

Inspector Statement

Subject: Interview of William Walker

Created by: FAA Aviation Safety Inspector Dwight Greenlund

On June 19th, 2021 I conducted a telephonic interview with Mr. William Walker. Mr. Walker is the Chief Instructor at Sunrise Aviation, a certified flight school operating from Cecil Field Florida. The purpose of the interview was to gain information regarding Mr. David Cuttino who was the instructor pilot flying N1300Q which had crashed the previous day. Records indicate the Mr. Cuttino was an Assistant Chief Instructor at Sunrise Aviation from 2017 to 2020. I am the Principal Operations Inspector for Sunrise Aviation, and have worked closely with Mr. Walker on several occasions.

I asked Mr. Walker if he could provide some background on Mr. Cuttino. Mr. Walker said he was expecting my call. He had received several calls from other pilots at Sunrise Aviation about the accident. Mr. Walker said that he and Mr. Cuttino were close friends. They had worked closely together at Sunrine Aviation for three years, and had known each other for several years prior to that. He said that Mr. Cuttino was an Assistant Chief Instructor at Sunrise Aviation starting in 2017. Prior to then, Mr. Cuttino was the Chief Instructor at Sterling Aviation, another flight school that operates from Craig Airport in Jacksonville. He said that Mr. Cuttino had left Sunrise Aviation in 2020 because he lived in Fernandina Beach and was tired of commuting.

As the Principal Operations Inspector for the school, I know that Mr. Walker conducts annual proficiency checks on all the instructors at his school. I asked Mr. Walker if he had flown with Mr. Cuttino. Mr. Walker replied that he had on several occasions. He said that Mr. Cuttino was a highly experienced pilot in both single engine aircraft and light twin aircraft. He said that Mr. Cuttino was an excellent pilot and instructor.

I asked Mr. Walker if Mr. Cuttino was one who would accept unnecessary risk or perform any risky maneuvers. Mr. Walker replied that Mr. Cuttino was very professional and would never perform any risky maneuvers. Mr. Walker said to me that I know how conservative and safety conscious he is (Mr. Walker) and that Mr. Cuttino was even more conservative in decision-making and even more safety conscious than he was. I asked if Mr. Cuttino would ever allow himself to get into a situation in an aircraft that he would not be able to recover from. Mr. Walker replied absolutely not.

Mr. Walker stated that he heard the accident aircraft was a Cessna 150. He mentioned that Mr. Cuttino was a large guy. With another pilot on board, the Cessna 150 would be close to max gross weight and the CG would be forward. Mr. Walker also noted that Mr. Cuttino had some medical procedures completed on his hip and maybe his knees which may have affected his mobility.

My opinion is that Mr Walker was truthful and open in his responses. Mr. Walker was shocked that Mr. Cuttino was in the accident, and inferred that it must have been some kind of mechanical failure. Knowing Mr. Walker, his experience and professionalism lend credit to his opinions and insights.

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