



MEMORANDUM for RECORD

Millicent Hill
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: April 3, 2018
Person Contacted: Troy Marks
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA118 – Ashville, AL

This investigator interviewed Mr. Marks by telephone. He reported the following:

He stated the pilot flew to Gadsden on Sunday, they met Monday morning for business. They met again on Tuesday about 1600, worked until dark, went to dinner, then worked from 2130 until 0230. He stated the pilot had one drink at dinner. The pilot said the FAA rules state pilots can not drink within 8 hours of flying, but he used 12 hours.

On Wednesday morning they left the hotel at 0700, worked, went back to the hotel to get the pilots belongings, then went to the airport. He stated he did not sleep much that night and believed the pilot slept even less because he told him he had been on a business calls with China that night.

He estimated they arrived at the airport around 1100. The pilot talked him through his preflight, explaining what he was doing. He stated he checked the oil, and “the nuts and bolts of the flaps and elevators.” He also checked the fuel and checked for water in the fuel. He stated he walked around the airplane 3 or 4 times. They loaded the pilot’s duffle bag, dry cleaning, and two 15 lb boxes in the airplane. The pilot started the airplane and taxied away, he watched the airplane takeoff before leaving the airport.

During their visit, the pilot told him he was studying to take his instrument test. He had interviewed 5-10 instructors for his instrument training because he was seeking an instructor that would be tough on him. The pilot stated he kept detailed flight logs and offered to take him flying.

The pilot stated he had had a propeller strike, and had the engine inspected, then elected to overhaul the engine. He had a buyer lined up to buy the airplane and he intended to buy a Bonanza. The pilot said there were about 40-50 hours on the engine, and that he wanted to leave Gadsden before weather moved into the area.



MEMORANDUM for RECORD

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Date: April 5, 2018
Person Contacted: David Hester
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA118 – Ashville, AL

This investigator interviewed Mr. Hester by telephone. He reported the following:

He stated the Civil Air Patrol conducted an air and ground search for the accident airplane. Based on the pilot's communication with the Birmingham tower they narrowed down a search area. Ground crews went door-to-door to look for witnesses and an airplane flew over the search area.

He spoke with a witness that was on helipad, he stated remembered the airplane taking off, then he saw it at traffic pattern altitude, level, west of the field in a left bank. He noted there were no odd noises coming from the airplane.

There was a Spot hit from the airplane at 1720, just south of runway 18. They estimated that for the airplane to be about six to seven miles from the airport in about two minutes that it would have been at takeoff power and level flight.

He stated the minimum safe altitude for the area is 2,200 ft above ground level.

Mr. Hester spoke to a witness who did not see the airplane but heard the engine noise. He stated he heard a change in pitch then heard a crash.



MEMORANDUM for RECORD

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Eastern Region Aviation

Date: April 2, 2018
Person Contacted: Cindy Collette
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA118 – Ashville, AL

This investigator interviewed Ms. Collette by telephone. She reported the following:

The Civil Air Patrol was alerted by the Air Force Resource Coordination Center about the missing accident airplane. They began searching on Thursday with 1 airplane, 1 helicopter, and a ground crew. The search on Thursday was limited due to poor weather in the area. They received information that the pilot had contacted the Birmingham air traffic control (ATC) and made initial contact, but contact was lost shortly after that. The pilot advised Birmingham ATC that he was “seven miles south, climbing to 7,000.” The search area was narrowed down to the area around the Gadsden airport. About 18:15 CDT, the wreckage was located by the aircrew.

She had spoken to some witnesses, a mother and daughter driving down the highway that saw something come out of the sky that was too big to be a bird.