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Date: December 19, 2024
Subject: ERA25FA020, Friend of Pilot Statement
Contact: William Sutherlin, Friend of the Pilot

Mr. Sutherlin contacted the NTSB IIC to discuss his time flying with the accident pilot. Below is an excerpt from that email conversation.

"I flew with Mr. Mahler quite often, starting in the mid 2000's. I was part of a partnership "club" that he had set up. He helped me get my instrument rating. He was very good about setting up flights into different locations to further my experience as I was working towards the rating. I also was a passenger on occasion when he was giving instruction to another pilot. As an instructor he was always in the right seat and I never once was with him where he was in the left seat. The only time I would see him actually fly a plane was if he was demonstrating a maneuver, which he was very proficient. In my instrument training, there was rarely a need for him to actually fly the plane.

I always felt comfortable flying with Mr. Mahler and because I was always the prepared student, I found his experience to be beneficial to my preparation for my checkride.

Mr. Mahler was a good guy and would often give his time and efforts to charitable causes as well as EAA functions, airshows and the like.

My only concern about Mr. Mahler is that sometimes he would miss things that could result in a snowball effect. Most times they were little things like a stuck heading bug, or a hand held radio with dead batteries, but usually nothing serious in nature."