

Cawthra Joshua

From: the Von Game Boy [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2020 4:44 PM
To: Cawthra Joshua
Subject: Todd Smith's statement of events of airplane crash

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On Aug 9, 2019 at approximately 5:00 pm Andy Frostenson and myself, Todd Smith were asked by Mr. Steve Mane, the owner of the aircraft if we would take it up for a test flight. We agreed to do so. We were both at the airport at that time working for our other employment, Farmers Aerial Applicators. That day Steve Mane's mechanic and another pilot signed off the aircraft that it was airworthy. Prior to that date on Aug 2, 2019 the aircraft had been started and taxied around the premises. On Aug 3, 2019 approximately 10:30 am was the first time we flew the aircraft. We flew from Ontario, OR to Vale, OR. Made two landings and one touch and go. That day Steve Mane purchased fuel for the aircraft at the airport gas pump. I don't recall the amount. The next planned flight we were to test the landing gear. The previous flight we had left the landing gear down and locked.

I helped remove the landing gear pin to allow the gear to move. The mechanic was also working on the canopy. For some reason it would not close. He fixed that and the plane was ready for the second flight.

The plan was to take off and put the landing gear up while Steve was on the ground and would tell me if the gear was up or down. I was in the rear seat making contact with Steve on the ground through texting. We made the first pass low over the runway. Steve texted me and let me and let me know that gear was up. We made the second pass with gear down, Steve texted and said gear is down. He also asked me how it felt, I texted back and texted it felt great. Within seconds it got really quiet. I asked Andy, "Did the engine stop?" He responded yes it did. I immediately started looking at the fuel mixture, the controls which were at the left of the console. Everything read normal. I looked up we were headed toward a dirt field. I remember thinking this is going to hurt. I have replayed this event over and over in my mind, even when I would like to forget it. I ask myself why did I survive and Andy did not.

The next thing I remember was impact and my body being thrust to the floor under the dash. There was smoke and dust around the plane. I could not reach back with my left arm to release the canopy. I called for Andy to do it but there was no response. Two young men who had arrived on the scene had tried to open it from the outside but they could not. Finally I assisted with my left hand and held my injured right arm to reach over to the handle so I could release the canopy. And the canopy was able to slide open.

Andy was told before we flew this aircraft, by Steve Mane that it was insured. Andy told me that and others that Steve told him it was insured. We would have never flown this aircraft had we known it wasn't insured.

This is the best of my recollection.

Todd Smith