



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: August 24, 2021
Person Contacted: James L. Schrock
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA307

Narrative:

Mr. James L. Schrock contacted NTSB by phone on August 23, 2021, at 1437 EDT. 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 verified his pilot certificate number and confirmed he holds a private pilot certificate with airplane single engine land rating. He has 434 hours total time and 53 hours in the accident airplane in the last 12 months. He estimated he has about 100 hours in Cessna 150 aircraft. He is an airframe and powerplant (A&P) mechanic.

The previous owner of N561QL asked him to check his aircraft as an A&P. When he looked at it the magnetos were off the engine and in pieces on the floor. He indicated that the magnetos needed the 500-Hour inspection, and he told the owner new magnetos were needed. He then had a conversation with the previous owner about buying the airplane for a proper price and purchased it in June 2018. He indicated that the previous annual inspection entry was 2017. At the time of purchase, he noted the gascolator was leaking, the wheel bearings looked like they had not been replaced in 20 years, and the wing tank sump drains were rusted shut. He installed new magnetos and flew it on August 25, 2018, from Philadelphia Municipal Airport (MPE), Philadelphia, MS, to his hometown airport, Macon Municipal Airport (20M), Macon, Mississippi, where the airplane sat without being operated until June 19, 2020.

On January 7, 2019, he moved into a hangar at the Columbus-Lowndes County Airport (UBS), Columbus, Mississippi, and worked in that hangar until February 7, 2021.

After signing off the 2020 annual inspection making the airplane airworthy, which included repairing the leaking gascolator and the rusted wing tank sump drains, he tried to get insurance on the airplane, and at that time he was informed he did not have a Bill of Sale. He drove to Philadelphia, Mississippi, and found the partner of the previous owner who had power of attorney. On August 21, 2021, he obtained a proper Bill of Sale from the partner of the previous owner. He sent the original to the FAA in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma the next day.

After the 2020 annual inspection was signed off, his first flight in the accident airplane occurred on June 19, 2020. He completed the 2nd annual inspection since purchase on June 25, 2021. Since the latest annual inspection was signed off, he flew the airplane excluding the accident flight 3 times.

He was asked the following questions:

What was the purpose of the accident flight?

He uses the airplane like a car. He has customers at 6 different airports and used his airplane to get to those airports to maintain his customer's airplanes. In 2019, he got a 2-year lease at the Columbus Airport. Once the lease was not renewed, he moved the airplane to Reform, Alabama, but since June 28, 2021, his airplane was parked on the ramp at Golden Triangle Regional Airport (GTR), Columbus/West Point/Starkville, MS.

He works for [REDACTED] at the Golden Triangle Regional Airport (GTR), Columbus/West Point/Starkville, MS. On the accident date, he was scheduled to be at GTR at 1315. Because of this he wanted to get to his airplane early at GTR. He then planned to fly to North Pickens Airport (3M8), Reform, Alabama to pick up some things he needed in Louisville and Kosciusko, but because of ground fog at GTR at 0600, he had to drive his van to Reform, Alabama and picked up the things he needed and returned to GTR¹. He subsequently departed GTR and flew to Louisville Winston County Airport (LMS), Louisville Mississippi where he dropped off an Airworthiness Directive (A.D.) report and parts that a customer had ordered. He departed from LMS and flew to Kosciusko-Attala County Airport (OSX), Kosciusko, Mississippi. He departed there about 1200 and flew to MPE where he landed.

While at MPE as part of his preflight inspection, he used a plastic dipstick and checked the total fuel quantity in each fuel tank, noting the left was reading 4 gallons and the right was reading 3 gallons.² He indicated that he did not account for the unusable fuel amount and, "let that cloud his judgement." He departed MPE at 1215 with a passenger on-board, for 3M8 where he planned to drop off the passenger whose airplane was in his hangar. Using Foreflight, he had to deviate to avoid weather, and he knew that he was low on fuel. His flight path took him just south of UBS which he could see, and he looked at his fuel gauges and in hindsight knew he should have landed there and have someone pick the passenger up and allow him to fuel the airplane before proceeding to GTR. But because he did not want to inconvenience anyone, he elected to continue

¹ He indicated that his schedule was tight as it was even without any delay.

² This amount did not include the unusable amount in each fuel tank.

to his planned destination and he “ran out of [fuel] 8 miles before [he] got there.” About that time the left fuel quantity gauge indicated more than 1/2 gallon remaining and the right fuel gauge indicated empty.

Ever since he owned the airplane, he planned on taking the fuel transmitters out and sending them for repair. He usually does not take off with less than 1/4 tank, but he did in this case.

Describe the flight.

He departed from Philadelphia Municipal Airport (MPE) at 1215, climbed to 2,500 ft mean sea level, trimmed and leaned the fuel to air ratio about 1 inch, and the accident occurred about 1250.

Describe the accident sequence?

The engine started losing power and he, “knew I was out of gas.” He looked for a forced landing location, and after spotting a field below him, performed S-turns, slips and turned onto final approach. He landed “faster than I like” and during the landing roll the nose landing gear dropped into a hole, causing it to separate. When the airplane came to rest the nose landing gear was 6 ft away on the left side of the airplane, which indicated the airplane was not going fast when the separation occurred since the airplane came to rest shortly after that.

When the engine lost power what were the fuel gauges reading?

Above empty a little bit. They were lower than he had ever seen them. He could have landed at GTR and if he had to do it over, he would have landed at the Columbus-Lowndes County Airport (UBS), Columbus, MS. The field he spotted he later learned was hilly, but he could not detect that from 2,000 ft.

Describe the restraints installed and used, injury and seat position?

He was not injured. The airplane was equipped only with lapbelts. He was in the left seat. Brandon Jones was in the right seat and had a cut on his arm from the mixture control. The airplane was almost stopped after the nose landing gear separated; it moved only 10 ft more.

Did he receive the NTSB Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Report?

He checked his e-mail inbox and spam folder and did not. It was resent to his e-mail address of [REDACTED] on August 23, 2021, at 1514 EDT. He later verified receipt.

Did the passenger ever manipulate the controls?

He never touched the controls

During the descent for the forced landing did the propeller stop?

Yes it did. It was in a left blade low right blade high position for almost all of the descent. He maintained 70 mph even though he was over the field. The bottom blade tip was bent slightly. He will send the propeller out for overhaul.

What type of fuel was he using?

100 low lead.

NTSB Questions Continued –

Describe the dipstick he used?

It was for a Cessna 150 and was given to him by a friend. It reads “actual gallons.” When he first got it he could make out the brand but he could not identify the brand during the phone call.

When he ran out of fuel, he estimated the fuel consumption for his intended flight to be 4 gallons. At the accident site he drained the gascolator and recovered about 2 ounces then the flow stopped. That amount surprised him based on the resting position of the airplane (nose low and tail high). He indicated that part of his returning the airplane to service he will take the fuel tanks out for inspection. With the airplane in a tail low attitude, he drained a little over 1/2 gallon from the left fuel tank and none from the right fuel tank.

Mr. Schrock was asked to follow-up with NTSB if he decided to check the fuel transmitters.

The call ended at 1522 EDT.

An e-mail was sent to him on August 24, 2021. He responded on August 25, 2021, with information that was incorporated into the digest. He was also sent an e-mail on August 25th asking for clarifying questions. He was contacted on September 1, 2021, at 0958 EDT, and was asked clarifying questions which was incorporated into the digest. The digest was e-mailed to him for review on September 1, 2021. During a conversation with Mr. Schrock on November 4, 2021, at 1106 EDT, he provided a single comment about the digest that was subsequently changed. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on November 4, 2021.



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Date: November 4, 2021
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Narrative:

Mr. James Schrock was contacted by phone on November 4, 2021 at 1106 EDT. The call was made to [REDACTED]

He was called to say that the NTSB had not yet received pages 7 thru 11 of the NTSB Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Report that was e-mailed to him on August 16, 2021 and again on August 23, 2021. He did send pictures of pages three thru six on September 10, 2021. He was given the NTSB facsimile number and faxed pages 7 thru 11 of the report the same day at 1407 EDT.

Also during the call he was advised that I had not received any comments from him regarding the typed interview summary notes that were provided on September 1, 2021. He indicated that he had read the document and the only change that was needed was the part when he realized he did not have the Bill of Sale. That part was corrected and the final version was e-mailed to him on November 4, 2021.

He was asked the following questions:

Was there anything mechanically wrong that caused the loss of engine power?
Not that he was aware of. There had been previous fuel leaks but he corrected those. There was nothing wrong with the airframe or engine that would cause unusual fuel consumption.

Was there anything mechanically wrong with the engine?
Not that he was aware of. There was nothing wrong with the airframe or engine.

Did he do any postaccident inspection of the engine?

No. He removed the engine from the airframe and did note as a result of the accident that the oil sump and airbox were damaged beyond repair. He did perform a dial run-out of the crankshaft flange and found the maximum was 0.0015 inch, which was within limits. The engine is currently mounted with the crankshaft flange on an engine stand. He has not yet begun rebuilding the airframe yet.

The call ended at 1119 EDT.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call and he agreed with the content. The digest was e-mail to him on November 4, 2021.