

## **Witness Interview Summary**

*Witness/PIC: James M. Sabovich*

Subject: Cessna 310, N310XX  
Accident Date: October 3, 2010  
Accident Time: 1530 PDT  
Accident Site: Santa Catalina Airport (AVX)

On October 8, 2010 at 0900 PDT, Ops Inspector Fallica and I conducted a telephone interview with Mr. James Sabovich in the office conference room.

Mr. Sabovich identified himself as the pilot in command and owner of the Cessna 310, N310XX that was involved in the accident in AVX. He also stated that he and his friend, Mr. Jeffery Williams are both general contractors and are long-term friends. Mr. Sabovich stated that he had planned the trip to Orange County to attend his grandson's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and had asked his friends Mr. and Mrs. Williams if they wanted to go to Catalina for the weekend. He told Mr. and Mrs. Williams that he could drop them off in Catalina and pick them up on Sunday October 3, 2010. Below is a summary of the interview with Mr. James Sabovich:

- On October 2, 2010 Mr. Sabovich met his long-term friends Jeffery Williams and Kristi Williams, husband and wife at the San Luis Obispo Airport (SBP).
- Mr. and Mrs. Williams arrived at the airport at 0800 PDT.
- Mr. Sabovich had the airplane fueled with 20 gallons per side, a total of 40 gallons in SBP.
- Mr. Sabovich performed his pre-flight and checked both engine oil levels.
- Before departing SBP, Mr. Sabovich went over the flight plan to AVX and emergency procedures with Mr. and Mrs. Williams.
- The flight from SBP to AVX took about 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- Mr. Sabovich dropped Mr. and Mrs. Williams off in AVX and proceeded to fly to SNA.
- N310XX was overnight and refueled at Signature Flight Services facility.
- Mr. Sabovich installed all plugs and covered all the ports. Mr. Sabovich had developed this habit even if his aircraft was only outside a hangar for one night.
- On October 3, 2010 Mr. Sabovich arrived at Signature Flight Services and performed his pre-flight inspection and took all the covers and plugs off.
- Mr. Sabovich departure was delayed due to weather conditions at AVX
- When weather permitted, he left SNA and arrived at AVX at about 1430 PDT.
- Mr. Sabovich planned to have a light lunch at the airport restaurant with Mr. and Mrs. Williams before leaving AVX.
- During their lunch time, Mr. Sabovich noticed the weather was deteriorating and since Mr. Sabovich knew his VFR rating limitation, he wanted to leave immediately before they had to stay in Catalina another night due to weather conditions.
- Mr. Sabovich paid the landing fee at AVX.

- Because it was a quick turn around and he did a full run-up in SNA, Mr. Sabovich decided that he would do an abbreviate run-up before take off.
- Mr. Sabovich did a calculation that taking off from runway 22 with a short field take off configuration; he could clear the fog bank and still be in VFR conditions.
- Mr. Sabovich set the flaps to 20 degrees, throttles at full power and released the brakes. The aircraft rolled down the runway and at approximately 85 to 87 mph, he rotated.
- Immediately after rotation, Mr. Sabovich felt the aircraft yaw to the left accompanied by a different engine exhaust “note” (resonance) from the left engine. He also could tell that there was no power from the left engine.
- Mr. Sabovich further defined that it was a mute (silent) exhaust sound from the left engine.
- Mr. Sabovich applied right rudder immediately.
- Mr. Sabovich remembered telling Mr. and Mrs. Williams that “we lost an engine”.
- At this point, Mr. Sabovich pushed the nose down to keep the aircraft from stalling and gain more speed at the same time trying to keep the right wing level.
- Mr. Sabovich cycled the left throttle but felt nothing from the left engine.
- The aircraft continued to turn left into the fog bank.
- Mr. Sabovich knew that they going to hit the ground so he alerted Mr. and Mrs. Williams that “we’re going to hit”.
- The aircraft impacted the ground hard with the left wing tip tank first then the belly.
- Mr. Sabovich estimated that they were airborne somewhere between 20 to 30 seconds.
- Mr. Sabovich remembered that when he opened his eyes, all he could see was the flames outside his front windshield.
- Mr. Sabovich directed Mr. Williams, which occupied the right front seat, to open the door.
- Mr. Williams told Mr. Sabovich that he could not open the door.
- Mr. Williams and Mr. Sabovich began to bang and push on the door and it finally opened.
- As soon as the door opened, the cabin engulfed in flames.
- Mr. Williams has severe burns to the arms, hands, and legs because he was next to the cabin door.
- Mr. Williams exited first. Mr. Sabovich helped Mrs. Williams with the seat belt and shoved her outside then Mr. Sabovich exited the aircraft.
- They were treated at the site by the first responders and later airlifted to Torrance Memorial Hospital by L.A. Sheriff Department.

In addition, Mr. Sabovich told us that he lost both of his logbooks, one was the “office logbook” and the other was the informal logbooks. Mr. Sabovich explained that the “office logbook” is the official pilot logbook where he would keep it in his office for safe and secure of the logbook. He would use the informal logbook to log and keep track of his flight time and activities then every few months he would transfer the information to the “office logbook”. For this trip, Mr. Sabovich planned to spend sometime in the AVX restaurant because of the ambience and work on transferring of the information from the “informal

logbook” to the “office logbook”; subsequently, both logbooks were destroyed in the accident. Mr. Sabovich also told us that he practiced the engine failure procedures every chance he gets

The interview was concluded at approximately 1100 PDT on October 8, 2010.

Viet Q. Tran  
Aviation Safety Inspector.  
10/08/2010