



Klickitat County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Report for Incident 20-000516

Nature: Missing Person

Address: [REDACTED]

Location: KCENT

Goldendale WA 98620

Offense Codes: MPER

Received By: E Chinalski

How Received: T

Agency: KCSO

Responding Officers: B Corning

Responsible Officer: B Corning

Disposition: FTP 03/09/20

When Reported: 12:05:41 02/14/20

Occurred Between: 12:05:41 02/14/20 and 12:05:41 02/14/20

Assigned To:

Detail:

Date Assigned: **/**/**

Status:

Status Date: **/**/**

Due Date: **/**/**

Complainant: 67013

Last: Morantes

First: Dustin

Mid: Marin

DOB: [REDACTED]

Dr Lic: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Race: [REDACTED]

Sex: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

City: Hood River, OR 97031

Offense Codes

Reported: MPER Missing Person

Observed: MPER Missing Person

Additional Offense: MPER Missing Person

Circumstances

LT01 Air, Bus, or Train Terminal

Responding Officers:

B Corning

Unit :

S29

Responsible Officer: B Corning

Agency: KCSO

Received By: E Chinalski

Last Radio Log: 14:12:34 02/14/20 CMPLT

How Received: T Telephone

Clearance: A1 Cleared, Case Report Required

When Reported: 12:05:41 02/14/20

Disposition: FTP **Date:** 03/09/20

Judicial Status:

Occurred between: 12:05:41 02/14/20

Misc Entry: F Kilian/ls

and: 12:05:41 02/14/20

Modus Operandi:

Description :

Method :

Involvements

Date

Type

Description

Relationship

02/14/20	Cad Call	12:05:41 02/14/20 Missing Person	Initiating Call
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NarrativeKlickitat County Sheriff's Office
Investigation Narrative

Case #20-000516

On February 14, 2020 at about 1205 Hrs, Dustin Morantes called to report that his father, Mark Morantes, was missing. Dustin was supposed to pick up his father, Mark, at the Dallesport Airport today to drive him to the PDX airport in Portland, Oregon. Mark was to take an international flight the next morning to Bonaire in the Carribean. It was very unlike Mark to miss their meeting time. Mark and Dustin own and fly several planes, which they keep in a private hangar at the airport. Dustin had checked the hangar and found Mark's vehicle parked inside and their 1946 Luscombe airplane missing. It was common for Mark to secure his vehicle in the hangar while he was out flying the plane, but it was unusual for him to be out on a flight considering his travel plans. I called Dustin, and he agreed to meet me at The Dallesport Airport shortly.

Dustin Morantes met with me a short while later and we discussed the facts known to us so far. I will note that Dustin is a Life-flight helicopter pilot, and he spoke in a very calm, articulate, and detailed manner. Reserve Deputy William Clinton was riding with me that day: he has an extensive history flying planes and helicopters, and he was also an excellent source of aviation related information. Mark was not answering his phone or responding to electronic messages to his tablet; he always kept the devices on his person. Mark and Dustin share a phone and data plan through AT&T: Dustin pulled up their account information and saw that no calls had been made or data used by Mark since Wednesday evening around 1700 Hrs. Mark's cellular phone number was [REDACTED]. His Ipad data is linked to his email account [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] I called dispatch and asked them to contact AT&T to request them to ping those devices to find their current location or location history.

Dustin, when he began to worry over Mark's missing their meeting that morning, drove to Mark's residence, 10 Prestons Road off of Soda Springs Road near Goldendale. Dustin had found that his father was not home, and his bag was packed in apparent anticipation for his international flight and was still in his house. Mark always stays at the Shiloh Inn next to PDX airport, so Dustin had called PDX to see if Mark had flown himself to the airport in the Luscombe plane and forgot to tell Dustin (which would be out of character). The Shiloh Inn stated that Mark had not checked in.

Dustin Morantes last spoke with his father on Wednesday morning, February 12. Mark Morantes had stated that he was planning to take their 1946 Luscombe airplane out for a joyride around the Dallesport Area. As stated, Marks vehicle was still parked in their hangar, and--of their multiple airplanes--the Luscombe was still missing. It appeared possible that Mark had left that morning in the Luscombe and not returned; the possibility that he may have crashed was discussed. Dustin was very knowledgeable about the families airplanes and it was clear he was active in maintaining and flying them. He gave me the tail number to the Luscombe (N77875), which he described as silver/aluminum in color with blue trim. He stated it was a simple aircraft equipped with a map and compass for navigation. The plane had about a four or five hour flight capability before it had to refuel, and it was capable only of visual flight rules (vision based navigation during daylight hours and good weather only). The plane had an emergency locator switch (ELT) installed in it. This switch would broadcast an emergency radio signal on a distress frequency in the event the plane crashed

hard or the pilot manually activated the beacon. Dustin stated a new battery had been put in the ELT last year, and the batteries had a functional life-span of five years.

Dustin Morantes stated his father usually flies to Newport, Oregon or Richland, Washington when he takes day-flights. His father is an experienced pilot. Dustin had already called the airports at both locations, and neither had seen Mark's Luscombe based on the tail number from Wednesday onward. The Luscombe was not equipped properly to fly into PDX airport without special permission from the airport. It was not common for Mark Morantes to fly to any other nearby airfields to camp overnight. The family had much more sophisticated personal aircraft that were capable of flying farther and safer if Mark had intended to fly to a further destination or needed to fly using instruments.

Dustin and Mark Morantes were both well known and on good terms with the staff at the Dallesport Airport. Dustin had already contacted Jeff Renard, a responsible party at the airport, to ask about his missing father prior to calling law enforcement. I met with Renard and other airport staff in the airport to discuss the matter. They stated the matter would become an FAA issue if it was likely involving a crashed or missing plane. Renard stated he and a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) pilot would launch from the airport shortly to visually scan the region for sign of Mark's plane and monitor for any radio distress signals. Renard confirmed that, because the Luscombe flies by sight and not instruments, Mark was not required to file any kind of flight plan with the airport prior to his departures. Renard later reported to me that his flight with the CAP pilot had not located evidence of Mark's plane or of his emergency transponder (ELT).

I also called and spoke to Jeff King, the director of the Klickitat County Department of Emergency Management about the issue. Mr. King also acts as a Search and Rescue (SAR) coordinator for Klickitat Coounty. Mr. King stated the primary agency of jurisdiction for searching for a missing plane in Washington would be the Aviation Division of the Department of Transportation. Mr. King forwarded me contact information for Tom Peterson, the director of that division. Mr. King also stated a SAR pilot was going to the Goldendale Airport to possibly launch a plane to search from there. Mr. King agreed to have his SAR pilot check the runway to ensure that Mark Morantes had not made an emergency landing there due to mechanical or medical complications.

Dustin Morantes then took Reserve Deputy Clinton and I to his family's hangar at the Dallesport Airport. The hangar was securely locked and had been when Dustin arrived earlier in the day. We confirmed that the family's other planes were in the hangars. We confirmed the Luscombe was still missing. A nice, black sports car belonging to Mark was in the hangar as well as his personal vehicle. Nothing appeared out of place in the tidy hangars, and I saw no signs of distress or foul play. Dustin verbally authorized us to search Mark's personal vehicle for evidence of where he could be. We searched it, but we did not find any unusual items, signs of foul play, Mark's electronic devices, or indicators of where he could have gone. There were some over the counter medications in the vehicle. Dustin stated that Mark was seventy years old; he did not have any known medical or mental health conditions and was not taking any prescription medications.

I called Tom Peterson, the director of the DOT Aviation Division. He confirmed Mr. King had called to brief him on the missing and possibly crashed plane. At&T was starting to relay a cellular phone ping history for Mark Morantes' cellular phone. The company was able to give a record of the cellular phone towers that Mark Morantes' phone had connected to (been closest to) on Wednesday. Their

records showed Mark traveling westbound from the Dallesport Airport then south over Oregon. Mr. Peterson confirmed DOT Aviation would be taking over the investigation, and I put him in contact with our dispatch center to receive the cellular phone ping history. We ended our call. I requested Klickitat Dispatch to enter Mark Morantes as a missing person at this time.

At 1727 Hrs, I was contacted via dispatch by Deputy Josh Mars with the Lane County (Oregon) Sheriff's Office. Deputy Mars identified himself as a SAR coordinator. The cellular phone data indicated that Mark Morantes' plane was last seen over a wooded, mountainous area near the Oregon Coast over Lane County. Given the plane was last detected out of Washington the Aviation Division had transferred the investigation and search to Lane County Sheriff. Deputy Mars would be coordinating a search in that region. I relayed all information I had collected for the case as well as relevant points of contact to Deputy Mars. We ended our call.

On February 17, I received an e-mail from Jeff King of the Klickitat County Department of Emergency Management. Mr. King forwarded me documents and reports from Scott Lucas, a State Search and Rescue Coordinator with the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The reports detailed the investigation and search effort results of the search for Mark Morantes. The cellular phone data (cell tower ping history) showed Mark's plane flying south and west away from Dallesport toward the southern Oregon Coast. The last tower pinged was near Eugene Oregon. The plane had been found in logged radar history flying into that region and turning westbound over the Pacific Ocean. There was a "radar gap" just off the coast for several miles where the plane's travel was not recorded. The plane was picked up on the west side of this gap based on time, flight path, and plane size still flying westbound out over the pacific. Mark's Luscombe was last tracked about 57.3 nautical miles out to sea travelling westbound on February 14 at 1859 Hrs (coordinates 43 45 39.70N by -125 30 42.13W). It was presumed his plane eventually crashed due to a lack of fuel. The United States Coast Guard (District 13) became involved. Their report indicated an MH-60 helicopter equipped with night vision and forward looking infra-red (FLIR) optics had been deployed through the early morning hours to search the last known position of the aircraft. A C27J search plane was also deployed to the last known position to search. Neither aircraft was able to locate the Mark Morantes, his plane, or any remaining debris of the plane. Land and sea based searches were suspended as of the afternoon of February 15. Mark Morantes was declared missing and presumed dead. Captain Coulter of the United States Coast Guard prepared a presentation regarding the search efforts and their conclusions and presented them to Dustin Morantes via phone conference as Mark Morantes' next of kin.

End of Narrative.

Report Forwarded to Klickitat County Coroner for considerations of death certificates.

CASE FILES: OEM & USCG Reports, Cellular Data Maps, Radar Maps.

I CERTIFY (DECLARE) UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON THAT THE FOREGOING IS TRUE AND CORRECT. (RCW 9A.72.085.)

Reporting Officer: B. Corning / #20-29

Reporting Officer/Date

Responsible LEO:

Approved by:

Date