

Jeffery Schnabel
[REDACTED]

Getzville, NY [REDACTED]

In Reference to: John Schnabel Accident which occurred on July 5th, 2014

To Whom this May Concern,

On July 5th, 2014 at around 12:00PM, I saw Mercy Flight fly over my home. It wasn't until 5:00PM that my mother called to tell me that my father's plane had crashed at 11:30 that same morning and that he was taken by Mercy Flight to Erie County Medical Center. She was not officially notified of this accident, but instead, she discovered that my father had been involved in a crash when friends saw on the news that 'a 79 year old man crashed his small plane in Royalton, NY' and began to call her to make sure that everything was alright. She knew that he was supposed to be out flying and he had not returned home yet, so she called the hospital. It was only then, at almost 5:00PM (over five hours later) that she learned that he was in the hospital. By this time, my dad was in the operating room, receiving his second surgery of the day. The first operation was to stop internal bleeding and the second operation was to make repairs to face, which was badly injured from the crash. He was awake and authorized both operations on his own.

I arrived at the hospital with my mother and my brother at 6:00PM and we spoke with both surgeons. The plastic surgeon said that he thought that he did a good job on dad's nose, which was crushed. Dad was in the ICU unit at this time and we were able to see him. Soon after, Dr. Flynn, dad's surgeon, arrived. He was the surgeon who worked on stopping the internal bleeding and checking out all of the other injuries. He informed us that he was awake when he arrived at the hospital. My mother asked him what they discovered about as his health before the crash and if there was anything health related that might have caused the crash. He said "There was no heart or brain malfunction to cause the accident." We asked if there were any blood clots, stroke or heart attack that may have caused the crash and he said "No".

We visited with dad Sunday and Monday during ICU visiting hours. Most of this time, dad had a breathing tube which made communication with him difficult. All we could do was let him know that we were there and try to make him comfortable. On Monday, July 7th, at around 9:00, my mom, my wife and I took a ride out to Royalton Airport to pick up my dad's truck. While we were there, we ran into 3 men who witnessed the accident, one of whom witnessed the whole take off. His name is Dan and he told me that he saw dad roll down the runway, lift off and roll to the left 3 times and correct then pitch up and roll over to the left above the treetops and drop into the woods. I have 14 years military aircraft experience which include Aviation Ordnance (Navy), Aircraft Weapon Systems (Air Force), Aircraft Egress Systems (Air Force) and Aircraft R&R Systems which

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includes Flight Controls (Air Force). I also worked 26 years with United Airlines. From my experience, it sounds to me like a flight control problem because he kept correcting. This doesn't happen to a pilot with 55 years' experience and no health issues. My dad had 37 years' experience as a military pilot, 30 years as an American Airlines pilot and 18 years flying his own Aircraft. I needed to ask him what happened.

When my mom and I arrived at the hospital on Tuesday, July 8th at 12:00PM for visiting hours, we were informed that we had to wait to see dad because they were removing his breathing tube. We were finally able to see him at around 1:00PM. He was awake and was moving around a bit as we visited with him. When visiting hours ended at 2:00PM and we were told it was time to leave, he had what I would call a fit; waving his arms and saying to use "don't go, don't go". We told him that we would be back at 5:00PM to see him again and he still was saying "don't go". It was scary and I didn't know what to think except that he thought he was dying and seemed to want to tell us something.

My mother and I returned at 5:00 that evening and sat with him awhile while he was awake. I asked him how he was feeling, if he needed anything and I boosted him up in the bed to see if he wanted to talk. I asked him if he remember what happened and he said "Yes, I Crashed!" I asked him "Do you want to talk about it?" he said "yes" and he nodded his head up and down strongly. I asked him "Did you have flight control problems?" and again, he said "yes" and nodded his head up and down strongly. I then asked him if it was caused by the auto-pilot and for the third time, he said "yes" and nodded his head up and down strongly. His voice was very weak but he made his answers very clear. I knew to ask these questions because of the experience that I have had working with these systems. After that, he seemed to be relieved and he rested his head back on the pillow and was more relaxed.

We visited every day during the ICU visiting hours that week and spoke with Dr. Flynn frequently as he was doing numerous tests. He kept telling us that he was very lucky to be alive because there was so much blunt force trauma. My sister came in from Florida and my brother came in from Georgia to see him. His injuries were too severe to overcome and he passed away on July 16th.

We do know that he was in good health on the day of the accident. His heart and brain scans were all fine according to his doctors.

Sincerely,

Jeffery Schnabel

11-6-2014