

Coconino County Sheriffs Office
Bill Pribil, Sheriff

Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Incident/Investigation Report

Case Number: S13-02074

NARRATIVE

PATROL DR # S13-02074
DEPUTY JASON SCHNEIDER #87
C205/NT: 05/31/2013

ASSIGNMENT:

On 05/28/2013 at approximately 1145 hours, I was dispatched to the end of Tonawanda Street in Mountainaire in reference to a plane crash.

INVESTIGATION:

I arrived on scene at approximately 1157 hours and immediately observed a single engine aircraft, on fire, behind the residence at [REDACTED] Iroquois. Members of the Bear Jaw fuel's crew and Highlands Fire Department were on scene attempting to extinguish the fire. Sergeant LURKINS #23 later arrived on scene and asked that I interview and obtain witness statements from various witnesses that observed the crash. I contacted the reporting party, John PATTON, and interviewed him.

WITNESS STATEMENT: PATTON, JOHN

In his statement, John PATTON stated he was at his home at [REDACTED] Mountainaire Road when a single engine airplane flew over going south. JOHN advised that he told his wife, "That the plane is too low." JOHN said he heard the plane's engine popping and sputtering and he knew it was going down. JOHN, his wife, and his brother then jumped in their truck and drove to Tonawanda and saw the wrecked plane. It exploded and then calmed down. We saw bodies but it was too hot. JOHN said that he took out his fire extinguisher but it was no match. Many people showed up with shovels and then fire fighters showed up.

JOHN later stated that he observed the plane fly over his residence with the sound of the engine sputtering and thought it was going to attempt to land on Mountainaire Road. The plane then flew very low over the Mountainaire Country Store. A short time later, he heard an explosion and followed the plane to the forest area behind the residence. JOHN walked up to the plane [REDACTED]

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

I contacted James A. PATTON in regards to this incident. I asked James to fill out a witness statement in regards to what he had seen, and the following is a brief synopsis of what JAMES stated on the witness statement.

WITNESS STATEMENT: PATTON, JAMES A.

In his statement, JAMES stated that he witnessed a small plane approach overhead at about tree line level. JAMES said as the plane went over, the engine was sputtering. JAMES advised that he jumped in his truck and followed the plane to impact. JAMES said that he jumped out and grabbed his fire extinguisher and ran to the cockpit. He tried to spray a path to the pilot while it was engulfed in flames, but could not reach him, and he then passed away.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

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I contacted Aric KOYIYUMPTewa in regards to this incident. I asked ARIC to fill out a witness statement in regards to what he had seen, and the following is a brief synopsis of what he stated on the witness statement.

WITNESS STATEMENT: KOYIYUMPTewa, ARIC D.

ARIC stated that he was working with a supervisor when he heard a plane so loud he looked up in the sky and saw a plane 30 to 40 feet above the tree tops, leaning from side to side. The engine was stuttering but the propeller was spinning, but not that well. He followed the plane 200 feet from where he was standing; "it crashed into the trees and exploded." I ran up to the crash site and called 911. He saw only one person fall out after the crash was burning.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

I contacted Julie STAPLEY in regards to this incident. I asked JULIE to fill out a witness statement in regards to what she had seen, and the following is a brief synopsis of what she stated on the witness statement.

WITNESS STATEMENT: STAPLEY, JULIE

JULIE stated that she was outside getting ready for a run when she looked up and saw a plane coming over her house. She heard the engine sputter and it was loud. JULIE indicated "I thought he was going to crash." She watched him pass her house and watched him go down over where she heard a tree snap, and then saw black smoke blow up. JULIE ran in the house to get her phone and call 911, but did not receive an answer. My phone showed I called at 09:43 and then said she thought she called. JULIE then dialed the Lake Mary Fire Department but received no answer. She then called the local fire department at 11:44 and 11:47 with the phone number of [REDACTED] While doing this, I got in the car and drove to help.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

I contacted Mary "Esther" STEWART in regards to this incident. I asked ESTHER to fill out a witness statement in regards to what she had seen. The following is a brief synopsis of what she stated on the witness statement.

WITNESS STATEMENT: STEWART, MARY "ESTHER"

ESTHER stated that about 11:45 am she was in the kitchen. I heard a very low flying plane, and my house began to shake. I ran out the back door and saw the plane hit trees and go nose down into the ground. It burst into flames immediately.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

I contacted Ronald JERUMBO in regards to this incident. I asked RONALD to fill out a witness statement in regards to what he had seen. The following is a brief synopsis of what he stated on the witness statement.

WITNESS STATEMENT: JERUMBO, RONALD

RONALD stated that today for a few minutes, he was standing in his driveway near he truck when he saw a low flying single engine Beechcraft, white and blue in color, extremely close to his home, at an elevation of approximately 200 feet above ground level. The first thing that came to mind was the pilot was sightseeing. As this plane continued in a southeastern direction, it appeared to him that the plane was dropping in elevation, even lower. He lost sight of this airplane when it dropped below the tree tops. He listened

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for the sound of a crash but never heard it. The engine sounded like it was not full power. Just before he lost sight of the Beechcraft, he heard what sounded like a backfire. In what seemed like several hours later, his wife called and told him that a plane went down near Mountainaire. He advised that he is a pilot and has been since 1971. RONALD indicated "If I can be of further help, please call."

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

After obtaining witness statements from the above persons, I then interviewed another witness, who was identified as Alfonso TAFOYA.

INTERVIEW: TAFOYA, ALFONSO

ALFONSO stated that he was landscaping a residence in Mountainaire when he observed the plane fly over the top of the trees very low, and then saw an explosion. I asked ALFONSO if the plane was flying level or if the wings were dipping from side to side. ALFONSO advised that the plane was flying level when he observed it. I asked ALFONSO if he had heard the engine sputtering. ALFONSO told me that he did not hear the engine sputtering.

CI AND MEDICAL EXAMINER NOTIFICATION:

Sergeant LURKINS notified the on-call, Detective MAGGARD. Detective MAGGARD later notified the Medical Examiner. Refer to Detective MAGGARD'S supplemental report for further.

FAA NOTIFICATION:

Pete KELLEY from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) later arrived on scene. He requested copies of all witness statements that I had obtained in this report. Sergeant LURKINS later responded to Highlands Fire Station 23 and made copies of all witness statements for KELLEY and provided them to him.