



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Brian C. Rayner
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: February 28, 2022
Person: Jeff Weissert – Flight Instructor
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21FA232 Crossville, TN
Subject: ~~Accident Student Pilot~~

Narrative:

Mr. Weissert was the accident pilot's flight instructor. He holds a commercial pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single engine land and instrument airplane. He held a flight instructor certificate with a rating for airplane single engine land. Mr. Weissert reported 492.8 total hours of flight experience of which about 440 hours was in the accident airplane make and model.

Mr. Weissert took on Mr. Ghelan as a student on the recommendation of a friend. He started flight training around the beginning of April and continued his training on a pace of about 3 flights a week. Sometimes, it was 5 times a week, sometimes two, but on average 3 times a week. "Mr. Ghelan was doing Sporty's online ground school, and we would review the academic lessons before we flew."

"I thought he was a quick learner with flying ability and communication, he was a successful businessman, a good family man, and as a pilot, he learned more quickly than the average Joe. He was consistent with scheduling lessons and wanted to do things the proper way without shortcuts. He was a good 'stick-and-rudder' guy, and his landings were quite nice."

Mr. Ghelan had 44 hours of flight experience, of which an estimated 7 hours was solo.

On the day of the accident, the plan was for a long cross-country solo flight. Depart downtown island (DKX), then fly to CSV (Crossville), and then to Cleveland TN (RZR) then back to DKX. "We met and discussed the flight, he then departed at 0700. I received a phone call from him at 0826 EDT. He called me from the air. Mr. Ghelan said the airplane's engine was not making full power, making 75 knots at 1,700rpm. Normal cruise was around 2,400rpm about 95 knots airspeed."

"Initially, his demeanor was quite calm, and remained calm while he was talking to me."

I helped him with troubleshooting, asked about fuel state, magnetos on, carb heat position, and the instruments were all in the green, but the engine was not making full power, and the airplane could not climb. From there, I asked where he was, what is your closest airport, and he thought he was 40 to 50 miles from Crossville and didn't think he could make it back. I remember telling him to land at the nearest airport and I would pick him up, but he said he had slowed to 70 knots. I told him to make an emergency landing in a field, and he said there were trees and mountains and I asked if he was talking to ATC, he said he was not. Soon after, I heard the sound of trees and impact and the connection went dead."

Mr. Weissert then called 911.