



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Elliott Simpson
Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: April 11, 2018
Person Contacted: Blake Brooksby, [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA119

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation, Mr. Brooksby stated the following:

- Mr. Brooksby is the sole partner and manager of the corporation N9456P LLC, which is the registered owner of N9456P.
- Double G Holdings is a financial partner in N9456P LLC, but has no ownership rights.
- Double G Holdings is composed of James Pedroza, Josh Gust, and Micha (does not remember last name).
- Double G holdings has provided money for the recent refurbishment of N9456P.
- The only other people with access to the airplane that Mr. Brooksby is aware of are John Brown, who was the airplanes mechanic.
- The airplane is insured under an "open pilot" policy, which allows any pilot to fly provided they have met a set of minimum flight experience requirements.
- Mr. Pedroza was a student pilot, and receiving flight instruction in the N9456P from Andy Johnson, who is the owner of the Las Vegas-based company "Lovecloud".
- Because James Pedroza was a student pilot, he did not meet the insurance requirements to fly the airplane solo, so he needed to fly with one of the other partners or his flight instructor, Mr. Johnson.
- The first time Mr. Brooksby met Erik Valente was just prior to the outbound trip from VGT to SDL on the day of the accident. He questioned who he was, and considered not letting him take the airplane. Mr. Valente stated that he was going to pick up Mr. Pedroza, and detailed his flight experience, which included 200 hours in a Comanche. He therefore decided to let him proceed with the flight.
- Mr. Brooksby had no idea that five people were going to be picked up at SDL. And he did not know any of the passengers except for Mr. Pedroza.

- Mr. Brooksby has flown the airplane twice since purchasing it about 3 years ago, for a total of about 1.5 hours.
- With regard to the airplane's configuration, it is equipped with six seats. The two seats at the back of the airplane are simply cushions resting against the aft bulkhead and floor, with the passenger's feet resting in scoops just below the back of the center seats.
- Mr. Brooksby performs maintenance on the airplane, in conjunction with the mechanic John Brown, who always examines and signs off on Mr. Brooksby's work.
- The airplane is kept underneath a shade hangar at VGT.
- He has no idea when the airplane was last fueled and does not know for sure who last flew it before the accident.



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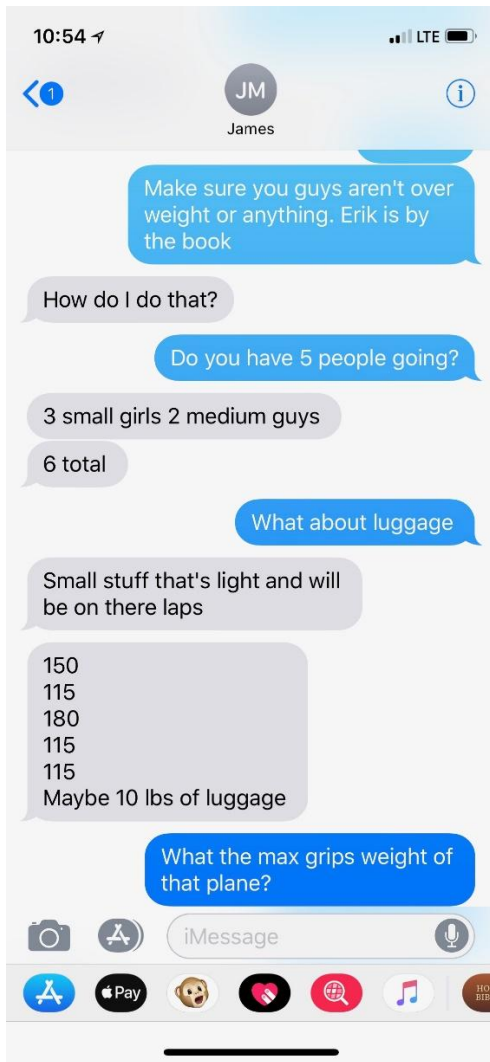
Interview Date: April 11, 2018
Person Contacted: Joshua Gust [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA119

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation, Mr. Gust stated the following:

- Mr. Gust had initially been a shareholder in the Double G partnership with Micha Griggs. Double G held a 1/6 share in N9456P LLC.
- He sold his share in Double G to his friend, James Pedroza, in January 2018.
- He has never met any of the other shareholders in N9456P LLC.
- Mr. Gust is a Part 121 pilot, and has only flown N9456P one time, for a 30-minute flight. He sold the partnership because the travel benefits included in his current job meant that he no longer needed private air transportation.
- He was aware that Mr. Pedroza was looking for a new flight instructor, so a few days before the accident he put him in touch with a friend and CFI, Erik Valente.
- Mr. Gust found out that Mr. Pedroza wanted to fly a group of friends up from SDL the evening of April 9, and that his flight instructor Andy Johnson had backed out of bringing the airplane down from VGT to make the trip.
- Mr. Gust was unable to ferry the airplane down to SDL, and Mr. Valente agreed to fly the airplane instead, but stated that the flight would not be instructional in nature, as he had yet to perform ground instruction with Mr. Pedroza.
- Mr. Gust discussed the flight with Mr. Pedroza, who stated that the airplane was full of fuel at VGT. Mr. Gust became concerned about the number of passengers and their weights, and warned as such, asking for the total weight of the occupants. (The text message exchange is detailed below).
- As a rule, N9456P is always topped off after landing in VGT.
- With regard to Mr. Valente, Mr. Gust had flown with him for about 100 hours in multiple airplanes including a Piper Arrow and 4-seat Piper Comanche 250. Mr. Valente had never flown in the accident airplane before.

- He had lost contact with Mr. Valente in the previous year, and had reconnected the week prior, both discussing their future plans.
- Mr. Gust had reviewed the SDL control tower audio multiple times, and the transmissions from N9456P sounded like they were being made by Mr. Valente. He could not understand why he reported that it was a training flight and opined that having, he may have been a little “rattled” under the circumstances, and not sure what to say, and that the call was almost a nervous reaction.





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Interview Date: April 12, 2018
Person Contacted: Micah Griggs, [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA119

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation, Mr. Griggs stated the following:

- Mr. Griggs has a pilot's license and was a partner with James Pedroza through the Double G partnership, which in turn had a share in the ownership of N9456P LLC. Josh Gust was the initial partner in Double G and sold his share to James Pedroza. He does not know who else has access to fly the airplane.
- Mr. Griggs was a very good friend of Mr. Pedroza and communicated with him regularly.
- He has only flown N9456P twice, and last flew it with Mr. Pedroza to San Bernardino, CA on March 29, 2018. For that trip, the airplane's fuel tanks were just short of full prior to departure from VGT, and he added 10 gallons in San Bernardino.
- After arriving back at VGT, Mr. Griggs departed immediately, and left Mr. Pedroza to secure the airplane and call the fuel truck to have the airplane topped off with fuel, which was the standard practice for the partnership. Because he left immediately, he cannot verify fuel was actually purchased.
- For his prior flight, Mr. Gust flew the airplane from VGT on a warm day, with 4 people on board, 100 pounds of luggage, and full fuel. For that flight he was surprised with how well the airplane performed, and that it was able to maintain a climb rate of 700 ft per minute.
- He would be surprised if the airplane had not been flown again during the weeks leading up to the accident, at the very least in the traffic pattern.