

FAA IIC (ASI Delbert L. Areford) Statement of Conversation with N907L PIC Parker R. Klehr

On 15 December 2023 at approximately 0500 hrs I was dispatched as the FAA IIC to investigate an aircraft accident in Asheville, NC involving Diamond DA 40NG, N907L, Ser. No. 40.NC262, which had crashed the evening prior. The below account is a record of my conversation with the PIC, Mr. Parker Riley Klehr [REDACTED] that afternoon at approximately 1600 hrs. Also present were FAA ASI Mr. Derek Jackson, FAA ASI Mr. Michael Everhart, and on the phone was LIFT Academy counsel with the approval of Mr. Klehr, Mr. Chad Pulley.

On 14 December 2023, Mr. Klehr was the CFI for a Commercial Student (Eduardo Vargas) performing his cross-country (6hr w/night ops). Mr. Klehr stated the route for the day began at approximately 1300 hrs and was departing MYR>LZU (Touch & Go Only)>DKX>MYR. Mr. Klehr stated that while operating the aircraft at approximately 7500' MSL between DKX (Knoxville Downtown Island, Knoxville, KY) and MYR (Myrtle Beach International Airport, Myrtle Beach, SC) with Mr. Vargas as PIC, the aircraft experienced a violent shudder w/loss of oil pressure to zero, engine power to zero, and dual ECU failure at approximately 11 miles northwest of AVL (Asheville Regional Airport, Asheville, NC). Mr. Klehr stated he immediately took control of the aircraft and made the MAYDAY call while Mr. Vargas began reading out the Engine Out Emergency Procedures checklist.

Mr. Klehr stated they were able to restart the engine momentarily. With the engine providing minimal power, Mr. Klehr stated he attempted to gain additional altitude, but the engine was making a "metal clanging noise" and soon shut back down. During a third attempt at starting the engine, the engine again only ran momentarily, and Mr. Klehr stated they heard a loud bang followed by the engine stopping and smoke entering the cockpit. Mr. Vargas ran the Smoke in Cockpit Emergency Procedures checklist while Mr. Klehr continued operating the aircraft at best-glide towards AVL. As the aircraft approached the airport, Mr. Klehr stated he did not think they would be able to make it to AVL and decided to attempt a forced landing in the eastbound lane on a visible road below (Interstate 26) approximately 3.5 miles north of AVL. Mr. Parker stated in preparation for landing and once in line with the interstate, he deployed the flaps and picked out an open spot in traffic when suddenly the aircraft struck high tension power lines crossing the interstate. The aircraft was tangled in the power lines momentarily, violently spinning them 180 degrees, and forcing them to the ground in the opposite lane of traffic (westbound). Mr. Klehr stated he was able to open the aircraft's canopy and both him and Mr. Vargas were able to exit the burning aircraft.

My follow-up questions to Mr. Klehr:

- Were you or your student acting as PIC when the engine began experiencing problems?
 - My student was PIC for the flight up until the emergency when I took the aircraft.
- Can you confirm any engine issues prior to and your engine indications when the engine began experiencing problems?
 - There were no previous indications of engine issues. Once the engine began experiencing problems, the oil pressure dropped to zero and I had a dual ECU failure.
- Approximately how far were you from AVL when you first began experiencing engine problems?
 - 11 miles
- How much power were you able to obtain during the subsequent attempted engine starts?
 - ~40% for only a few seconds

- Was there any aircraft servicing done through the day?
 - Only fuel at DKX
- What was the extent of yours and your student's injuries?
 - For me, a head injury w/multiple bumps/scratches/bruises over my body. Head wound required multiple staples.
 - For my student, a back injury is all I know at this time.