



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: December 13, 2020
Person Contacted: Anthony G. Young
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA068

Narrative:

Mr. Anthony Young, manager of Kyle-Oakley Field Airport (CEY), Murray, Kentucky, was contacted by phone on December 13, 2020, at 1520 EST. He was called at [REDACTED]. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

He was advised that I was the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator concerning the fatal accident involving N5470U. He was also informed that I was looking to find out information about fueling, whether anybody interacted with the accident pilot before the flight departed, and whether the fixed base operator (FBO) had any cameras on the interior that would have captured the pilot before departure. He indicated that there are no cameras at the FBO.

He indicated that the pilot originally flew from Florida to Marion-Crittenden County Airport (5M9), Marion, Kentucky, and after arriving there had the fuel tanks topped off. He subsequently flew to CEY arriving about 2 to 3 days before the accident date (December 12th)¹. After arrival at CEY he taxied to the fuel pump and one tank was topped to a certain level. The pilot then left CEY with the individual (Gene Sams) he was there to visit and left his airplane at CEY.

While at CEY, Cardinal Aviation serviced the landing gear struts.

He subsequently provided copy of the fuel pump inspection record for December and the fuel logs for aircraft fueled from the same source from December 6, 2020 thru December 13, 2020. He also provided the phone number for Cardinal Aviation of [REDACTED] and for Gene Sams of [REDACTED].

¹ Fuel records later provided indicated an arrival on December 8, 2020.

On the same day at 1606 EST, he contacted NTSB from the same number to confirm receipt of the document he had sent earlier.

During the call he confirmed that they have a stationary fuel pump. Payment for fuel is done at the pump after fueling. Hence, the time of the credit card payment occurred shortly after the airplane was fueled.

The fueling on the 8th in which 7.400 gallons of 100 low lead (100LL) fuel were added was done by him. That fueling occurred after the pilot's flight from 5M9. During that fueling the pilot was present and all the fuel was added to the left fuel tank. The pilot had him refuel to a specific level and said that he had a fuel leak. The pilot told him when to stop fueling the tank. After the fuel was added he (Mr. Young) noted the tank was almost full, and he added that he looked for fuel staining and leaks and did not see any. He added that each wing had only 1 fuel cap and he did not top off the left tank at that time.

In preparation of the fueling on the accident date (December 12th) personnel from Cardinal Aviation pulled the airplane to the fuel pump. The fueling was done by Griffin Sheridan. As part of that fueling 3.150 gallons of 100LL fuel were added to the left fuel tank which filled it. The right wing fuel tank was full at that time.

With respect to the other aircraft fueled from the same source as the accident airplane, there have been no reports of any fuel related complaints.

Postaccident, he took a sample of fuel from the fuel nozzle under pressure and retained it. His fuel supplier was Titan Aviation., He was asked if they had any quality control checks to do as a result of an airplane crash following fueling, such as comparing the specific gravity postaccident with the specific gravity when the fuel was delivered. He advised he would need to research that.

He confirmed the accident airplane was not flown between the arrival on the 8th and the accident flight.

The pilot did not pay for the fuel purchased on the accident date.

He had not seen the pilot before, but he had only been the CEY Airport Manager for about 2 years.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on December 13, 2020. He replied on December 23, 2020, at 0946 EST with, "[I] don't see any needed changes." The final digest was e-mailed to him on December 23, 2020.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: December 22, 2020
Person Contacted: Ernest Jirak
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA068

Narrative:

Mr. Ernest Jirak, owner of Cardinal Aviation was contacted by phone on December 16, 2020, at 1238 EST. He was called at [REDACTED] He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He indicated that he has known Mr. Leadlay for about 10 years. He indicated that he (Mr. Leadlay) had a portion of 1 leg removed following a motorcycle accident a "long time ago."

He and Mr. Leadlay had a mutual friend named Gene Sams. It was Mr. Sams that Mr. Leadlay was in town to meet. Mr. Leadlay arrived at Kyle-Oakley Field Airport (CEY), Murray, Kentucky on December 8, 2020.¹ When the airplane arrived at CEY the nose landing gear strut was flat and the main landing gear struts were "down." The airplane was brought into his hangar and they found the nose seal was bad. They replaced the defective seal and serviced the nose landing gear with MIL-H-5606 and nitrogen. They also serviced the main landing gear struts with MIL-H-5606. The work was signed off on December 12, 2020². The airplane remained in their hangar from when it was brought in for maintenance until the morning of the accident flight.

On the accident date the pilot arrived at CEY about 1030. At that time the airplane was still inside their hangar. He spoke with him at that time and he reported the pilot was his "same old chipper self." The pilot paid the maintenance bill, and the pilot put the documents in his briefcase. At that time he did not notice anything physically wrong with him. His speech was OK.

¹ According to FlightAware, the flight departed Marion-Crittenden County James C Johnson Regional Airport (5M9) at 0903 on December 8, 2020, and was last noted near Murray, Kentucky.

² The logbook entry that was found inside the Aircraft Logbook is an Attachment to this digest.

He added that the pilot and Mr. Sams had been friends a long time, and it was Mr. Leadlay who was a flight instructor taught Mr. Sams how to fly, though he was not sure if Mr. Leadlay had been instructing since he lost his leg in the accident.

Mr. Leadlay had owned the airplane a long time³. He had flown a similar trip several times. He described him as a competent pilot who had flown many different models of aircraft.

He was asked the following questions:

Did he express any concern regarding weather?

He “talked about the weather that the flight would encounter in the Georgia and Alabama area but I don’t think he was really concerned about it.” When he was at his facility and specifically in his office he was filling out the flight plan and checked the weather using ForeFlight or a similar app.

To me he picked up ice or had a medical problem. He did have an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan filed for the intended flight.

Did you see him perform a preflight inspection of the airplane?

The pilot performed a preflight inspection while the airplane was inside his hangar. After completing that the airplane was towed to the fuel pumps and a small amount of fuel was added which topped off the fuel tank.⁴

How would you describe the preflight inspection?

The pilot opened the engine cowlings, checked the oil quantity, sumped the fuel tanks and also visually checked the fuel tanks after fueling, adding, “he was pretty thorough about most things.” Mr. Sams could give more precise information about the preflight inspection. He (Mr. Jirak) watched the preflight from inside his hangar.

Aside from the leg was there any health issues?

He did not know him that well personally for him to discuss that with him. He knew about his leg. Mr. Sams could give more information.

Could he describe the weather in Georgia and Alabama?

No. The pilot was looking on his computer and made the decision to go. He “didn’t discuss that, or too much with him.”

Is there anything else I haven’t asked that I need to know about?

No. Mr. Leadlay “took really good care of his airplane.” They worked on the nose landing gear and serviced the main landing gears. The “airplane looked to be in pretty good shape.”

Was the airplane equipped with weather radar?

He did know it had a modern panel but he was not sure. Mr. Sams was familiar with the airplane.

³ According to records from the Federal Aviation Administration records Leadlay Aircraft, LLC purchased the airplane on September 9, 2010.

⁴ According to fueling records 3.150 gallons of 100 low lead fuel were paid for on December 12, 2020 at 1050:23.

Do you have any questions for me?

No. He asked about the condition of the airplane and was informed it was fragmented.

The call ended at 1300.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on December 22, 2020. He replied the same day at 1753 EST with, "No changes are needed in your report." The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on December 23, 2020.

AIRFRAME TIME: 3571.80 + TACH TIME
ENGINE TIME SINCE NEW: 706.61 + TACH TIME
ENGINE TIME SINCE TOH: TACH TIME - 515.10

12-12-20 Cardinal Aviation Murray, KY 42071
N5470U Tach Time 1233

Replaced seals in nose strut, service with 1qt. Phillips Hyd 5606, charge
with Nitrogen.
Service R&L main struts with Phillips Hyd. 5606.
Replace Alu grommet for Dzus Fastener right top engine cowl fwd corner.
Ernest Jirak A&P [REDACTED] [REDACTED]



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: December 22, 2020
Person Contacted: Michael J. Brady
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA068

Narrative:

Mr. Michael J. Brady was contacted by phone on December 22, 2020, at 1616 EST. He was called at [REDACTED] He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He was advised that I was the National Transportation Safety Board investigator concerning the fatal accident involving Mr. Leadlay. I indicated that the investigation was just beginning and I was reaching out to him to get information concerning the replacement of the right aileron control cable that occurred on May 1, 2020.

He and Mr. Leadlay who were a part of the American Bonanza Society were aware of the Airworthiness Directive¹ concerning inspection of the right aileron control cable. During the annual inspection he and Mr. Leadlay inspected both right aileron control cables and during his inspection after removing the safety wire from the turnbuckle of the cable that went into the cockpit to the control column, the cable came apart and was broken. He indicated that the outboard cable was fine. Mr. Leadlay purchased a replacement cable part number MC35-524314L directly from McFarlane Aviation Products², and there was a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) 8130 form associated with the cable. Prior to installation he compared the new cable to the old, and then installed it. Instead of using the clip recommended in the AD, he used 0.040 safety wire.

¹ Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2019-23-10, with an effective date of November 22, 2019, which superseded AD 2019-21-08.

² The logbook entry specified "McFarland."

He was asked the following:

If he had the old cable.

He indicated that he thought the pilot might have it in his hangar.

Did he interact with the pilot before his trip from Kentucky to Florida?

Yes. They messaged each other. The pilot did something to the wingtips, and had trouble putting navigation light covers on. He told the pilot that he wouldn't be back before his trip. He since learned that the pilot was able to put the lens covers on.

While in Kentucky the pilot got into contact with him again. He asked him if he needed him to pick him up in Murphy, North Carolina and fly him to Florida. Mr. Brady said no because he planned to drive his vehicle (truck) to Florida.

Did he know what type autopilot was installed?

It was a 3-axis.

Did the pilot have any health issues?

He suffered from prostate cancer and had undertaken some treatments and was not happy with how they were going. He had asked the pilot how he was feeling and he said good. He added that the pilot was a, "damn good pilot."

The call ended at 1634 EST.

After the call ended, on the same day at 1749 EST, he was sent an e-mail requesting he provide:

1. "Any pictures of the airplane exterior or interior you may have
2. The work order for the right aileron control cable replacement
3. The P/N for the right aileron control cable that was replaced
4. A formal, signed, dated statement addressed to NTSB that explains how the right aileron control cable was found, what the damage was, confirm what cable was replaced including part number, and how your securing method at the turnbuckle varied from the AD, and why you opted to use that method."

He replied on December 25, 2020, at 2102 EST with, "Mr. Monville, I can't find any pictures of the aircraft and there were no work orders as this was verbal between Elliott and me." He provided the part number of the cable in the e-mail and also attached a signed, dated statement."

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on December 22, 2020. He replied on December 25, 2020, at 2102 EST with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. In addition, he provided the following information, "I don't know if you are aware but Elliott had his ruddervators stripped and painted due to some corrosion on the magnesium surfaces-- sometime late summer[.] When I was back home in August he told me about it- don't remember where. He also had his airplane through the Bonanza Society safety inspection by Bob Riply- which he said they found only a couple "nit-picky things"(his words) and they were impressed at how nice the 50 year old was. I believe that was in Sept. or Oct.-- But don't know for sure." The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on February 5, 2021.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: February 8, 2021
Person Contacted: Gene Sams
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA068

Narrative:

Mr. Gene Sams was contacted by phone on February 5, 2021, at 1558 EST. He was called at [REDACTED]. It was agreed to speak on February 8, 2021 at 0900 EST. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

He was contact on February 8, 2021, at 0901 EST at [REDACTED]. At the beginning of the phone call he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He indicated that he is a pilot, and Mr. Leadlay was his flight instructor in 1970. He and Mr. Leadlay remained friends since then, adding that their children had grown up together.

With respect to his recent visit with the accident pilot, Mr. Leadlay, arrived on December 6th at Marion-Crittenden County James C Johnson Regional Airport (5M9), Marion, Kentucky. He met the pilot, and while there they also met Mr. Jim Johnson, who was the airport manager. During that time Mr. Leadlay talked about selling his airplane and Mr. Johnson took pictures of Mr. Leadlay's airplane for a relative who was interested in buying an airplane. Mr. Leadlay was there to visit him (Mr. Sams) for the week. During his visit they talked and everything was normal. They stayed at his (Mr. Sams) lake house.

He provided the following timeline:

December 8th, 2020 - Mr. Leadlay flew N5470U to Kyle-Oakley Field Airport (CEY), Murray, Kentucky, to have the struts serviced.

December 9th or 10th, 2020 –

He and Mr. Leadlay flew in Mr. Sams' Beech A36 (N364BB) from 5M9 to Kansas to look at a Cessna 182. It was a day trip with a return to 5M9. Mr. Sams occasionally bought and sold aircraft.

December 12, 2020-

He drove Mr. Leadlay to CEY airport.

He was asked the following questions:

During their visit did Mr. Leadlay express any health issues?

He thought that his prostate cancer was under control. He was going to start treatment for it in 2021.

Was he taking any medication?

Not that he knew of.

Explain the accident flight?

He drove Mr. Leadlay to CEY around 0930 to 1000. Mr. Leadlay paid Mr. Jirak for the strut servicing and the airplane was pulled from the hangar. He expressed a concern that fuel might have been leaking from the fuel vent but that was not the case. Mr. Leadlay may have topped off 1 fuel tank but he was not sure. He saw Mr. Leadlay perform a preflight inspection of the airplane and they said goodbye. He went back to his lake house and while there monitored ForeFlight. He also went for a walk and while on the walk monitored the flight and noted it went off radar but he thought that was because of poor w-fi reception.

Did he know Mr. Leadlay's usage of the autopilot?

He would use it in-flight and thought it would have been on that the time. About 6 weeks earlier, the ruddervators had been removed, paint stripped, and repainted.¹

Have you ever flown in that airplane?

Yes, many times. He was not sure when the last time was though. He had previously owned a V-tail type Bonanza before Mr. Leadlay bought his. He (Mr. Sams) sold his V-tail type Bonanza and bought a Beech A36.

Did he know the name of a flight instructor at Merritt Island who may have given Mr. Leadlay his last flight review?

He was not sure who that would have been.

¹ According to a logbook entry in the Airframe logbook dated June 1, 2020, both ruddervators were removed, stripped, cleaned, treated, epoxy primed, repainted, and balanced.

Did he have any questions for NTSB?

No. Because the airplane went off radar he called to Birmingham Approach within a couple hours of the accident and spoke with a supervisor. He added that Mr. Leadlay's son was killed in an airplane accident.

He was with Mr. Leadlay when he was involved in the motorcycle accident. They were in Wyoming and a car tire of a pickup truck near them blew. The vehicle started swerving and missed him but hit Mr. Leadlay. Mr. Leadly was in a hospital in Salt Lake City for about 3 months, and he had a portion of his leg amputated about 1 year later.

The call ended at 0928 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on February 8, 2021. He replied on February 12, 2021, at 1520 EST with, "To the best on my knowledge the statement is true and correct. Mason Sams." The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on February 15, 2021.