles were parked. George was standing next to the parked police vehicles. He was visibly shaken from the event but appeared to not be injured. George told me that while he was flying back to Ellington the airplane's engine began to "sputter". He said he requested from air traffic control to divert to Pearland Airport. According to George he was too fast on his approach to the runway and initiated a "go-around". George explained that during his go-around, the engine sputtered again and lost power causing him to land in the trees. I asked George if he got fuel in San Antonio, and he replied that he did not. I asked why he did not get fuel, he explained that he thought he had enough. George further explained that when he got to San Antonio, both fuel tank level indicators were above half. He also told me when he started having engine troubles one fuel tank level indicator read 5 gallons and the other read 10 gallons.

This statement is true and accurate to the best of my recollection.

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