

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Research and Engineering

Washington, DC 20594



ERA23FA380

VIDEO FILE

Specialist's Factual Report

March 4, 2024

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Whitesville, Kentucky
Date: September 27, 2023
Time: 2249 central daylight time (CDT)
Aircraft: Piper PA28-161, Eagle Flight Academy LLC, N3079M

B. VIDEO FILE SPECIALIST

Specialist: Steven Smith
Mechanical Engineer (Recorder Specialist)
National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

C. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

In agreement with the Investigator-In-Charge (IIC), a Video File group was not convened, and a summary was prepared. The NTSB Vehicle Recorder Division received the following video files:

Video File #1: Snapchat_Video.mov

1.0 Device Recording Description

The video file is a compilation of Snapchat videos and still photos that the instructor pilot took and posted to social media from ground checks through portions of the flight. All the videos and still photos were posted to the instructor pilots Snapchat "Story." Snapchat "Story" is a collection of "Snaps" (videos and still photos) that play in the order they were taken. Followers (people who subscribe to a user's account) have an unlimited number of times in 24 hours to view those videos and still photos. The videos and still photos from the accident flight were downloaded from an individual that follows the social media account of the instructor pilot. The individual then provided a video file containing the instructor pilot's social media use during the accident flight to the NTSB. For the remainder of this report, the video file will be referenced from the instructor pilot's cell phone.

The video file was generated from a point of view (POV) cell phone camera. The exact model of the cell phone was not noted by the IIC.

2.0 Video File Information

The video file was made at a resolution of 960 x 444 pixels at a frame rate of 30.00 frames per second (fps). The length of the recording is 1 minute and 52 seconds. The video consists of 7 individual postings at different times. The Snapchat "Story" includes 4 videos and 3 still photos. For the 4 video posts, each contained an

integrated audio track recorded from the cell phone microphone. The camera was held in the hand of the instructor, who is seen standing on the ground while ground checks are being conducted and in the right seat when the aircraft was in flight. In multiple video files, the instructor pilot switched the camera from front-facing to rear-facing.¹ Table 1 provides a summary of the timing of location of each video.

Table 1. Summary of Snapchat "Story."

Snapchat Story #	File Type	Video Elapsed Time (m:ss)	Location
N/A²	Snapchat User Profile Screenshot	0:00 to 0:01	N/A
1	Video	Clip 1³: 0:01 to 0:11 Clip 2: 0:11 to 0:13	On Ground
2	Video	Clip 1: 0:13 to 0:23 Clip 2: 0:23 to 0:33	On Ground
3	Video	Clip 1: 0:33 to 0:43 Clip 2: 0:43 to 0:52	Takeoff
4	Video	Clip 1: 0:52 to 1:02 Clip 2: 1:02 to 1:04	In Flight
5	Still Photo	1:04 to 1:08	In Flight
6	Still Photo	1:08 to 1:42	In Flight
7	Uploaded Screenshot ⁴	1:42 to 1:51	In Flight
N/A	Snapchat User Profile Screenshot	1:51 to 1:52	N/A

3.0 Timing and Correlation

In agreement with the IIC, time correlation was only required on Snapchat Story number 7, which was a still photo of weather information. The rest of the Snapchat Story is approximated or will not be assigned any timing information. Note, that since these videos and still photos were downloaded by a follower (subscriber) to the instructor pilots Snapchat account, there is a timestamp from that individual's phone in each file. This time is not associated with the accident. There is also a timestamp of how old each video is upon viewing the story, generated by Snapchat. All videos and still photos will display in the left corner, under the instructor pilot's username, "'#h ago," where the '#' is replaced with a number (for example, 23h ago,

¹ For this report, the camera on the back of the phone is defined as the rear-facing camera. The camera on the front (used to take portraits or selfies) is defined as the front-facing camera.

² N/A: Not Applicable.

³ Snapchat videos may be recorded up to 10 seconds long. Longer videos up to 60 seconds may be recorded, but will be split into "Clips," each lasting up to 10 seconds. In each of the video files posted by the instructor pilot, the video file was longer than 10 seconds, and therefore the video was separated into multiple "clips." The "clip" files ranged from 3 to 10 seconds in length.

⁴ Snapchat users may upload their own videos and still photos that were taken outside of the application.

is 23 hours ago that a video or still photo was posted to the Snapchat Story but does not guarantee that was when the video or still photo was exactly taken).

4.0 Summary of Recording Contents

4.1.1 Summary of Snapchat Story #1

The instructor pilot had the camera pointed at themselves, in the front-facing view. There was text written by the instructor pilot that said, "Me and this student would not get along if he was my full time student. I've seen faster at the special Olympics." The instructor pilot looked annoyed and shook their head. Six seconds into the video, the camera view was changed to rear-facing. The camera panned from the instructor pilot's feet to the forward part of the aircraft. The pilot then turned the camera toward the aft portion of the aircraft, where the student pilot was reviewing a paper document with the flashlight from a cell phone. The aircraft was on the ground and not powered on, and it was dark outside. This set of clips ended shortly thereafter. Figure 1 is a screenshot from the first video Snapchat Story.

4.1.2 Summary of Snapchat Story #2

The instructor pilot had the camera in the rear-facing view. A timestamp of 8:39 PM was presented on the top right corner of the clips. There was text that said, "I don't have to be up at 430am tomorrow or nothing. Let's take our sweet ass time and have a conversation instead of getting this 3hr flight done 😞." The camera was pointed at the instructor pilot's left hand. The instructor was tapping their fingers against the fuselage. The camera panned to the front of the aircraft and showed the student pilot sitting in the right seat. The student pilot appeared to be using a cell phone's flash light and reading documents in their lap. The aircraft was on the ground and was not powered on. The instructor pilot continued to tap their fingers while recording. Seven seconds into this Snapchat story the instructor pilot said, "come on," in a low agitated voice. The camera panned to the right wing and then back towards the fuselage. The instructor pilot then changed from rear-facing to front-facing view. The instructor pilot facial appearance looked annoyed. The instructor pilot then shook their head. This set of clips ended shortly thereafter. Figure 2 is a screenshot from the second video Snapchat Story.

4.1.3 Summary of Snapchat Story #3

The instructor pilot was in the right seat. The aircraft was taking off. Approximately 8 seconds into the first clip of this Snapchat story, the aircraft rotated. There was text that said, "This is gonna be a-long 3hr flight with forest gump jr. Let me tell you this he is not still the smartest in his class." Two flight instruments were visible; the gyro suction gauge was between 4 and 6 inHg and a lighted display adjacent to gyro suction gauge was visible with ALT 1200 and Pressure ALT FL 004

displayed. The lights of the aircraft were visible and no abnormal engine noises were heard. Figure 3 is a screenshot from the third video Snapchat Story.

4.1.4 Summary of Snapchat Story #4

The instructor pilot was recording with a rear-facing view. The camera was pointed outside the aircraft. The aircraft was at altitude and flying, and no abnormal engine noises were heard. No views of the instrument panel were captured. From the altitude that the aircraft was flying, the ground was clearly visible. Visual meteorological conditions (VMC) were present. Figure 4 is a screenshot from the fourth video Snapchat Story.

4.1.5 Summary of Snapchat Story #5

The instructor pilot took a still photo and posted to their story. The photo was taken with a rear-facing view, out the starboard side. The wing was lit up red when the still photo was taken, and lights from buildings and streetlights were clearly visible. VMC were present. Figure 5 is the still photo from the fifth Snapchat Story.

4.1.6 Summary of Snapchat Story #6

The instructor pilot took a still photo using the rear-facing camera, angled slightly at the instrument panel. The top header was labeled "LOVER'S LANE SOCCER COMPLEX Bowling Green, KY."⁵ There was text that said the following:

"1. 6 hours into the flight of me giving it to him straight up

Forest: I don't mind you being hard on me I know I need it

Me thinking to myself did you really think I cared if you minded 😂 but what I actually said was were flying planes not driving a car we can't have these weak areas this far in the game."

On the instrument panel, a track of 215 was observed on the navigation display. The only other visible flight instruments were the altimeter and the attitude indicator, which showed an approximate altitude of slightly greater than 500 feet and the artificial horizon was approximately wings level, respectively. All the other instruments and gauges were not visible or discernable. Figure 6 is the still photo from the sixth Snapchat Story.

⁵ If users enable location services to Snapchat, selective filters are available in different areas. The Lover's Lane was a filter for the area that the aircraft was flying in.

4.1.7 Summary of Snapchat Story #7

The instructor pilot took a screenshot of ForeFlight and uploaded to their story.⁶ ForeFlight timestamps the chart when users access the application in the top left corner. The timestamp for this screenshot was 11:15 PM EDT (eastern daylight time), or 10:15 PM CDT.⁷ There was text that said, "Headed are [sic] way like a group of pissed off hornets 🐝." A circle was drawn around the flight path and the weather band. The flight path was slightly east of the projected weather. A cyan circle was drawn around the aircraft. The aircraft was in the first third of the flight from KBWG (Bowling Green-Woodhurst Airport) to KOWB (Owensboro/Daviess County Regional Airport). The screenshot shows the weather was just northwest of Madisonville. In the ForeFlight weather screenshot, there is a large green area of precipitation. Inside of those green areas were 3 smaller red areas of precipitation, with numbers showing 400, 450, and 500 (weather tops out at flight level 400, 450, and 500, which is 40,000 feet, 45,000 feet, and 50,000 feet, respectively). From the red spots, there were arrows that pointed easterly, indicating that the weather was moving easterly toward the airplane's projected flight path. In addition to the weather just northwest of Madisonville, there was also weather shown in this screenshot east of Owensboro. On the bottom portion of the screenshot, ForeFlight displayed in a blue box, Glide: 73 KIAS, 11:1 (3079M). This was the last photo uploaded by the instructor pilot to their Snapchat story. Figure 7 is the still photo from the seventh Snapchat Story.

Submitted by:

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⁶ ForeFlight is an electronic flight bag for iOS devices designed to assist pilots and corporate flight departments with flight planning. It includes information about facilities such as airports, NAVAIDS, and air traffic control facilities. It also aids pilots in tasks including flight planning, weather monitoring, and document management, as well as an electronic logbook to help pilots record flight time.

⁷ The software manufacturer, ForeFlight, was contacted regarding the posted time displayed on the screenshot. They advised the NTSB that the time displayed was accurate within 25 minutes. This was determined by the color of the time, which was displayed in white. If the time color was displayed in orange, the time would be older than 25 minutes, but less than 30 minutes. If the time color was displayed in red, the time would be older than 30 minutes. Note: this does not guarantee the time at which the instructor pilot published the screenshot to his Snapchat Story. This is the time that the weather information was queried, within a 25-minute accuracy.

D. EVENT PHOTOS



Figure 1. First Snapchat Story video clip with aircraft on the ground.



Figure 2. Second Snapchat Story clip with the student pilot still preparing the flight.



Figure 3. Third Snapchat Story clip with the aircraft in takeoff rollout.



Figure 4. Fourth Snapchat story clip with the aircraft in flight.



Figure 5. Fifth Snapchat story still photo with the aircraft in flight.



Figure 6. Sixth Snapchat Story still photo with visual of instrument panel.



Figure 7. Seventh Snapchat Story screenshot displaying the weather in ForeFlight. Screenshot taken at 10:15 PM CDT (11:15 EDT).