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Subject: N926K - Witness Statement Synopsis
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Andrew,

As discussed earlier; below is a rough description of witness statements regarding the N926K accident. As three of the witnesses were in the same location, I am grouping their statement as one – they all say the same thing. Also, I did not actually speak with one witness directly (Brent Larson of Billings Flying Service) but again, he was standing with Gary and Ashli Blain.

Eye Witness #1: Gary Blain, Billings Flying Service owner, Rated Pilot with 1000 hours in a Piper Cheyanne.

Eye Witness #2: Ashli Blain, Billings Flying Service employee, Rated Pilot in multiple rotorcraft Make & Model

Eye Witness #3: Brent Larson, Billings Flying Service employee, No know ratings

Eye Witness #4: Burkly Dowd, no aviation experience

Eye Witness #5: Chad Wilson, no aviation experience

Mechanic Statement: Leonard Patton, Patton Aviation owner, last to perform maintenance on accident aircraft

Mike Wacker: Aircraft owner, president of FMR Aviation, no aviation experience

In relationship to the aircraft's flight path, taking off from the 28L runway headed west.

Witness #1, #2, & #3, observed the aircraft, through a window, flying very low, lower than what that type of aircraft should be at given their position was 3200 feet from the end of 28L. All moved outside and recall the aircraft had the gear down, was heading west with a slow decent trajectory and a slight nose-up attitude. #3 recalled an abnormal engine noise but may attribute it to the closer than normal proximity. #1 described the aircraft as rocking and porpoising slightly. The event lasted roughly 10 seconds, the aircraft passed over a hill and out of view. #1 chased through a field in a vehicle but arrived only to see a plume of smoke – still some 3000 feet from the actual accident scene.

Witness #4 was walking his dog, approximately a quarter mile from the accident scene, when he noticed the aircraft flying very low and what appeared to be flying between a house and a line of electrical power lines (average height power lines). #4 presumed that the pilot noticed he was headed for a housing development and banked very slightly to the right, as he noticed the wings tip then return to level (he made the physical movement for me). #4 also clearly stated that the landing gear was not visible and the plane did not make any odd noises compared to other aircraft he observed flying overhead. #4 watched as the plan fell below his field of view but could hear the impact and witnessed trees branches and foliage launch into the air followed by the sound of an explosion and plume of smoke. #4's recollection of the wing tilt and gear position supports ground scaring at the initial impact point.

Witness #5 was parked in his vehicle on the Gun range property, approximately 250 feet from the aircraft flight path. #5 looked up in time to see the aircraft pass before him, wings level and gear up, strike the ground, then fall out of view down the ravine. #5 heard the explosion and plume of smoke. #5 ran to the edge of the first ridge and watch secondary explosions then ran, around the rim of the ravine, to the other side where a staircase lead to the lower part of the ravine to attempt a

rescue. Once on the other side of the ravine, the intense heat and popping sound kept him from going down the ravine.

Mechanic stated in mid-February the aircraft was dropped-off to make repairs to the Rt wing fuel bladder and troubleshoot a reported 'Slow to extend' nose gear issue. Patton made appropriate repairs, performed a fuel tank leak check and performed an engine run to verify fuel flow – as per the maintenance records. Patton was casual friends with the accident pilot and described him as not proficient in the Cheyenne based on the pilot's overt agitation with the installed avionics being complicated. The pilot arrived on the day prior to the accident so that he could go through the manuals and better familiarize himself with the system, a Garmin GNS-530. This early arrive was noted in a work order by Patton as the pilot requested assistance with the system. Patton regarded the accident pilot as a good pilot but new to the Cheyenne and not very confident in its operation.

Aircraft owner during a telephone conversation supported Patton's statement that the accident pilot was a low hour pilot of the Cheyenne, but came to the company with high hours in other aircraft.

Let me know if there is anything else I can do. I'm out for the day – good luck!

John

John M. Cosenza
Aviation Safety Inspector (AVI)



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