



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: May 17, 2016
Person Contacted: James F. Plaster
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15FA335

Narrative:

Mr. James F. Plaster was interviewed on September 3, 2015, at 1328 EDT. The interview was conducted in a hangar at 8A7. Also present was the Federal Aviation Administration inspector-in-charge (Cecil Land).

Mr. Plaster provided an address of [REDACTED] Winston Salem, North Carolina [REDACTED]. He provided a cell phone number of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]. His certificate number is [REDACTED] and he indicated he has about 1,930 hours total time and holds a private pilot certificate, but he current operates a Carbon Cub as a LSA. He holds an airframe and powerplant certificate, but does not have an inspection authorization.

He indicated that he personally knows both occupants for the past year, and reported that William did not have any known medical issues. He indicated that a low level maneuver by William would be out of character for him, and reported he was conservative when flying. He believed that William had flown the airplane from the rear seat, and since his purchase of the airplane estimated that it had been operated for less than 100 hours. He indicated that if William were to do a low pass, it would have been done at 500 feet.

He provided the following information pertaining to the airplane –

He indicated the pilot purchased the airplane with a fresh condition inspection, and in 2014, he performed the condition inspection to it. The rear seat was equipped with full flight controls but it did not have throttle, propeller, or mixture controls. He indicated that William did not cut any corners when it came to the airplane. He was aware of a Service Bulletin related to the tail/elevator.

He last flew in the accident airplane about 6 months ago. During that flight Greg Gibson was on-board who was the pilot-in-command (PIC) from the rear seat.

He provided the following timeline for September 2, 2015 –

He arrived at 8A7 about 0855. While there, one of the occupants called on the common traffic advisory frequency when the flight was 10 miles out. The flight landed and was taxied to his hangar. He talked briefly with the occupants, and during that conversation was told the brakes were wearing, which was the only issue and the reason the airplane was at 8A7. Mr. Plaster removed the wheel pants, and Greg Gibson took David Stubblefield (younger brother) flying in a Boeing Stearman, while William remained with him during the work to the brakes. When Greg and David returned, Greg and William then departed in the Stearman flying for about 25 minutes. James reported that he finished the maintenance, and Greg and William returned. All (except him) went in Greg's vehicle to Zaxby's for lunch, and returned to 8A7 between 1325 and 1330. James reported observing William and David perform a thorough preflight inspection, then David entered the airplane first and was seated in the front seat, while William was in the rear seat. While both were in the airplane David passed to William an I-pad. The engine was started and the canopy was closed. The airplane was taxied to runway 27, and he reported hearing an engine run-up performed which included a check of the magnetos and propeller; no discrepancies were reported.

He, Larry Melton, and Greg Gibson were standing outside on the ramp near the approach end of runway 27. Their location was later determined to be located at 35 degrees 54.871 minutes North latitude and 080 degrees 27.198 minutes West longitude. He (James) had a portable VHF transceiver with him and reported the batteries were low, which usually allowed you to hear but not transmit.

The wind was from the north at 3 knots, and there were scattered clouds to the North at 5,000 feet.

The flight departed runway 27 about 1355 and became airborne in the normal/typical location, then climbed in a normal attitude to between 700 and 800 feet. The flight remained in the traffic pattern for runway 27, and flew over runway 27 between 200 and 300 feet above ground level. He estimated the airplane was flying between 190 and 200 miles-per-hour. When the airplane was at about the ½ way point along the runway, he noted the airplane briefly pitched slightly nose down. At that time he thought they were going to do a roll or some maneuver and said words to the effect, "oh my god he is going to roll it" though he thought they were too low an altitude at the start of the maneuver. The airplane then pitched slightly nose up (not consistent with the amount needed for an aileron roll) and began to roll to the left, which began about 1 to 1.5 seconds after the slight pitch-up. He reported the roll turned into a barrel roll. As the airplane became inverted he noted the nose came down and the airplane began descending while continuing the roll. He noted the airplane at that time was about 30 degrees nose low and south of the runway. The tail appeared to lower and the airplane was in a nose-up attitude, which he later attributed to be an attempt to "save" the airplane, then thought it turned into an accelerated stall. He saw a splash and heard the impact and then saw smoke. He indicated he did not see any smoke trailing the airplane during the flight, and reported the engine sounded OK during the

entire flight with no discrepancies noted. He also indicated he did not see anything separate from the airplane during the flight, and reported the engine was developing power during the entire time it was airborne; no engine discrepancies were reported. He later reported he did not hear any power settings change from the flyover until the engine stopped at impact. He also indicated he was not in any position to see the flight control surfaces during the final portion of the flight. He also did not see the canopy open during the flight, nor did he hear any distress call on the portable VHF transceiver that he had, but he also indicated he did not hear the occupants announce their departure.

He called 911 using his cell phone; the call was made at 1403. He estimated about 1 minute elapsed between the time of the accident and the 911 call.

He was asked that if before departure either occupant made a comment about what maneuver (if any) they would perform on takeoff; he indicate there was no comment made.

He indicated that William had aerobatic training in the U.S. Air Force and was a T-38 instructor. He was asked if he knew whether William had given David aerobatic flight instruction and he said he was not sure, but thought Greg might know.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on September 4, 2015, about 2131 EDT, and he replied on September 5, 2015, at 0806 EDT, with, "Tim, This report is accurate although the "tail low " portion was observed prior to impact as they were simply trying to "save " the airplane. I also did not hear any power settings change from the flyover until the engine stopped at impact. As I stated yesterday I feel a climbing turn was the intent and the airplane and simply over rotated on the roll axis and the resulting roll was an attempt to save the airplane. If I can be of further help give me a call,thank you guys for your professionalism in this matter, Jim plaster

Sent from my iPad"

These changes were incorporated into the narrative.