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Date: May 21, 2023

Subject: ERA23LA240, Record of Conversation/Interview

Contact: Nicholas Thornsburg

Mr. Nicholas Thornsburg contacted NTSB by phone on May 21, 2023 at 1849 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 was advised by e-mail when sending this document for review that it will not be released to the public until the investigation is finished and when published, any personal identifiable information (PII) such as cell phone number, e-mail address, address, pilot certificate number, etc., will be redacted and not viewable in the released document.

He indicated that he holds a private pilot certificate with airplane single engine land rating. His certificate number is [REDACTED]. He has about 700 hours total time.

He was asked by NTSB the following –

Do you have any time in a Cessna 182?
No, he owns a Cessna 177 (Cardinal).

Do you know the pilot personally?
I have met him but did not know him personally.

Do you live on the airstrip?
No, he flies into NC10 on the weekends and he does have a place on NC10.

NTSB Questions Continued –

Where were you located when you saw and heard the accident?

About 1/2 way down the runway on the right side. If Tanglewood Drive bisected the runway he would have been just north of it on the west side of the north/south oriented runway.

Do you have any eyesight or hearing issues?

No I don't.

Explain what you saw and heard?

He heard the pilot start the engine and saw the airplane taxiing on Tanglewood Drive in a westerly direction towards Lakeland Drive. The pilot crossed Lakeland Drive then back taxied to the north end of the airstrip for a south departure. He heard the pilot perform an engine run-up, and to him that sounded "ok" with "nothing abnormal." He saw the pilot begin the takeoff roll and what caught his eye first was the airplane was in a "very nose up elevator pitch attitude with the tail tie dragging the runway kicking up dirt. The tail tie down was spewing grass. The tail continued to drag the runway to the point where his Cessna 177 would have become airborne. The tail continued to drag the runway and when the flight was just south of Wellington Drive, the airplane became airborne, but was in a very high angle of attack. He noted the wing buffet, and the airplane was flying at a very slow speed and very high angle of attack. The airplane drifted to the left, made contact with trees, and a fire started immediately.

Did you see any flaps extended?

I don't recall.

Had you seen that pilot and aircraft takeoff before?

I have seen him once or twice before last summer when he flew into NC10.

Did you perceive the engine running at full power during the takeoff roll?

Yes. I didn't hear anything abnormal. There was no audible change during the takeoff roll.

Can you get pictures of the grass showing the gouge?

Yes.

Can you get latitude and longitude of where the gouge on the runway surface is?

He can get measurements and will provide to me. By text messages the same day at 1916 EDT, 1918 EDT, and 1920 EDT he provided 3 pictures and the following details. The 1st identified tail strike gouge was located about 50 ft south of Wellington and the gouge was 10 ft in length (figure 1). He indicated that 50 ft from the starting point of the 1st strike, or 40 ft from the ending point of the 1st strike, another tail strike 12 ft in length was noted (Figure 2). Moving south 50 ft from the starting point of the 2nd strike, or 38 ft from the end of the 2nd strike, the third tail strike 16 ft in length was noted (Figure 3).

NTSB Questions Continued –

Did the pilot use full length of the runway for the takeoff attempt?

Yes. He did a run-up facing south and Crepe Myrtle Lane is a gravel road. He was glad there was no cars on that road when the pilot was doing his run-up. It was standard procedure due to runway slope at NC10 to takeoff to the south and land to the north.

Did you hear any sputtering or engine malfunction?

I did not, no. The accident site was located east of Lakeland Drive, across from Gumwood, or at 36.540115° north latitude and -078.057756° west longitude.

The call ended at 1910 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on May 21, 2023. He replied on May 22, 2023, at 1126 EDT with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on May 22, 2023.



Figure 1: Digital Photograph From Witness Thornsbury. View Of the 1st skid mark on the Runway from the Tail of N182LG.



Figure 2: Digital Photograph From Witness Thornsberry. View Of the 2nd skid mark on the Runway from the Tail of N182LG.



Figure 3: Digital Photograph From Witness Thornsbury. View Of the 3rd skid mark on the Runway from the Tail of N182LG.