



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Pilot Statement

**Lynn Spencer**  
**Air Safety Investigator**  
**Eastern Region Aviation**

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Date: September 14, 2022  
Conversation With: Mr. Gary "Aaron" Barnes (Pilot)  
Contact # [REDACTED]  
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA213

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### **Narrative:**

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. Aaron Barnes called at 1423 EDT on September 14, 2022. He provided a phone number of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

This was the first contact in any form from Mr. Barnes after the accident, and I let him know that I was there with his airplane and that I was very pleased to hear from him, and I asked him how he was recovering. I advised him 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.

Mr. Barnes stated that he got a divorce that he didn't want in November, 202, which may have had something to do with what happened on May 1, 2022, and that the accident airplane was the first airplane he has ever owned. He said that it was small and compact, and his uncle bought it and started building it, and he bought it from his uncle. He said it was a fabulous little airplane.

On the day of the accident, he assumes that he had his shoulder harness on because he ALWAYS wore them. When he got to altitude, he would sometimes loosen the shoulder straps, but they would always be on. He stated that he was returning home from Dallas and recalled nothing after crossing into Mississippi. He recalled having a good tail wind and thought he would be home in 30 minutes. He said that the airplane was hangered at Huntsville (HSV), about 1.5 miles from his house but he doesn't know why he was out there by 3M5. He did not recall drinking on that flight, but he knows that he had. He inquired as to whether I had the toxicology records from the hospital, and I let him know that I did. He stated that he doesn't drink that much; he drinks socially but "that divorce killed me. If I had been smarter, we would not be having this conversation."

He said that the airplane held 42 gallons. At 10-11,000 ft he used 8-9 gallons per hour. He always figured that he needed to be on the ground in 4 hours. The day of the accident, he was at a paintball event, and he had had one beer there and he drank some in the airplane. He had not eaten that day.

He said that he has recovered to 60%. They had told his family that he was paralyzed but he can walk with a limp. He can do pushups and can swim, but he cannot run. He said that the logbooks were in the hangar if they were not in the airplane. I told him that I had a key on a chain with the wreckage, along with other personal effects that I could send to him, and he said that that key was for the hangar and that would be great. He provided me with him address for shipment. The call ended at 1456.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on October 6, 2022. No response was received.