

REPORTING OFFICER NARRATIVE*Broward County Sheriff's Office*

OCA

11-1802-000077

Victim

Offense

INFORMATION

Date / Time Reported

Thu 03/01/2018 15:06

On March 1st, 2018 at or about 0952 hours, I responded to Pompano Airpark, located at [REDACTED] Pompano Beach, in reference to a plane crash. The airplane had come to its final rest on the west side of the field along the fence-line, between Sand and Spurs Equestrian Park and the Goodyear Blimp Hangar. Upon my arrival, I observed a small framed aircraft (1973 Piper Cherokee 6-300 tail-number N54476) entangled with the fence north of the Goodyear tarmac. I observed plane debris leading up from the center of the tarmac to aircraft's point of final rest. It should be noted the aircraft sustained massive damage, and had both wings partially or completely torn off: thereby rupturing both fuel tanks.

Prior to my arrival on scene, Pompano Beach Fire Rescue (PBFR, Run #5051, Rescue 263 and Rescue 24) were treating both the pilot and passenger for injuries. The on-scene PBFR Engine was also present and hosing down the aircraft with fire retardant foam to avoid any fire from the aircraft's leaking fuel. Deputy Mateo CCN [REDACTED] was on scene interviewing the pilot, identified as Eric Pierce. Deputy Davis CCN [REDACTED] advised me he had spoken with employees from the Goodyear Blimp Hangar who had witnessed the crash, and that there was possible video surveillance at the hangar. It should be noted neither pilot nor passenger reported any injuries in the crash, but were later transported to the hospital.

I then met with Gary Hencken, who was being treated in the PBFR rescue truck. Hencken stated he had been a passenger in the aircraft, but that he was a pilot as well. Hencken explained shortly after take-off from the Pompano Airpark the manifold pressure of the engine had dropped, indicating an engine problem. Hencken said the pilot made the decision to return to the field, and notified the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATC) that he was making an emergency landing. Hencken stated their approach speed was high, and that they may have touched down late on the runway. Hencken explained that upon making ground contact the pilot had attempted to throttle back the engine but it did not respond. Hencken said at this time they had attempted to pull back the mixture, but the engine would not respond and shut off. Hencken said the pilot then attempted to "go-around: fly another flight pattern to re-attempt a landing. Hencken advised they made a hard right turn, and ended up making a hard landing on the Goodyear Blimp tarmac to avoid the large hangar. Hencken advised to me he was a pilot, but wouldn't state to me his pilot's license number, due to the fact he was just a passenger and not the Pilot-in-Command (PIC).

I then met with the pilot Eric Pierce, who stated he was the PIC. Pierce explained the aircraft belongs to the Pompano Beach Flying Club, of which he is a member. Pierce advised during the start-up of the aircraft this morning he had noticed that one magneto did not produce a drop in engine Revolutions Per Minute (RPM). Note: an aircraft magneto is a self-sufficient engine driven electrical generator that uses permanent magnets and coils to produce high voltage to fire the aircraft spark plugs. Pierce explained due to the magneto not producing a drop in RPM he had determined that maintenance was needed for the aircraft to be airworthy. Pierce stated he had obtained permission and then taxied the aircraft over to South Florida Aircraft Maintenance to conduct the necessary maintenance. Pierce explained after the mechanic at the business had completed the repairs he had again prepared for take-off. Pierce advised ATC cleared him for take-off on runway 28 (heading west). Pierce advised when he was climbing through 800 feet, approaching 1000 and preparing for a cruising climb, the engine manifold pressure had dropped down to 13" inches of Mercury. Pierce said this indicated an engine problem, and he had made the decision to return to the airfield to perform an emergency landing. Pierce advised ATC had cleared him to land on runway 28 (heading west). Pierce explained due to the ongoing engine issue he made the decision to maintain a high approach speed.

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Pierce said upon landing and making contact with the ground he had attempted to throttle back the engine, but it was unresponsive. Pierce stated he then made the decision to make the decision to go-around, and make another attempt at landing. Pierce advised he made a sharp right turn immediately upon going airborne as he wanted to stay over the field. Pierce explained Hencken had then helped out as well, and they ended up making a hard landing onto the tarmac of the Goodyear Blimp facility. Pierce said the aircraft then skidded across the tarmac and crashed through the fence.

I then met with Karen Thurlow and Audrey Germann, both from Sand and Spurs Equestrian Park. Thurlow advised me she had seen the airplane crashing. Thurlow stated she had been riding her horse in the stables next to the airfield and had seen the airplane attempt to make its first landing. Thurlow said she had then seen the airplane make a sharp right turn and make a hard landing onto the tarmac area of the Goodyear Blimp operating area. Thurlow explained the airplane had then skidded across the field, and crashed through the fence. Germann stated she saw the airplane coming down over the Goodyear Blimp tarmac and diving nose first. Germann explained the airplane had crashed through the fence and been turned around by the force of the impact and came to a final rest facing south.

I then met with Goodyear Blimp staff who advised me they had cameras at their hangar. I spoke with Daniel Smith, the on-site Public Relations Director, who advised me he would try to get me copies of the video surveillance camera footage. I provided Smith with my email, and he stated he would email me a copy of the video surveillance or call back should it prove necessary for a deputy to return to pick up a physical copy.

I then responded to the Pompano Beach Airpark Control Tower, located at [REDACTED] 10th St. I met with Bruce Bivins, who is the Air Traffic Manager of the Air Traffic Control tower. Bivins advised me he had notified the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), who advised Bivins they would be responding to the scene for an investigation. Bivins stated he had also contacted the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and notified them of the crash. I met with air traffic controller John Bonner who was handling the radio traffic at the time of the crash. Bonner advised the aircraft (Piper Cherokee #N54476) had been cleared for take-off on runway 28, and had made a right turn on take-off. Bonner said when the aircraft was approximately 2.5 miles northeast of the airfield, the pilot had notified him of engine problems and he had been cleared for a priority landing on runway 28. Bonner stated he witnessed the airplane make its landing on runway 28, and he believed it may have a high approach speed. Bonner said the airplane had touched down late on the runway, by the Mike taxi way, and had then attempted to go around. A copy of the Pompano Airpark airport diagram, which displays the runways and taxiways, was submitted to records. Bonner explained the aircraft then made a sharp right turn and had crashed onto Goodyear Blimp tarmac, and then crashed through the fence on the north side of the hangar property. I then met with Airport Manager Steven Rocco. Rocco advised he would be having an environmental crew coming to take care of the fuel leak that had contaminated the area of the crash. Rocco stated the fence was property of both the airport and Goodyear, and he would be taking care of the issue. Rocco stated the fence is not required by Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

I then responded back to the original incident location, and met with FAA Investigators Jimmey Mygatt, Antonio De Leon, and Francis Lauterborn. All three Investigators took pictures of the scene and conducted

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their own independent investigation. I advised the Investigators I would be forwarding them a copy of this report, as well as security footage once it becomes available. The FAA Investigators advised me the NTSB would not be responding. The FAA Investigators stated they had completed their investigation: therefore the aircraft could be released back to its owner and the scene could be cleared.

Deputy Mateo photographed the scene and uploaded the photos to Evidence.com. I photographed an empty Michelob Ultra beer case, which contained no bottles, located under the passenger back seat. I uploaded the photo to Evidence.com.

At this time I observed a book bag and small black flight bag by Deputy Mateo's patrol vehicle. I could not immediately confirm the ownership of the bags as it was just Deputy Alvarez, Deputy Mateo and myself left on scene. I inventoried the contents of the bags, and completed a property receipt. Inside one bag was Eric Pierce's passport, I therefore contacted Pierce and advised him he had forgotten his flight bags on scene. Pierce stated he would return to the scene to retrieve his items. Hencken then arrived on scene and took possession of the flight bags, and signed the property receipt. The property receipt was later submitted to records.

Sgt Braga was present on scene and notified of the incident, and a staff event was completed. Pompano Beach Command staff were also present on scene immediately following the incident.

No further action will be taken at this time.