



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 18, 2021
Person Contacted: Ronald Martin
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA051

Narrative:

Mr. Ronald Martin and Douglas Glass were interviewed at Marianna Municipal Airport (KMAI), Marianna, Florida, on November 9, 2021, at 1320 CST. Mr. Martin provided a cell phone of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED] while Mr. Glass provided a cell phone of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]. Also present was FAA inspector Kevin Atkins, of the Birmingham, Alabama Flight Standards District Office.

Mr. Martin indicated that he is a student pilot and has between 180 and 185 hours total time. He has been friends with the pilot for a couple years. They spent most of November 8th together. The pilot put fuel into the airplane from a can; the fuel was purchased from Walmart in Dothan. He (Mr. Garrett) was checking the airplane over, started the engine, and it sounded good. He (Mr. Martin) departed from KMAI and flew to Lake Seminole. He heard Mr. Garrett call on the radio advising that he was departing from KMAI to the east. Mr. Martin and Mr. Garrett landed at KMAI and went into the fixed base operator (FBO) where they had a late lunch (sometime between 1500 and 1530). They planned to meet the next day, and Mr. Martin left the airport for his home.

Mr. Martin was asked the following-

Did Mr. Garrett mention anything to him during their lunch earlier that day about how the airplane was operating?

He said it was running very well. He had been concerned about the ignition system. The accident airplane was equipped with a Briggs and Stratton magneto and a capacitor discharge ignition (CDI) system¹. Mr. Garrett noted that two spark plugs were not firing on the CDI. Mr. Garrett chased that issue for 1 month and read on a forum that the CDI ignition system did not operate until 1,600 rpm. Mr. Martin indicated that the pilot did say that the engine had quit but he “touched it” and the engine came right back. Mr. Martin asked Mr. Garrett what he was referring to, but the conversation was interrupted and Mr. Martin did not get an answer, though he assumed he was referring to the ignition switch.

NTSB Questions-

Did the engine quit on a flight on November 8, 2021?

Yes he thinks so. Mr. Garrett had not been flying much the past couple days.

Did it happen twice?

Yes, he thinks that what Mr. Garrett told him.

Do you have any pictures of the airplane?

Yes.

Had Mr. Garrett mentioned the engine quitting before their conversation on November 8, 2021?

No. Mr. Martin knew the engine had quit one other time when Mr. Garrett first bought the airplane in March 2021. The engine quit due to a fuel line coming off.

Was Mr. Garrett in good health?

Yes.

What engine was installed?

AeroVee.

Mr. Glass indicated that on the accident date he talked with the pilot before departure. The pilot asked him how to use the television in the FBO. Another pilot (George Dotson) asked him when Mr. Garrett was returning. Mr. Dotson got into his airplane and did touch-and-go landings, then later asked him if he had heard about the crash.

¹ According to the AeroVee 2.1 Assembly and Installation Manual (ACV-R02), Rev AE dated April 27, 2021, the primary ignition is Magnatrons and the secondary ignition is electronic.

Questions from FAA-

What was the visibility at the time?

Perfect. It was similar to the conditions of the weather at KMAI on 11/9/2021 at 1400 CST.²

It was noted by Mr. Glass that it is pitch black outside at 1700 CST.³ Mr. Glass received a call from the Jackson County sheriff's office at 1648 CST, informing him of the accident.

Mr. Martin provided the pilot's wife (Patty Garrett) and her e-mail address of

[REDACTED]

They planned to drive to Texas on November 9, 2021

Mr. Martin indicated that on either November 8th, or the day before, Mr. Garrett removed one bottom and one top spark plug and reported both were light tan in color (normal combustion).

NTSB Questions Continued-

Why did the pilot show you the removed spark plugs?

Mr. Garrett said he was not getting ignition to the bottom spark plugs that were sparked by the CDI. On Friday (November 5, 2021) Mr. Garrett started the engine and Mr. Martin said it sounded strong. Mr. Martin drove away and noted Mr. Garrett depart from KMAI.

FAA Questions Continued-

Who did the maintenance?

Mr. Martin did not know.

Who would know the pilot's flight time in the airplane?

Mr. Garrett purchased it in March 2021. The previous owner drove it down from either Wisconsin or Minnesota.

NTSB Questions Continued-

Was the airplane insured?

He did not think so. Mr. Garrett had \$8,000.00 in it.

The interview end time was not recorded.

² A surface weather observation at KMAI on 11/9/2021 at 1353 CST reported calm wind, visibility 10SM, clear skies, temperature 24°C, dewpoint 04°C, altimeter 30.21 inches of Mercury.

³ According to the US Naval Observatory, sunset for the accident site coordinates for November 8, 2021, occurred at 1647 CST.

The digest was e-mailed to them for review on November 26, 2021. Mr. Martin replied on November 29, 2021, at 1054 EST with, "It appears accurate, to the best of my recollection." On November 29, 2021 at 1128 EST, Mr. Glass replied, "I agree." The FINAL digest was e-mailed to them on April 7, 2022.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 26, 2021
Person Contacted: Lonnie Whitehead
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA051

Narrative:

Mr. Lonnie Whitehead was interviewed at Marianna Municipal Airport (KMAI), Marianna, Florida on November 10, 2021, at 1334 CST. He provided a cell phone of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He indicated that on the accident date, when he arrived at KMAI the accident pilot's truck was parked at the entrance. And that is when he met the pilot. During a conversation Mr. Garrett indicated that he thought he had found "the problem" and planned to depart to stay in the traffic pattern. In the past (about a week ago), Mr. Garrett had informed him that he had put on a new jug (cylinder head) due to a stuck valve.

Mr. Whitehead was asked to clarify what the problem was-
He indicated that he did not know. During their conversation on November 8th, Mr. Garrett had mentioned that he did a cylinder compression test and the results didn't read that high. This was later attributed to be because the tool that threads into the spark plug hole was not tight. The tool was tightened, the test was performed again, and the reading was "ok." Mr. Whitehead said that Mr. Garrett had experienced a previous problem with a fuel line separating in-flight, but that had been fixed.

He reported that the accident pilot departed from runway 36, and flew straight out. He (Mr. Whitehead) then diverted his attention. He added that the engine sounded OK with no sputtering.

He was asked the following questions by NTSB-

Did he hear an engine run-up?
Yes, the pilot checked the engine.

NTSB Questions Continued-

What time did the accident flight depart?

Before dark, or a little after 1600 CST. Mr. Whitehead indicated in the past that he got higher octane fuel without ethanol, and had an issue with the ignition system.

The interview end time was not recorded.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on November 26, 2021. He replied the same day at 1537 EDT with, "Received, thank you" but did not provide any comments. The digest was again e-mailed to him for review on April 7, 2022. He did not reply. The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on May 18, 2022.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 23, 2021
Person Contacted: James M. "Michael" Williams and Clayton Jordan
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA051

Narrative:

Mr. James Michael Williams was contacted by phone on November 23, 2021, at 1040 EST. He was called at [REDACTED] a voice mail message was left. He was also sent a text message the same day at 1106 EST requesting a return phone call. He returned the call the same day at 1401 EST from the same phone number. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He indicated he is not a pilot nor an aviation mechanic, but is mechanically inclined. He indicated that he had met the pilot 1 time earlier about 6 months prior to the accident.

He was asked to describe what he had seen as he had called 911 to report the accident at 1634:00.¹ He indicated that he did not witness the accident but an employee of his (Clayton Jordan) did. He (Mr. Williams) went to the accident site. Mr. Williams was asked to have him and Mr. Jordan call me back later today. Mr. Williams indicated he would call later this afternoon.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Clayton Jordan contacted NTSB on November 23, 2021, at 1401 EST. The call was made from Mr. Williams cell phone.

At the beginning of the interview they were 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. They were also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; they agreed to the interview without representation.

¹ This is according to the Jackson County Call Details Report Chronological Order document provided NTSB.

Mr. Jordan was asked if he was a pilot or aviation mechanic and he said no. He was also asked if he was mechanically inclined and he said yes.

Mr. Jordan was asked where he was located when he witnessed the airplane. His location was referenced on Google Earth and located about 30.986722° north latitude and -085.169663° west longitude. That location was about .65 nautical mile and 202° from the impacted tree.

He was in the cab of a tractor and was plowing to the north. Because he was in the cab of the tractor he could not hear the airplane. He glanced to the east and saw an airplane what he thought was a crop duster flying at a high rate of speed towards the ground. He described it as a crop duster because of the way it was descending. The airplane went behind woods and about 1 to 2 seconds later he saw a big ball of black smoke. He immediately called Mr. Williams and that call was made at 1620.

Mr. Williams reported going to the area and called 911 to report the accident, then after gaining closer access to the wreckage through an open fence called 911 a second time. His first call to 911 he reported the airplane was on fire.

Mr. Jordan was asked the following questions-

Which way was the airplane flying?
To the west.

Describe how the airplane was descending such as shallow, vertically, medium?
It was like the airplane was trying to land. The airplane was parallel to the ground. He did not notice any erratic movement from the airplane before the accident. He estimated that he saw the airplane for 7 to 8 seconds. It didn't look to him like the airplane was in distress.

Had he ever seen that airplane flying in that area before?
No sir.

Had he ever seen other airplanes flying into that area before?
Yes, but only military. Mr. Williams indicated that a Osprey had flown into there 11/22/2021.

Did he see anything trailing the airplane in-flight?
No sir. He did not notice anything abnormal.

Did he see the wings wobbling?
No sir.

When he first saw the airplane what altitude was it at?
Maybe 200 ft, or maybe not that high.

When he last saw the airplane how high was it at?
Between 70 and 90 ft.

NTSB Questions Continued –

Did he notice the airplane making any turns?

No. It was “flying to the final destination.”

Did you perceive any problem with the airplane in the 7 to 8 seconds that he had seen it?

No sir.

Had he made a written statement?

No sir. In fact the call was the first made discussing what he had seen.

Is there anything else I need to know?

No.

Do you have any hearing issues?

No sir.

Is there anything else to add to your statement?

No sir.

The call ended at 1416 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to Mr. Williams for their review on November 23, 2021. Mr. Williams replied by text message the next day at 1109 EST with, “Everything looks just like our conversation went.” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to Mr. Williams on November 26, 2021.