



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Elliott Simpson
Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: May 19, 2016
Person Contacted: Bruce Velcant [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA087

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Mr. Velcant stated the following:

- He is a contractor who built an addition to the house of the passenger and her deceased husband.
- He is a pilot, and the passenger's deceased husband taught him to fly.
- He had initially been approached by the passenger to drop the ashes in January of that year, but his airplane, a Cherokee 180 was not conducive to that kind of operation.
- At that time, she wanted to spread them somewhere along the coast, close to her property in Ocean Shores, near Aberdeen.
- Mr. Velcant took a video of the airplane starting and taxiing for the accident flight.
- Prior to that, he observed the pilot put the ashes in a long white canvas bag, which he believes was designed for this procedure, and kept at the local FBO.
- He believes the bag was made by Jamie Green for the specific purpose.



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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Interview Date: March 27, 2016
Person Contacted: Captain James Brady
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA087

Narrative:

In an email dated March 27, 2016 Mr. Brady Stated:

My name is Captain James Brady. I was the Columbia River Bar Pilot who was on the Foss pilot boat "Betsy L" at the time the Greek Captain on the Yiannis B called in on VHF channel 13 at 1545 (Wed. 3/23/2016) that he had seen a plane crash off his port beam. The "Yiannis B" was anchored in the Astoria North Anchorage at the time. I had just disembarked the "Rose Balsam" in the Astoria North anchorage. I knew we were the closest vessel to the scene at approximately 2.0nm away from the reported site.

I spoke with the Greek captain on the radio and tried to ascertain an approximate range and bearing to where he thought he saw the plane go down. I called our dispatch office and asked the dispatcher to call 911 and have an ambulance and police go to Pier 39 (as that would have been the closest and most easily accessible dock) to transport survivors/ casualties to. At about the same time, a friend of mine on the beach (at Pier 39, Astoria) called me on my cell to report she had seen a plane crash too. Her description matched pretty much what I could get out of the Greek captain, except that she thought it had no pontoons or landing gear, and that she thought maybe she saw yellow on it. He reported red. She also told me that she had seen it flying upriver, making a steep left-hand bank turn, and then immediately dove almost straight down vertically very fast.....it sounded like from about 1000 feet or less (I am frequently flying to and from ships by helicopter here as part of my job and am well versed in local landmarks and altitudes we use for flying). My friend did not see the plane hit the water as her line of sight was obscured by the hull of the cargo vessel "Yiannis B". her name is Lucy mottle, and she filed a report with both the Astoria police department and the Clatsop County Sheriff. I told her not to call 911 as I had already taken care of that.

I was able to basically hone in on the approximate lines of position from both of these reports, while talking real-time directions from the captain on the "Yiannis B" to ascertain the approximate crash site. There was no debris in the water, and the current was just turning from high water slack to the ebb. Current and wind were minimal at the time and visibility was fair, but overcast. There were only slight ripples on the surface of the water so we would have been able to see any debris on the water with our

binoculars. The water is very murky/ muddy in the river, making it impossible to see more than 2 feet below the surface. Also, only for about an hour around slack water is it possible to dive on the site due to strong currents that are usually encountered (3-4 knots in the North Anchorage is not unusual). Another item worth noting is that sand, mud, and silt will very quickly be covering up the plane and make it very difficult to raise or extract. In about a week you will have a very difficult time recovering it due to the amount of sediments that will be deposited on it.

The Betsy L was on scene within 10 minutes of the reported crash, and probably scanning the surface with binoculars within 3 minutes. There were 3 aboard the "Betsy L". The only thing we ever ended up seeing were the fuel oil/ hydraulic oil bubbles that were coming up from directly below, and these were minimal, but I know they were not usually seen in this area/ water. I was confident we were directly over the plane and directed the Sheriff and the USCG helicopters to the site. I believe the approximate location for the plane was:

Lat 46-13.154N, Long 123-47.838W At the time, the "Yiannis B" was at:

Lat 46-12.557N, Long 123-48.023W Attached is a blow up of the anchorage and the vessels around the crash site at approximately 1610 on 3/23/2016.

I hope this information will help with your report.

Best regards,

Capt. James Brady
Columbia River Bar Pilots



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Elliott Simpson
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Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: March 28, 2016

Person Contacted: Capt. Tzamaras Nikolaos [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA087

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Captain Nikolaos stated the following:

He was the Captain of the cargo ship Yiannis B, which was docked in the channel at the Astoria North Anchorage (1 mile north of the shoreline at Pier 39).

He was on the bridge, and observed an airplane flying about 300 ft above sea level, approach his ship from the starboard quarter traveling on a NNE track. He walked outside to watch the airplane as it flew directly overhead and across the port beam. It continued on the same track away from the ship, and a short time later he saw the left wing "dip" as the airplane banked to the left. A few seconds later the wings were almost vertical, and it then transitioned into a rapid and aggressive steep vertical dive. The airplane hit the water in a nose-down attitude, and he saw a red tail then bob back into view, and then sink. The airplane was flying parallel to the water surface leading up to the diversion, and he could hear the engine operating throughout the flight, with no visible smoke or vapors.

He called the Coast Guard immediately, and remained on the deck, directing them to the last observed location. The weather at the time consisted of high overcast clouds with excellent visibility. The airplane was clearly in view, and it did not start to rain until later that day.



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Interview Date: March 27, 2016
Person Contacted: Gary Kobes, [REDACTED] Airport Manager at Astoria Airport.
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA087

Narrative:

In an email dated April 5, 2016 Mr. Kobes Stated:

Good morning Elliott. Brent Gilland, the fueler on duty the 23rd from 0800 to 1700 reports that the aircraft did not land and did not purchase fuel at AST. I am having the fueler on duty today check the daily quality control logs which will have the meter readings on both the 100LL card lock fueling point and our 100LL mobile truck. I am pretty certain that both will show no fuel sales on that day. I will let you know as soon as he gets back to me--he is doing some field work at the moment. If you require any

April 5, 2016:

QC logs confirm no 100LL sales March 20 through March 23.



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Elliott Simpson
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Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: June 27, 2016
Person Contacted: Jamie Green - [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA087

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Mr. Green stated the following:

- Mr. Green was a family friend of the passenger and her deceased husband.
- He owns a Cessna 180 and has dispersed ashes on multiple occasions.
- He made a dispersal sack with a rope, and was not sure if this was the same one used in the accident. The sack had a plastic liner.
- The passenger had approached him about dispersing the ashes a few months prior to the accident. He had agreed on a date. They agreed to drop them along Ocean Shores, Hoquiam.
- He called the passenger the week prior (March 18th) and said the weather looks bad, and wouldn't it be nicer to do it on a good day?
- She said she had changed her mind, and her sons said they were going to do it together with her ashes and their fathers, so she cancelled.
- He was not aware that she was going up with someone else.



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Elliott Simpson
Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: June 27, 2016
Person Contacted: Lee Dunham - [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA087

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Mr. Dunham stated the following:

- Mr. Dunham was a friend of the pilot, Mr. McKibbin. He also owns a AT-6A and has a hangar close to the pilot.
- The pilot flew in the accident airplane the weekend prior.
- He was not aware of any recent maintenance issues with the airplane.
- The pilot also owned a Cessna 190, and was building a homebuilt airplane.
- The pilot usually performs maintenance on the airplane with Bill Burr, a local A&P IA mechanic.
- Mr. Dunham was not sure why the airplane was registered as an experimental, but thinks there may have been a snag regarding getting the airworthiness certificate after it was imported from Mexico, and registering it as experimental reduced the bureaucratic overhead.
- On the morning of the accident, Mr. Dunham, assisted with pulling through the propeller, and he checked the oil. He observed he pilot performing a preflight check.
- The pilot stated to him that they would be out flying for between 45 mins to an hour. He further stated that they were going to fly along the Pacific Coast to release the ashes. The pilot told him the airplane had full fuel.
- Weather at the time was a little, "crappy" but visibilities were 10 miles + and overcast ceilings at 4,000 ft. The weather conditions to the west looked a little worse, he described as "groggy".
- Mr. Dunham watched the pilot and passenger put the ashes into the sack prior to departure.
- He is familiar with the ash dispersal procedures; the sack has a flap with a bow, and is typically tied to the airframe by a 6 ft rope. The airplane is then slowed down to prevent ashes from coming back into the cockpit, the passenger slides back the canopy and throws out the sack. The ashes disperse, and the passenger pulls the sack back in.
- In Mr. Dunham's experience, the AT-6A has aggressive stall characteristics when flown slow and at steep bank angles.

- He thinks the pilot has about 1,300 hours of total flight experience, about 100 of which are in the AT-6A.



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Elliott Simpson
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Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: March 28, 2016
Person Contacted: Lucy Mottle [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA087

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Ms. Mottle stated the following:

She was located inside her condo complex, which was on the waterfront next to the dock connecting the street to Pier 39. She was at her window, which faced north, allowing her view of the channel. She observed an airplane directly north of her position, flying in over the channel east towards and over docked ships, which were moored out in the channel. She is very familiar with the helicopter traffic from the Columbia Bar Pilot's, and the airplane immediately seemed unusual because of its low altitude; it was flying at the level of the ships stacks relative to her position, at a similar altitude to helicopters she had seen, although she could not specifically state how low. It was flying straight and level and not trailing smoke or vapors.

The airplane was flying at a speed she considered to be slower than normal. It then began a slow and "graceful" turn to what appeared to be the left. She likened the turn to the way a large commercial airplane turns, and as the turn progressed she could see the wing profile. The wings looked long, almost like a glider. The turn progressed, and before completing 180 degrees, the nose of the airplane aggressively dropped, and the airplane transitioned into an almost vertical dive, passing out of her view behind a ship. She compared the transition to a maneuver a model airplane would perform. She thought she saw a yellow glint at some point during the turn, and was surprised to later find out the airplane had red painted features.

Construction was going on in her condo complex, and her window was closed, so she could not hear the airplane at any time. Her view of the airplane was not obstructed by clouds, and while clouds were present, the area was generally clear, with no rain until later in the day.



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Elliott Simpson
Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: June 27, 2016
Person Contacted: Megan McKibbin, [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA087

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Ms. McKibbin stated the following:

- She is the daughter of the pilot.
- She flew with her father in the accident airplane to disperse ashes on Father's Day in June 2015, over the water between downtown Seattle and Bainbridge Island.
- On that occasion she was briefed by her father on the dispersal procedures, prior to and while in the airplane.
- The ashes were placed in a bag, about the size of a paper lunch bag. The bag was cinched closed with a rope, and tied by a longer rope to an interior airframe member the right side of the airframe.
- She sat in the rear seat, facing forward, and when the time to drop came, she slid the rear canopy open.
- He then banked the airplane slightly to the right, and she reached out with her hand holding the bag along the airframe sides. She then let go of the bag, the rope unraveled, and the ashes immediately "puffed" and dispersed, and she pulled the bag back in.
- She reiterated that the turn was not steep when she threw out the ashes, but more of a shallow right bank.
- She did not know the passenger for the accident flight, and she was not sure if her father had performed any other ash dispersal flights.
- Her father had never complained of medical issues beyond frequent headaches a few years prior to the accident.