

From: Daniel Glover <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, July 31, 2022 9:11 AM
To: Gunther Todd [REDACTED]>
Subject: Aircraft Accident in Melrose FL, 7/30/22

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Mr. Gunther,

I observed the subject aircraft prior to the accident. However, I did not observe any issues with the aircraft. At approximately 1015 local I heard a distinct Rotax style engine approaching my area. Moments later I observed what I believed to be a Gyrocopter on a easterly track. I would estimate the aircraft's altitude to be 1000 feet or higher and moving at 20-30 knots. The aircraft appeared to make a slow turn to the Northeast while I observed it. I had a friend over to assist me work on a boat. We discussed the subject aircraft and observed it for approximately 2-3 minutes. We then boarded my boat under a covered boat lift and proceeded to run the boat on and off for 10-15 minutes. That afternoon, returning from a trip I observed a crash scene and learned the aircraft was a Gyrocopter. I would estimate the crash scene is approximately 1.5 nm from the point we observed the subject aircraft.

I hope this small tidbit of information can assist the investigation.

[REDACTED]

Please feel free to contact me should any questions arise.

Thank you

Daniel Glover
[REDACTED]

Aircraft Accident

This is an estimated flight path with a pin on my location when I observed the aircraft.

Legend

 Lilly Lake Rd

 Untitled Path

 Untitled Placemark



From: Gunther Todd

Sent: Sunday, July 31, 2022 6:08 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Image of Gyrocopter from witness in at Carquest parts on SR 21 in Keystone Heights

Minutes prior to the accident. It was sent into FHP via their anonymous tip email.



[REDACTED]



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 08/04/2022

Subject: Information Obtained from James Childress (Witness)

NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Mr. Childress he was fishing on Lake Geneva when he observed the gyrocopter going south over the lake and then going north over the land.

He observed it for about 10 minutes.

Five minutes before the accident it went up really high, then throttled down, then throttled back up.

Two to three minutes prior to the accident it throttled down again, and it sounded like the engine stopped. It then made a spinning and rolling move and started falling. It then flipped over, and was tumbling, and then fell upside down.

One of the propellers then fell off.

It did not seem to any mechanical issues prior.

He could see that it was blue in color. It then fell behind the trees, and he saw black smoke come up.

He had seen it flying around the area quite a few times before, usually on Saturday mornings.

The weather at the time of the accident was clear with a light and variable wind.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 07/30/2022
Subject: Information Obtained from Susan Graham (Witness)
NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Ms. Graham, she was walking north, then heard what she thought was a plane behind her. It did not sound right, so she turned around and waited till she could see it through the trees, then she saw that it was a helicopter. Then she could hear the rotor.

She then realized that it was a small helicopter, and that the engine was revving up and down, and she got the feeling that something was wrong.

The helicopter was traveling to the north, and then did a big circle and she was not sure if the pilot was trying to do some kind of aerobatic maneuver. The helicopter banked, and then all of a sudden, the rotor started to come straight down. She then realized that it was not attached, and "all these pieces started to fly out." Then it just came down and she heard it hit the ground and there was a lot of smoke and when she got there, it was in total flames.

She remembered that all of a sudden, the rotor was perpendicular to the craft, and she thought it had come off. Everything came down in the area, but it had come apart.

The weather was good. There was a blue sky with a few clouds. It was a normal morning.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 07/30/2022
Subject: Information Obtained from Chase Harris (Witness)
NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Mr. Harris, He was headed down to the water when about 0945 he saw a helicopter flying around.

About 1010 He heard it making noises which sounded like a loud “Pop, Pop, Pop,” and it appeared to be plummeting, going straight down.

He then called 911 and tried to find it. When he did find it, it was on fire, and it looked like a tiny, miniature version of a helicopter.

At the time, there was a clear sky, and it was as clear as it could be.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 07/30/2022
Subject: Information Obtained from Taylor Hill (Witness)
NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Mr. Hill, about 1000 he was down by the water at Lake Hutchinson. The aircraft moved from southeast to northwest.

As it passed by, he noticed a sound, and it was doing a spinning tailspin maneuver towards the ground.

There was smoke coming from the middle of the field where the aircraft crashed. The aircraft was on fire. There was nobody alive.

It was in the mid-90s, sunny blue skies, some clouds but no storm clouds.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 08/04/2022

Subject: Information Obtained from Sharon Martin (Witness)

NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Ms. Martin, She was outside pulling weeds in front of her house when she heard what she thought was a helicopter. It was spitting and sputtering, then she heard an explosion, and it was spiraling in the air.

The propeller then “flew off.”

She then saw the plume of smoke.

It did not sound like a normal helicopter, and she thought someone was flying a drone.

She did not see any fire or smoke while it was airborne, and it looked like the top blades had folded up, then one flew off.

She and her husband later found the blade.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 07/30/2022
Subject: Information Obtained from Steven Murray (Witness)
NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Mr. Murray, he was on his back porch having a cigarette and coffee, when he heard a noise up in the sky.

He stepped out from under the porch and looked up, and there was a helicopter that looked rather small. He was trying to figure out if was a drone or an actual person inside of it.

The engine made this big whiny noise that did not sound right. Everything then went quiet, and it fell out of the sky like a sack of bricks. He then yelled at his wife to call 911.

The helicopter was blue in color, and the weather was clear and calm.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 08/04/2022
Subject: Information Obtained from Timothy Smith (Witness)
NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Mr. Smith, he was on his roof, repairing a TV Antenna, when he heard an aircraft in the air that sounded like it had an engine missing.

He saw it to the northwest, and it was circling to the southwest. Being small it seemed like it was really far away, which in reality it wasn't.

It made a large circle, and it was still making the strange noise, and came around to the northeast. Then all of a sudden, the noise stopped, and he looked up and saw debris falling straight down.

There was no autorotation at all, it just went down like a rock. He then saw something long and thin like a rotor blade or the body of the aircraft. Black smoke then came up.

It was blue in color, and the weather was perfect, you could see about 10-miles.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 07/30/2022
Subject: Information Obtained from Rhonda Waddell (Witness)
NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Ms. Waddell, she was watering plants by her garage when she heard a sound in the sky that sounded like engine trouble on some kind of flying vehicle.

She then saw this blue, small flying apparatus. It was pretty high up, and it was stalling, and jerking, and then began to wobble. She remembered seeing a propeller but did not know if it was on top.

It was making a grinding noise but did not see any parts come off.

It was initially flying from the west, the engine cutoff, and it began to fall. She ran away and then heard the crash. She then ran back, and all she could see was a giant fireball engulfing the craft.

The fire was about 12 feet high and then 3 feet. Someone had brought an extinguisher but by then the fire was disappearing. They could then see just a smoldering pile then saw that there was a person in it.

This happened in the morning between 10:00 and 11:00. At the time, it was a nice day with a gentle breeze.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 07/30/2022
Subject: Information Obtained from Hunter Wishall (Witness)
NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Mr. Wishall, around 0945, he saw a helicopter on the north side of Lake Hutchinson.

Around 1000 he saw the helicopter again, on the southside of the lake and soon thereafter, realized it was in trouble as he saw it struggling, with parts coming off it, and actively falling out of the air.

The last time he saw it, it had not reached the tree line yet, but he could see it was still falling.

When he reached the pasture, it was on fire.

The weather was sunny and hot with good visibility.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 07/30/2022

Subject: Information Obtained from Riley Yorty (Witness)

NTSB Case Number: ERA22FA344

According to Ms. Yorty, she was feeding her grandmother's tortoise, and she heard a "Bang." She looked up in the sky and she saw a helicopter, but it looked like it was cutting the brakes a lot and then stuff started falling. The helicopter then folded together, and it just fell.

She then heard another "Bang," and the horses started freaking out.

When she saw it on the ground it was blue in color.