



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Timothy W. Monville**  
**Sr. Air Safety Investigator**  
**Eastern Region**

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**Date: March 1, 2018**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA088**

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### **Narrative:**

Mr. Robert Baird Moor was interviewed on February 28, 2018, at 0747 CST. Also present were FAA inspector Allan Crabbe, and Kyle Schroeder of Air Tractor, Inc. The interview was performed at the location where he heard the airplane, which was at [REDACTED] Greenwood, MS 38930. The coordinates of his exact location were 33.50458° north latitude and -090.25208° west longitude, which was later determined to be located 0.83 nautical mile and 118° from the main impact crater location. Mr. Moor provided a cell phone number of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He indicated that he is not a pilot and is a semi-retired farmer leasing his land. He indicated that on the date of the accident while at a barn near his house he was on his phone with a girl between 1715 and 1718. During that call he noticed a low-flying airplane that was yellow in color with the letters or numbers, "L682" but not in that sequence. That airplane was a single engine equipped airplane, and it was so low it nearly hit a pine tree adjacent to his house.

About that same time while looking to the West through an opening in trees, he noticed another airplane making passes from the east to the west. He then heard what he described as two nearly simultaneous, "loud/hard" sounds similar to that of the sound of dynamite. He also equated the sound to what would be heard when blowing up a Beaverdam. He ended the call with the girl at 1718 and then immediately called George Saunders, who was the tenant leasing his land. That call also occurred at 1718. In describing the two sounds he said the second was louder than the first. He proceeded to the accident site, but before leaving the county road to approach the

airplane, he called the sheriff department to report the accident; the call occurred at 1725. He located the wreckage, and reported the pilot was still in the cockpit, which was buried in mud.

He described the wind as being from the northwest at 6 mph. He indicated that it was sunny and bright, which affected him after many days without sun. He indicated there were few light/high clouds.

He was asked if he knew the pilot and he said he did not. But he did pay attention to his work as an agricultural pilot and said he was impressed with his skill. He also reported he had a tendency to make a gradual pull-up, and not a quick pull-up. He described the pilot's turns as being lower than other pilots; however, he would go farther out to make the turn. On the accident date, he did not witness any of the pilot's turns.

Someone mentioned that the pilot was wearing rubber boots, which he thought was unusual.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on March 1, 2018, at 1656 CST. He replied the same day at 1906 EST with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him.



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**Date: March 21, 2018**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA088**

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### **Narrative:**

Mr. George Saunders was interviewed in person on February 28, 2018, at 1403 CST. The interview was performed at the location he was at when he heard the accident airplane flying, which was located at 33.49887° north latitude and -090.29794° west longitude. That location was later determined to be located 1.73 nautical miles and 244° from the main impact crater. His cell phone is [REDACTED] in his email address is [REDACTED] but indicated he does not use email.

He indicated that he is a private pilot with ratings for airplane single engine and airplane multiengine land. He has approximately 4000 hours total time, but is not an agricultural pilot. He indicated that he is a mechanic, but not an aviation mechanic.

On the approximate date and time of the accident, he was walking near Roebuck Lake, and heard an airplane flying towards the Morgan city area. He reported it was quiet for about 15 to 20 minutes, and then an airplane returned flying near him then proceeded in an easterly direction, consistent with spray application. He reported hearing the sound of the crash, which consisted of one thump. About three minutes later Mr. Moor called him to report the accident. He reported there was not much wind at the time of the accident.

He estimated that the airplane was flying between 200 and 300 feet when he saw it, and he did not hear any unusual sounds from the airplane.

He indicated that he did know the pilot, and had called the Mississippi state board on him for drift about two years earlier.

The digest was reviewed with him during the interview and he agreed with the content.



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**Date: March 21, 2018**  
**Person Contacted: Matthew Chay Schad**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA088**

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### Narrative:

Mr. Schad was interviewed at Ag Concepts, Inc., Itta Bena, MS, on March 1, 2018, at 1037 EST. Present during the interview was party to NTSB investigation Kyle Schroeder of Air Tractor, Inc.

He provided an address of [REDACTED] Morgan City, MS [REDACTED] a cell phone of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

The interview was recorded using a NTSB cellular phone. He gave permission on the recording to have it recorded. At the beginning of the interview he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He indicated that his title is mixer/loader. He is not a pilot or mechanic, and started with Ag Concepts, Inc., in the end of the 2008 spray season, or August 2008, and remained thru about December 2008. At the end of the 2008 spray season he left Ag Concepts, Inc., and moved to Pontotoc, MS. He returned to Ag Concepts, Inc., three seasons ago, in the beginning of the spray season 2014, or about the middle of January, and has been with them full-time since then.

He was asked for details about when Mr. Risher began flying for Ag Concepts, Inc. He indicated that he began flying part-time in 2013, or the year before he left, and had completed 5 full seasons, and was beginning his 6<sup>th</sup> season. The 6<sup>th</sup> season, started about 2 weeks earlier of a few small jobs, but rain occurred requiring them to stop. February 26<sup>th</sup> was the real start of the spray season. Before flying for Ag Concepts, Inc., Mr. Risher flew for a local co-op, or co-operative.

Ag Concepts, Inc., was comprised of the accident pilot, himself, and Tyler Gilliland, who were the only 3 employees.

He was asked to describe how fueling and chemical loading occurred. He indicated that the pilot would taxi into the hangar and motion by hand whether he needed fuel, which would be started first because it would take the longest. He would then hook up the hose to pump chemical into the hopper tank. With respect to fueling, the pilot would motion by hand when the fuel load was sufficient. The pilot was not involved in either the loading or mixing of chemical.

He was asked to describe if the pilot had any known health issues. He indicated that he seemed perfectly healthy and would only get the occasional cold. He would occasionally talk about his sinuses related to colds. He reported he was more energetic than anyone he personally knows.

On February 26<sup>th</sup>, there were 2 spray jobs that day, each requiring 3 loads of chemicals. The 1<sup>st</sup> spray job was for Lakeside Planning. The 2<sup>nd</sup> spray job was for Ray Makumson.

On the accident date, Mr. Risher was in a cheerful attitude and had talked about a new gun he wanted to buy. He indicated that he did not notice anything unusual or out of the ordinary.

On the accident date, he arrived at Ag Concepts, Inc., between 0630 and 0700, and opened the doors, got the chemical ready and in order for the day. He stated they were not sure if they would spray that day and were waiting for the farmer to give them the go-ahead. They sat around and waited then went to town to have lunch. When he returned to Ag Concepts, Inc., Tyler Gilliland told him they would be spraying.

The pilot arrived that day between 1330 and 1400. Earlier that day, he had taken a rudder from his Sukhoi airplane to Grenada Airport, Grenada, MS, which is where the annual inspection was performed.

He mixed the first load, and waited for the pilot to get ready and do his preflight. He reported nothing unusual. He fueled the airplane before the 1<sup>st</sup> spray job bringing the total fuel capacity in each tank to 3/4 capacity. He usually fuels the airplane after 2 spray loads, and fuels while loading chemical. He recalled that on February 26<sup>th</sup>, he fueled the airplane 4 times.

The first load was loaded, and nothing was abnormal. The first spray job was completed, and they began the 2<sup>nd</sup> spray job that day. That included adding fuel per the pilot's request. He fueled the airplane. Before the last load he recalled seeing ½ tank capacity on both gauges, which was more than adequate to finish the last spray job, do the rinse load, and return. Before takeoff of the accident flight he reported the pilot kept the door closed and there was no interaction between him and the pilot, which signified that everything was "A-OK." He returned to the office, and then they received a call about the accident.

With respect to fueling, he was asked how that was communicated to him. He indicated that the pilot would motion by hand when to stop fueling.

On the accident date, the pilot did not mention to him any issue with the airplane.

He was asked if the pilot would personally do an aerial or ground based survey in advance a field he intended to spray. He indicated that Mr. Risher had not done a survey of the accident spray job, but he did indicate that Mr. Risher had previously sprayed that field before, or hundreds of times. He was asked by the Air Tractor representative if Mr. Risher would perform a lap of the field and he responded he would loop around and survey it.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on March 22, 2018. He replied on April 12, 2018, at 0939 EDT, with, "Looks good, please proceed."



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**Eastern Region**

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**Date: March 21, 2018**  
**Person Contacted: Tyler Gilliland**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA088**

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### **Narrative:**

Mr. Tyler Gilliland of Ag Concepts, Inc., was interviewed in person at Ag Concepts, Inc., on March 1, 2018, at 1127 EST.

At the beginning of the interview he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He indicated that the pilot began his employment with them in 2013, but at that time he (Tyler Gilliland) was not with the company. Tyler started in January 2014. In 2015, the pilot's title was changed to Chief Pilot, and remained to the accident date. He indicated that the pilot did not have any known health issues, and was a first class pilot who could fly anything. He also indicated that the pilot flew multiple airshows in his own airplane, operating as Jim Risher Airshows. Tyler did not know the location of Mr. Risher's pilot logbook.

Tyler indicated that Mr. Risher was checking him out in his Citabria.

With respect to experience, Frank Kimmel of Kimmel Aviation Insurance would have Mr. Risher's pilot experience application, which was renewed every year. Mr. Gilliland reported that Mr. Risher had over 10,000 hours flying, and flew a Hawker.

On the accident date, Mr. Gilliland interacted with the pilot and reported he was chipper, and in a good mood. It was the first good day in about 2 weeks and he was excited to be flying. He reported Mr. Risher last flew on February 13, 2018.

During an inspection of their facility on March 1, 2018, it was noted that the fuel pump did not have a sticker for filter replacement date. It was suggested during the visit that they add a sticker as to when it is due to be replaced.

The amended digest was e-mailed to him for review on March 22, 2018. He replied on March 25, 2018, at 0918 EDT with, "looks ok."