



## RECORD OF EMAIL

**Samantha Link**  
**Aviation Accident Investigator**  
**Western Pacific Region**

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**Date: July 27, 2020**  
**Person Contacted: Mr. Chad Sanders (Witness)**  
**NTSB Accident Number: WPR20LA237**

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### **Narrative:**

During an email conversation Mr. Sanders reported to the FAA Inspector:

“It was nice to meet and speak with you Saturday, of course it would have been better under different circumstances. My statement about the accident I witnessed Friday 7/24 is below.

I had just landed after giving a ride to a friend and I stopped what I was doing to watch the two RVs in the pattern land. The first aircraft, the RV-8, had a decent, tailwheel first touchdown, then began the classic taildragger oscillation between tail and mains for approximately three to four cycles. Then the aircraft tipped up on the left main gear (with tail still on the ground) as it began a transit to the right side of runway 29. I saw the wing coming back down and decided to myself that the slightly exciting, nothing extraordinary landing had finally run out of energy and the pilot had the aircraft completely under control. My father then said "he's gotten it off the runway," so I turned my attention back to the runway and saw a cloud of dirt drifting downwind as the pilot reapplied power. My father and I then decided that the aircraft was, in fact, not off the runway, but close to the right side of the runway since the dust did not continue as the pilot initiated the go-around. The pilot applied the throttle quickly enough that the engine coughed a number of times before running smoothly. I was alarmed at the initiation of the go-around since the pilot appeared to have used at least half the runway during his landing, so I began to jog out to the runway to get around the trees and hangars I was behind to get a better view. From what I saw, the pilot was airborne quickly enough and had plenty of room to accelerate before reaching the hill at the approach end of runway 11. I then watched the pilot begin a left crosswind turn at what was a perceivably slow airspeed. As the pilot turned, he simultaneously increased pitch attitude to an alarmingly nose high attitude. The best way I can describe the aircraft's attitude is I could see way too much of the top of the airplane, it was banked too far left and too nose high for his airspeed and horsepower. Due to my experience in model aircraft (where I intentionally stall and spin routinely), I became extremely concerned, anticipating a departure stall and spin. At that point the aircraft disappeared behind the trees near me. I then began looking for the aircraft

to reappear on the other side of the trees where aircraft usually appear on downwind for runway 29. The engine cut after being behind the trees for about two seconds after I lost visual on it, then maybe a half to one second after the engine cut I heard a tremendous smack. I continued to watch for him to appear on downwind, but he did not.

Here are some notes to clarify questions brought up during our verbal discussion. Earlier in the week I had watched my father and brother performing touch-and-gos in a T-6. The main wheel takeoffs were and appeared normal; nothing special. However, my father was training us to perform tail low, three-point takeoffs, and I watched my brother perform one. I noted that the heavy (compared to an RV-8) T-6, at the three point attitude, on runway centerline kicked up dust on the right side of runway 29 and I could see the swirling wake of the right wing in the dust as the aircraft departed. This example leads me to believe that the RV-8 did not necessarily leave the runway during landing, but was simply close enough to the edge of the runway to kick up dust as he applied power.

I do not believe that the propeller was damaged during the landing or go-around. As I mentioned in our conversation, I am incredibly frustrated at this accident particularly because the aircraft was basically completely out of energy and the landing was over. The aircraft was tail low and at no point did I see it transition to the main gear enough to strike the propeller. It looked like a good touchdown, slightly exciting roll-out, and a dart to the right that could have easily been ridden out with application of full aft stick. Obviously I don't know what he was thinking, but certainly was not a bad landing that would have at any point damaged the aircraft. As for the engine cut I heard before impact, given the short amount of time between cut and impact, I do not believe it was engine failure. After the initial cough during power application on the runway, the engine ran continuously and did not wind down as if it was failing before impact. I assumed at the time I heard the sequence of events unfold, that the pilot had cut the throttle instinctively as the aircraft departed nose down about a half to one second before impact.

If there's anything I can do to help further, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Regards,  
Chad Sanders”

END.

Submitted by: Samantha Link