



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Elliott Simpson
Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: October 29, 2019

Person Contacted: Joe Dory, [REDACTED]

NTSB Accident Number: WPR20FA016

Narrative:

During an in-person interview Mr. Dory stated the following:

- Mr. Dory is the owner of the FBO where the pilot purchased fuel before the accident. In his experience, the pilot always departs in the helicopter with full fuel.
- He retained two quarts of fuel from the fuel tank farm after the accident for further testing, but no pilot has reported any issues with the fuel since the accident.
- He has previously owned an Enstrom and has about 400 hours of flight experience in the type.
- He provided Enstrom flight instruction to the pilot in the accident helicopter 18 months prior.
- No mechanical issues with the helicopter at that time, beyond a minor transmission fluid leak, and an adjustment to the throttle end stop, which was since resolved.
- The accident pilot was very smart, intelligent, but was busy like most doctors.
- During the Enstrom training it was apparent that he was "rusty", and had difficulty accomplishing autorotations and manipulating the throttle control, because his prior experience was almost exclusively in an MD500, which because it was a turbine helicopter, did not require throttle manipulation.
- As such, he found that the pilot would not anticipate the appropriate throttle response fast enough, and would often allow the rotor rpm to decay, although he eventually got the hang of it.
- Ultimately, the pilot performed to a standard appropriate for his ratings, and he met the minimum training time for insurance requirements to fly solo (between 5 to 10 hours).
- They agreed to do follow up training, but it never happened.
- He is not sure how much time the pilot had to focus on these issues after the training, because most of his following flights appeared to be in his Cessna 182 airplane.



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Interview Date: October 29, 2019
Person Contacted: Jordan Valentine
NTSB Accident Number: WPR120FA016

Narrative:

Ms. Valentine was the right-seat passenger in N280F. The interview was conducted over the phone, while she was in hospital, and sedated with pain medication.

- She met her father at the airport hangar, having both driven there separately. She believes she arrived a few hours after him.
- The helicopter was already out and on the ramp. He usually tinkers in the hangar, and she asked if he had got much work done, to which he exclaimed no.
- They then went to the bathroom and boarded the helicopter.
- She remembered him performing the preflight checks, which included confirming the doors were locked. (She specifically remembers because they joked a little later when they arrived at the fuel facility and realized that he had actually forgotten to close his door).
- Taxi to the fuel facility was uneventful, and her father went inside to check to see if his friend was there.
- He serviced the helicopter with fuel, and they departed.
- Departed the pattern to the southwest toward the Lake in the Owyhee's and all was uneventful. She noted that the winds were about 3 knots.
- During the initial phase of flight, he allowed her to operate the cyclic control, to get a feel for how the helicopter turns, while he manipulated the foot pedals (she holds a fixed wing pilot license).
- During that time, he discussed the possibility of ultimately installing a GoPro camera in the helicopter, although there was not one installed for the accident flight.
- Once they arrived in the Owyhee region, they saw about two dozen wild horses, and he performed an orbit around them while she took photos. They flew fairly low, but she assumed this portion of the flight was over 500 ft agl, because the iPad that was installed had a terrain feature, that would announce if they flew below 500 ft agl, and she did not hear it.

- They proceeded southwest toward the Leslie Gulch, where they would fly it down to the lake although they often start to the north but decided to instead fly through the badlands and fly down the gulch and then to the north over the lake. This was done out of an abundance of cautions regarding the wind, even though it was only 3 knots.
- A short time later her father commented in a tone that she described as “matter of fact”, that the “RPMS” were getting low. (Ms. Valentine earlier in the interview stated that she was not aware of the difference between main rotor and engine rpm).
- She did not think anything of it and continued to look out of the window.
- When she looked back, he appeared nervous, and appeared to be “working” the collective control, rather than aggressively manipulating it, while he also possibly reached out to the instrument panel.
- There was no change in the sound or feel of the helicopter, and when she looked at the instrument panel, one of the needles that she is used to seeing in the green zone, was just to the left of the normal zone. She perceived that this was the “RPM” gauge, and she believed that it is normally at 1,300, but was just to the left of its normal range.
- Suddenly they descended quickly, during which time the helicopter yawed right, and then struck the ground right side down.
- She did not recall the sun interfering with her field of vision during the flight.
- She was wearing the 3 point harness
- She was wearing a long sleeve t-shirt and pants but took off her jacket before getting into the helicopter because she did not want to be too hot in the helicopters bubble.
- She sustained serious injuries during the impact sequence and developed severe hypothermia with body temperature in the upper 80’s by the time she was discovered, the following morning.
- She debated taking off her father’s shirt and using it after the accident, but she was too badly injured to move.
- Her father had owned a 269 helicopter, and then had a share in two consecutive MD500 helicopters. Most of his helicopter experience was in the MD500.