



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Eric M. Gutierrez
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: October 5, 2021
Person Contacted: Jason Houle (Student Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR22FA001

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Mr. Jason Houle during an interview.

On October 1, 2021, he and William Dubel, flight instructor, were conducting an instructional flight in N2868H, a Piper, PA-28-181 at the Chandler Municipal Airport (CHD), Chandler, Arizona.

Houle woke up at about 4:30 AM, before the alarm went off, this is a common occurrence. Dressed and went downstairs to the kitchen, prepared breakfast of "microwaved eggs" and coffee.

Houle checked the weather for the flight via "Weather Underground", and "1800wxbrief". Used weather underground to check the local radar map and flight services to get the area METAR's for practice reading them. Weather looked good, noted that the winds were calm which Dubel wouldn't like as Houle needed additional practice with windy conditions.

Houle left for the airport shortly after 5:00 AM. Upon arrival he began the pre-flight inspection on N2868H as per Houle's usual routine. Checked the hobbs time against the logbook. Turned on the avionics and did first walkaround verifying the lights, pitot heat, and stall horn were operational. Returned to the cockpit and turned off power, proceeded with exterior inspection, everything looked as expected. Noted that they would need fuel. Retrieved the fuel cup and drained the sumps from both wings and the nose location. Fuel looked good. Returned to the cockpit to listen to the local AWOS on handheld radio as Houle reviewed the POH weight/balance section to cross reference against his own copy of that didn't have a completed weight/balance section. Planned to practice some sample problems later in the day.

Called for fuel at 6:00 AM. Dubel arrived around that time. They reviewed landings with a specific focus on the location of the roundout/flare and discussed Houle's tendency to land flat. Also discussed that Dubel would like Houle to make as many of the radio calls as possible. Compared to the last time they did touch-and-go's at CHD where Dubel made all the radio calls so Houle could focus on landings. Fuel arrived and they filled the airplane to the "tabs."

Returned to the cockpit. Dubel mentioned that he would like Houle to do a "stage check" with another flight instructor. Houle asked what that was about and Dubel indicated that this is something that he likes to do so that Houle can receive feedback from a different instructor from another perspective. Houle agreed this was always a good idea.

Followed the "Start Engine" checklist and started the plane. Setup the COM1/COM2 radios as per their usual of the two tower frequencies on COM1 and the ground/ATIS on COM2. Listened to the ATIS, identifier was Sierra.

Houle called the Chandler Ground controller and requested touch-and-go's in the pattern. They were instructed to taxi to runway 04L via A/D as expected. They proceeded to taxi to the run-up area for 04L. During taxi they heard another airplane ahead of them asking for instrument flight rule (IFR) clearance. They spoke briefly about that and they noted that it was nice that the airplane was out of the way in the runup area, in event any VFR airplanes were ready for takeoff.

Houle taxied the airplane into position on the runup area next to the IFR plane and began runup procedures.

Houle switched radio from COM2 ground to COM1 tower (126.1) to listen while they did their run-up. Followed by the "Before Takeoff" checklist. Runup proceeded as expected, verified all instruments were set and reading as expected.

Houle contacted the tower and requested a take-off clearance. They received the clearance to take-off from 04L and fly left traffic. Houle was happy to hear left pattern, as he had yet to fly that pattern out of KCHD.

Houle recalled conducting about 3 touch-and-go's on the left traffic pattern to runway 04L. On the last one they were instructed to transition to radio freq 133.1 and do their next touch-and-go on runway 4R. Dubel communicated with the tower, as it was more complicated than normal.

Houle recalls conducting about 6 more touch-and-go's to runway 04R. For the last several landings they were following a Piper, Seminole in the pattern and were told "clear to land 04R number 2 behind the Seminole". Each time through the pattern they observed the Seminole landing out their right window as they were nearing the end of the runway.

During the previous landings, while on the right downwind leg of 04R, abeam the numbers, Houle would reduce the engine power and apply flaps. As the airplane descend, he would pitch the airplane to maintain airspeed, when the airplane was on a 45° from the threshold, he would turn the airplane onto the base leg of the traffic pattern.

Dubel commented that, he wanted to try an "engine out" landing and was waiting for the proper spacing with the Seminole.

On their final touch and go they received clearance to land when they were about midfield on the downwind to runway 04R. Again, they were told they were number 2 behind the Seminole and cleared to land. A short approach to land was not requested with the tower, nor was a simulated engine failure communicated with the tower.

They observed the Seminole land when they were abeam the numbers, Dubel decided that they we would do an "engine out" landing. Houle reduced the engine power to idle.

Dubel had previously demonstrated a simulated engine failure to a landing, but this was his first time performing a simulated engine failure to a landing.

Houle did not recall, but believes Dubel guided him to make a turn to base and then final with engine power remaining at idle and no flaps. When they turned to final, Dubel noted that they were sure to make the runway and to add full flaps, which Houle did. Dubel assumed control of the airplane put the airplane into a forward slip to lose altitude. Houle mirrored Dubel on the flight controls. They were longitudinally aligned with the runway and descending in the slip with clear view of the runway.

During the maneuver, they had not seen any helicopter traffic in the pattern.

They felt a strong shudder and Houle observed something flying off to the left of the airplane. The engine began running roughly and Houle could smell something burning. Dubel indicated that, he thought it was a bird strike and something struck the airplanes undercarriage. Dubel radioed the tower, declared an emergency, and asked about the airplanes landing gear. The tower radioed that the landing gear looked good. At this point they were over the runway numbers.

On touchdown Dubel noticed that they did not have any left landing gear and attempted to correct. They landed, skidded off the left side of the runway 04R and came to a stop. They immediately exited the airplane and assessed the situation. Once it was clear that the airplane was not on fire, Houle re-entered the airplane, shut off the fuel and avionics.

Houle retrieved his flight bag and exited the aircraft. Dubel radioed tower from his handheld radio. At that time, they observed the plume of smoke off the end of the runway. Shortly afterward a Chandler Police Department officer arrived.

Houle further explained that he is aware that the Chandler Muni airport has 2 traffic patterns, one for each of the runways. Houle has seen helicopters in the traffic, but very few.

According to the student pilot there were no preimpact mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airframe or engine that would have precluded normal operation.

Timeline

Monday, October 4, 2021 07:48

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

- Normal work day, 8:00 till 5:00
- Attended installation of new rector service at St James Tempe where I attend. Ran the sound system. Arrived at 6:00 PM and returned home around 9:30 PM, went to bed as usual around 10:00 PM.

Thursday, September 30, 2021

- Woke-up around 5:30 AM as usual and had normal breakfast and coffee. Reviewed the overnight news on my tablet.
- Normal work day, 8:00 till 5:00
- Spoke with William over IM about the plan for Friday. He indicated several different options that we could do, one of which was doing more touch-and-go landings. I indicated that was what I wanted to work on, specifically the round-out and flare part of the landing. Agreed to meet at our normal time of 6:00 AM.
- Met with Special needs financial planner from 5:30 till 6:30 PM
- Had dinner and watched TV with the family
- Set alarm for 4:45 AM, went to bed around 9:00 PM

Friday, October 01, 2021

- Woke up at 4:30 AM before the alarm went off -- this is a common occurrence.
- Dressed and went downstairs to the kitchen. Prepared standard breakfast of "microwaved eggs" and coffee.
- Checked on the weather for the flight via "Weather Underground", and "1800xwbrief". Used weather underground to check the local radar map and flight services to get the area METAR's for practice reading them. Weather looked good, noted that the winds were calm which William wouldn't like as I needed more practice with windy conditions.
- Left for Chandler Muni shortly after 5:00 AM.
- Arrived at the airport and began pre-flight inspection on N2868H as per my usual routine. Checked the Hobbs time against the logbook. Turned on the avionics and did first walkaround verifying the lights, pitot heat, and stall horn. Returned to the cockpit and turned off power. Proceeded with exterior inspection. Everything looked as expected. Noted that we would need fuel. Retrieved the fuel cup and drained the sumps from both wings and the nose location. Fuel looked good. Returned to the cockpit to listen to the local AWOS on handheld radio as I reviewed the POH weight/balance section to cross reference against my own copy of that didn't have a completed weight/balance section. Planned to practice some sample problems later in the day.
- Called for fuel at 6:00 AM. William arrived around this time. We reviewed landings with a specific focus on the location of the roundout/flare and discussed my tendency to land flat. Also discussed that he would like me to make as many of the radio calls as possible compared to the last time we did touch-and-gos and KCHD where he made all the radio calls so I could focus on landings. Fuel arrived and we filled to the "tabs" per usual.
- Returned to the cockpit. William mentioned that he would like me to do a "stage check" with one of the other flight instructors that he knew. I asked what that was about and he indicated that this is something that he likes to do so that I can receive feedback from a different instructor for another perspective. I agreed this was always a good idea.
- Followed the "Start Engine" checklist and started the plane. Setup the COM1/COM2 radios as per our usual of the two tower frequencies on COM1 and the ground/ATIS on COM2. Listened to the ATIS, identifier was Sierra.
- Called Chandler Ground and requested touch-and-go's in the pattern. Was told to taxi to 4L via A/D as expected. We proceeded to taxi to the run-up area for 4L. During taxi we heard another

plane ahead of us asking for IFR clearance. Spoke briefly about that and we noted that it was nice that he was nicely out of the way in the runup area in case any VFR planes were ready for takeoff. I taxied the plane into position in the runup area next to the VOR plane and began runup procedures.

- Switched radio from COM2 ground to COM1 tower (126.1) to listen while we did our run-up. Followed the "Before Takeoff" checklist. Runup proceeded as expected. Verified all instruments were set and reading as expected.
- Called for take-off clearance. Received clearance to take-off on 4L and to fly the left traffic pattern. Was happy to hear left pattern as I had yet to fly that pattern out of KCHD.
- Did 3 (?) touch-and-go's flying left traffic. On the last one we were instructed to transition to 133.1 and do our next touch-and-go on runway 4R. William made the response to this call as it was more complicated than normal.
- We did 6 (?) more touch-and-go's on runway 4R. For the last several we were following a Seminole in the pattern and were told "clear to land 4R number 2 behind the Seminole". Each time through the pattern we observed the Seminole landing out our right window as we were nearing the end of the runway. William commented that he wanted to try an "engine out" landing and was waiting for the proper spacing with the Seminole.
- On our final touch and go we received clearance to land when we were about midfield on our downwind. Again, we were told we were number 2 behind the Seminole and cleared to land. We observed the Seminole land when we were abeam the numbers and William decided that we would do an "engine out" landing. I took the throttle to idle. We made our turn to base and then final with engine out, no flaps. When we turned to final William called that we were sure to make the runway and to add full flaps which I did. At this time William put the plane into a forward slip to loose altitude to make the runway, I mirrored him on the controls. We were longitudinally aligned with the runway and descending in the slip with clear view of the runway out the front window. At this time we felt a strong shudder and I observed something flying off to the left of the airplane. The engine began running roughly and I could smell something burning. William indicated that he thought it was a bird strike and indicated he thought something struck our undercarriage. He next radioed ATC and declared an emergency and asked about our landing gear. ATC radioed that our landing gear looked good. At this point we were over the runway numbers. On touchdown William noticed that we did not have any left landing gear and attempted to correct. We landed and skidded off the left side of the runway and came to a stop. We immediately exited the aircraft and assessed the situation. Once it was clear that the aircraft was not on fire I re-entered the aircraft shutting off the fuel and avionics. I next retrieved my flight bag and exited the aircraft. William radioed tower from his handheld. At this time we observed the plume of smoke off the end of the runway. Shortly afterward Chandler PD arrived.