



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Millicent Hill
Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: April 26, 2018
Person contacted: Jerimie Hill
NTSB Accident Number: ERA17FA088

Narrative:

Mr. Hill was a friend of the accident pilot who witnessed the accident flight. He was interviewed at the scene, and the following is a summary of the interview.

According to Mr. Hill, the pilot flew to meet him at Blue Springs Park on Saturday 14, 2017. He stated that the pilot arrived at the park around 1530; landed on the river, and secured the airplane. Mr. Hill arrived about 20 minutes after the pilot had landed. He stated that they chatted briefly and then Mr. Hill needed to retrieve his dog's life vest that had floated south, down the river. He got on his paddleboard and the pilot said, "I'll unload and come help you look."

Mr. Hill was downstream retrieving the life vest when he heard the airplane takeoff. He had retrieved the vest and was paddling back towards the campsite when he heard a noise that drew his attention to the airplane. He was about 200 yards south of the power lines when he heard a "clanky-shanky" noise, and a decrease in engine RPM. He looked up and then watched as the airplane descended uncontrolled to water contact below a set of high-tension power lines that spanned the north-south river in an east-west direction.

According to Mr. Hill, the pilot had owned the airplane for about 9 months. He also flew a Dragonfly; an airplane similar to the Buccaneer. The accident airplane had belonged to the president of an amphibian flying club, who kept it hangered, and sold it to the accident pilot with a low number of total aircraft hours.

Mr. Hill estimated that the pilot had between 9,000-10,000 total hours of flight experience, and was also an avid hang glider.

Mr. Hill stated that when the pilot landed, he had flown over the power lines and touched down beyond them. He said that the pilot had not flown in the area of the accident before, and that the

pilot told him had flown up the river for an hour before reaching Blue Springs Park. The pilot told him that the airplane was below its maximum allowable gross weight with his camping gear aboard. .

Mr. Hill stated that he had “no doubt there were zero maintenance or performance issues with the airplane,” and that the accident was caused by “a mistake.” He believed that the pilot’s attention was focused in the direction of the water, and not his flight path He also stated that the sky was grey and overcast at the time of the accident, and that when he heard the sound and looked up he could not see the power lines against it.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Millicent Hill
Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: January 18, 2016
Person contacted: Tony and France Kost
NTSB Accident Number: ERA17FA088

Narrative:

Mr. and Ms. Kost were at the Blue Bayou State Park at the time of the accident. They witnessed a portion of the accident flight, a brief segment of the flight was filmed by Ms. Kost. They were interviewed by phone, and the following is a summary of the interview.

Mr. Kost stated the pilots camping gear was on shore, and that he talked to the pilot while the pilot was using bilge pumps to pump water out of the hull before he departed. He stated that before the pilot departed he told them he had 35 years of experience in aviation, primarily in hang-gliding. He said the pilot told him he was "going to look for a dog's life vest." He stated that he taxied to the middle of the river, turned around and began his takeoff run to the north. He said that the engine sounded good, and that after becoming airborne the pilot climbed above the tree level and made a left, 180-degree turn, and descended back below tree top level. He said he was headed downstream, to the south when the airplane went out of sight.

He stated that moments later, he heard a sound and then the power went out. He said that there had been gun shots earlier in the day and he was not sure if the sound was gunfire or something else; but that people were saying that the plane had just crashed.

Ms. Kost stated that she recorded four short videos of the airplane before, during and after takeoff.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Millicent Hill
Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: January 17, 2016
Person contacted: Teresa Simpson
NTSB Accident Number: ERA17FA088

Narrative:

Ms. Simpson was at the Blue Bayou State Park at the time of the accident. She witnessed and filmed a portion of the accident flight. She was interviewed at the scene, and the following is a summary of the interview.

According to Ms. Simpson, she recorded a short 9-second video of the airplane taking off. She said it was flying below tree top level when it went out of sight. After the airplane was out of view, she heard smooth and continuous engine noise before she heard a “boom,” and the engine noise stopped.



Federal Aviation Administration

Inspector Statement

Date: January 24, 2017

Prepared by: Jesse M. Lacy II, Aviation Safety Inspector

Subject: Accident N696FT, interview of witness Dawson Wooley

On January 20, 2017 at approximately 1730 I, along with Inspector Matthew Laseter conducted an interview of Dawson Wooley, age 8, in the presence of his father, Damon Wooley. Dawson stated that he was a witness to the events on January 14, 2017 involving N696FT.

The father took us by boat to where Dawson was standing when he witnessed the events. The general consensus of the father and the inspectors were that the location of the accident was one half to one mile down the river. At this point GPS coordinates were logged of the location for mapping and a more complete measurement of the distance. Dawson stated that he saw the plane take off towards him and then turn around over the trees. He stated that the plane went down over river and flew away from him. Inspector Laseter asked about how high he was, and the relation to a tree branch about 30-40 feet above the river was eventually referenced.

At this point Dawson said he watched the plane go up again (shown with hand gestures) then it looked like it suddenly flipped backwards and then hit the water (flipping was also gestured with his hands).

After comparison of the distance between the accident and Dawson's location, it was determined to be about .87 miles.