



MEMORANDUM OF RECORD

**Eric Alleyne
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern
Region**

NTSB Case Number: ERA18FA180

FAA interview statement: Jenny Hawk

Interview date: 6/27/2018

**Place: Dare County Regional Airport
(MQI), Manteo, North Carolina.**

**Subject: Interview with the opposing
banner tow company**

The interview was taken by the FAA inspector prior to the arrival of the NTSB. It is the full statement of Jenny Hawk owner of OBX Airplanes.

Witness Interview with Jenny Hawk

Jenny Hawk identified herself as the owner of OBX Airplanes, a competitor Banner towing company to the accident victim's employer, OuterBanks Seaplanes.

Ms. Hawk stated that winds on the morning of the accident were coming from an unusual direction that was a crosswind to runway 23 and at 12 mph from about 220 degrees and was a little dangerous for banner pickup operations. The air seemed very turbulent and seemed to prevent her from getting good lift when she flew that morning.

Jenny Hawk stated she did not witness the hookup of the advertising banner, but saw the plane as it got to midfield and believed the engine to have an unusual engine sound, and the tow rope to be wrapped around the left horizontal stabilizer. She then witnessed the accident aircraft reach the end of the runway with a left yaw condition and looked like a "falling leaf". The aircraft then turned to the left at about 250 feet before stalling. The aircraft then went into the trees just to the left of the end of the runway.

Ms. Hawk made the statement that the accident pilot often "flew on the edge" and was a "macho pilot". She previously witnessed the accident pilot's company have tail wraps from the banner pickup multiple times in the previous few months. She did not mention if it was the accident pilot involved with those incidents.

-----End of Statement-----



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Eric Alleyne NTSB
Peter Wentz NTSB
Eastern Region, Office of Aviation Safety (ERA)
National Transportation Safety Board

Date: 6/28/2018
Person Contacted: Andy Rosman
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA180

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. Rosman stated he operated a banner towing company under the name of Island Arial Ads at Dare County Regional airport (MQI) and first met the accident pilot in the spring of 2017. The accident pilot had inquired about employment with Island Arial Ads at that time as a banner towing pilot. Mr. Rosman did not hire the accident pilot in 2017 because he had no recent pilot experience.

He stated that a friend of his had recently flown with the accident pilot and recommended him as a competent pilot, so Mr. Rosman re-evaluated him in 2018 and hired him. The training provided by Island Arial Ads consisted of one month of ground school and flight training. Island Arial Ads does not have a formal training program with a syllabus, but rather a hands-on training program for new banner towing pilots. The pilots training consists of first picking up a loop of rope from a set of 7-foot poles. Once the pilot gets comfortable with picking up rope they move to picking up small banners. Their final check consists of the pilot picking up a 65 foot banner. The accident pilot completed that task on May 8, 2018 and a letter was sent to the Greensboro, NC FSDO requesting an FAA banner towing observation.

The FAA traveled to MQI on May 10, 2018 to observe the accident pilot complete a successful banner pick-up and drop off. Mr. Rosman stated that he estimated the accident pilot had flown about 75 hours since May 10, 2018.

Mr. Rosman stated that he has been in the banner towing business for about 15 years and operates 4 aircraft, 1 Blanca and 3 Cessna 150's. He stated experiencing a tow line wrap around the elevator in the past while he was banner towing. He stated that if a pilot should pick the banner up with any part of the airplane (landing gear, elevator) they should remember to "just fly the airplane".



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Mr. Rosman escorted the NTSB investigators to the banner pick up area on the airfield at MQI and explained how the operation worked. The area consists of two sets of pick up sticks on the east side of runway 5. There is a north and south area. Each area is equipped with 4 pick up stations to allow for 4 banners to be layout on the ground. Each station has two poles that measure between 76 and 78 inches tall and are roughly 16 feet apart. A ground worker would layout the banner in the direction of flight and walk the rope back to the pick up sticks. Place a loop of rope that measures roughly 45' over the top of the pick up sticks. The loop has a steel ring that attaches the long tow line (roughly 275') that is attached to the banner.

Mr. Rosman stated the aircraft was equipped with 3 tow hooks that are manually attached under the rudder of the aircraft. The tow hook rope is then pulled forward and routed through the left aircraft window. Once the pilot takes-off they would throw the first hook out the window while climbing to pattern altitude. Additionally, the pilot was required to check the tow hook to make sure it was hanging free and clear before attempting to pick up a banner. When the banner tour is completed the pilot would fly back to the airport and once over the banner towing area, they would pull one release handle for the banner and the banner would fall to the ground.

He stated on the day of the accident, the pilots were taking off on runway 17 and would fly around the pattern and then proceed to the banner hook up area to pick up the banner and depart to the north. He stated this was the first banner to be towed that day.

Mr. Rosman concluded by stating the banner towing season is from mid-May until October.

On June 27th at approximately 11:00 AM
we received a call saying one of our
airplanes crashed. I drove across the field
to the eastern side following the red
airport track. There was a group of
people near ODX airplanes hangar.
I stopped to ask where he crashed and
Robby told me the airplane stalled and
spun into the trees. I drove over
to the area. Went thru the trees and found
the aircraft.

A J B.
[REDACTED]
Andy Rosman



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Peter Wentz NTSB
Eastern Region, Office of Aviation Safety (ERA)
National Transportation Safety Board

Date: 6/28/2018
Person Contacted: Rich Paul
Contact: [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA180

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. Paul stated his position at Dare County Regional airport (MQI) was an operations technician. He stated on the day of the accident he was working in the operation area that looked out over runway 35/05 and could see the banner towing pick up area. He recalls hearing the ground crew make a radio call alerting an airplane that they had just picked up the tow line on the elevator of their aircraft. He stated seeing the aircraft departing to the north and not gaining altitude like they normally do.

Mr. Paul stated the aircraft continued north, he estimated the aircraft to have flown to a position over Driftwood Dr on the north edge of the airport property and made a turn to the left. He recalls that the aircraft being about 3 fingers (he held up 3 fingers to use as a measuring tool over the tops of the tree line) above the tree line before it turned back towards the airport.

Mr. Paul stated seeing the top of the Cessna wing in about a 30-degree bank to the left. The nose of the aircraft was in a nose down position near the trees to the left of runway 5. He stated seeing the nose rise for a brief second before disappearing into the trees and recalls the banner hanging up the trees to the north of the airport.



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Peter Wentz NTSB
Eastern Region, Office of Aviation Safety (ERA)
National Transportation Safety Board

Date: 6/28/2018
Person Contacted: Ryan Huddleston
Contact # [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA180

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. Huddleston stated on the day of the accident was his first day working for Island Arial Ads. He was working on the ground in the banner pick up area. He stated seeing the accident airplane approaching the pick up area and was lined up with the second set of pick up poles.

Mr. Huddleston stated the aircraft was very low and estimated the tail of the aircraft to be about 5 feet off the ground. As the aircraft flew through the pick up area, it hooked the pick up loop around the left elevator. He recalled the pilot making a radio call to the ground crew stating, "I can't turn, it won't release".

Mr. Huddleston stated the aircraft continued north and was barely over the tops of the trees, he recalls the aircraft moving to the left, he stated the wind was blowing from right to left and he felt the wind was pushing the aircraft to the left. He stated seeing the aircraft disappear behind the trees.

He concluded by stated that he had only witnessed about 2 or 3 banner pick ups before witnessing the accident airplanes pick up the banner on the day of accident.