



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: December 30, 2020
Person Contacted: Liraz Bershardsky
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA092

Narrative:

Ms. Liraz Bershardsky contacted by phone on December 29, 2020, at 1600 EST. She called from [REDACTED] She provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview she 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. She 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; she agreed to the interview without representation.

She indicated that she holds a private pilot certificate with airplane single engine land rating, and recently obtained her instrument airplane rating. Her pilot certificate number is [REDACTED]

With respect to the accident flight, she was in the left seat and was the pilot-in-command. Oz Lev (pilot-rated) was in the right seat. The flight departed from Montgomery County Airpark (GAI), Gaithersburg, Maryland, for Culpeper Regional Airport (CJR), Culpeper, Virginia. She reported gusty wind conditions existed on her arrival and the approach was normal, but during the flare a wind gust caused the airplane to land hard on runway 4. She reported the wind was from 310° at an unknown velocity with gusts to 20 knots.

She was asked the following clarifying questions:

Did she know the wind was gusting to 20 knots prior to her arrival?
No. She did not know the wind was that strong.

Did she get a preflight weather briefing?
Yes. As part of that she was told that the wind was a “little gust.”

Clarifying questions Continued:

Did she have any flaps extended?

Yes, 20°.

Did the airplane bounce?

Yes, but because of the gust while flaring to land it bounced.

During the wind gust did the airplane balloon?

Yes.

Did you hear the stall warning horn during the balloon?

No. She flew the approach a little faster because of the gusts, adding that it was a power-on approach.

How much extra airspeed did you carry during the approach because of the gusts?

½ the gust, or about 7 knots.

Was there anything mechanically wrong with the airplane that caused the accident?

No. It was flying OK. The final approach was OK, just during the flare the flight encountered gusts.

Were you or your pilot-rated passenger injured?

No.

What restraint was she wearing?

Lapbelt and shoulder harness.

What restraint was Mr. Lev wearing?

Lapbelt and shoulder harness.

How many flight hours does she have?

About 200.

How many hours in make and model?

About 100.

Did she listen to the automated terminal information service/automated weather observing system (AWOS) when approaching the airport?

Yes, she obtained the weather from her iPad.

Did she enter the airport traffic pattern for runway 4?

Yes.

Did you plan for a touch-and-go landing or a full-stop landing?

A full stop.

Clarifying questions Continued:

Did the AWOS reported wind agree with what she experienced?

No. It felt stronger/harder. She has experienced wind gusts before both during takeoff and landing, but the wind she encountered was much stronger than broadcast.

What was the date and time of the accident?

December 22, 2020, at 1200 EST/1700 UTC.

What time did you depart GAI?

1100 EST/1600 UTC.

Did she have a flight plan filed for the flight from GAI to CJR?

No, but she did have flight following briefly.

Can she send me the documents concerning her weather briefing?

No it was not written down. She did not save anything.

What date and time did she get her weather briefing?

The date of the accident between 1000 to 1100.

Any questions for me?

What are the next steps. She was explained what the NTSB would do next.

The call ended at 1623 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to her for review on December 30, 2020. She replied on January 4, 2021 at 1149 EST with "Yes this draft is ok." The corrected digest was e-mailed to her on January 4, 2021.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: December 31, 2020
Person Contacted: Oz Lev
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA092

Narrative:

Mr. Oz Lev contacted NTSB by phone on December 31, 2020, at 1329 EST. He called from [REDACTED] He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview 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 holds a private pilot certificate with airplane single engine land and instrument airplane ratings. His pilot certificate number is [REDACTED] He has about 220 hours total flight time, and about 210 hours total time in make and model. He is friends with the pilot-in-command (Liraz Bershadsky) and both were gaining flight hours in order to obtain their commercial pilot certificates. Their flight training was being done at Washington International Flight Academy (WIFA).

He was asked the following questions:

What was the purpose of the flight?
To gain flight hours.

At any point of the flight did he manipulate the flight controls or act as pilot-in-command?
No.

Was he involved in any preflight planning?
Both of them looked at the route and forecast weather conditions.

Questions Continued:

What did he recall about the forecast weather at the destination airport at the estimated time of arrival. Did he recall the wind?

He did not recall the wind gusts, but he indicated the presented wind was “not too severe. Nothing that they had not encountered before.”

Did you write down the weather information?

No. The weather was obtained by an app called ForeFlight and by using AWC website.

What date and time was the weather briefing?

The date of the accident about 1015 EST.

He was asked to describe the flight in detail from his arrival at the airport until the accident. He indicated that they departed from Montgomery County Airpark (GAI), Gaithersburg, Maryland, and after takeoff obtained visual flight rules (VFR) flight following to their destination of Culpeper Regional Airport (CJR), Culpeper, Virginia. While en route it was “quite bumpy” and the flight continued to CJR entering the downwind leg of the airport traffic pattern for runway 4. The pilot turned onto the base and final legs of the airport traffic pattern and on final was aligned with the runway while maintaining 80 knots. Then just before touchdown a wind gust from the left side caused the nose to pitch down and the airplane to impact the runway.

He was asked additional questions consisting of:

Did you have any trouble getting out of the airplane?

No. The airplane bounced and then came to rest. The pilot then taxied to the ramp and secured the airplane. He added that the engine continued to operate after the bounced landing.

Did he or she sustain any injuries?

No. Neither of them were injured.

Did they listen to the automated weather observing system at CJR before the approach?

Yes. He recalled the wind was from around 300° “something (like:310/320/330) don’t remember the specific wind direction” at 14 knots with gusts to 19 knots. They landed runway 4.

Did he speak on the common traffic advisory frequency/UNICOM during the approach?

He thinks someone tried to give the weather but at that moment another airplane had their microphone depressed and he could not hear the reported weather. He did recall earlier hearing the wind was from 14 knots with gusts to 19 knots and she took that into consideration for her approach and landing.

Did he video record the flight?

No.

Additional Questions Continued:

Was there a discussion from the pilot about the approach speed or flap setting?

No. She was in charge of the flight and the approach speed and flap setting was for her to determine.

Was there any discussion from her about going to a different airport because of the reported wind direction, velocity and gusts?

No. He stayed quiet during the approach to allow her to concentrate.

After the accident was there any discussion between them about what occurred? If so, what was said?

They did discuss the event but he did not recall any details of that conversation.

Did he hear the stall warning horn during the accident sequence?

No, not that he recalled.

At this point of the conversation he was advised that since he was a certificate pilot with access to flight controls I wanted him to complete the Flight CrewMember 2 information blocks of the NTSB Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Report. I also requested he provide me a detailed written statement that began with details about the preflight weather briefing and concluded with the accident.

He was then read excerpts of the statement from Paul Miller indicating, "I called on the UNICOM saying 'Aircraft on the downwind for runway 4 at Culpeper, winds are currently 310[°] 17 gusting 25'. A male voice responded with 'Winds 310, 17 gusting 25. Thank you.'"

He was asked if he recalled that information?

He does not remember responding to the wind information. He even attempted to listen to a copy of the recording on LiveATC.net but could not find a recording for that airport.¹

Did he have any questions of me?

He was concerned about filling out the Flight CrewMember blocks of the NTSB Report because he never manipulated the controls. He was advised that there was no need to complete those blocks but I would require a detailed statement from him.² He asked to confirm that he was only to include his name in the passenger section of the NTSB report and was informed that was correct.

He was advised that if he recalled any information regarding the wind that was given to them while in the traffic pattern to call me.

¹ He was informed at that time that NTSB had also gained access to LiveATC.net but there was no recording for CJR.

² An e-mail was sent to the Flight Academy, pilot-in-command, and Mr. Lev on December 31, 2020, at 1405 EST, advising that Mr. Lev was not required to complete the NTSB report but a detailed statement from him was expected.

The call ended at 1355 EST.

He called the same day at 1442 EST from the same phone number and stated that he did recall hearing and replying to the wind, but he did not recall what wind was given. When he changed from Potomac Approach to the common traffic advisory frequency, the frequency sounded like another airplane had the microphone depressed.

He was asked:

Did he recall hearing the wind direction, velocity, and gusts while in the traffic pattern at CJR? He thinks he did, though he did not recall the gust velocity.

The call ended at 1445 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on December 31, 2020. He replied the same day at 1742 EST with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on January 4, 2021.