

< NARRATIVE >

DATE	TIME	TYPE	OFFICER REPORTING	CALL #	REP TAKER	EDIT DATE	EDIT TIME
6/20/2008	16:55	INITIAL	CLONINGER JR., PHILLIP M	2104		6/21/2008	13:35

CAD INCIDENT DISPOSITION CODE: [28-0] [B] [3]

On 06/20/08 I received a call of a plane crash at the Placid Lakes Airport. I responded to the location and observed the following:

On Friday, June 20, 2008 at approximately 1145 hours the listed witness identified as Sue DeBruler stated she is personally familiar with and identified the pilot as Mason Gabelein Smoak. Sue DeBruler is the office manager of the Placid Lakes Airport located at 100 Airport Road in Lake Placid, Highlands County, Florida. Sue DeBruler advised she observed Smoak outside of his airplane hanger awaiting the arrival of a passenger who was later identified as David S. Maehr. Sue DeBruler stated she estimated Smoak and the passenger were airborne for for approximately thirty minutes before her husband, Richard DeBruler advised her of the airplane accident. Richard DeBruler stated he was mowing the lawn of their residence which is parallel to the Placid Lakes Airport runway identified as N18/S36. Richard DeBruler advised he is also familiar with Smoak and recognized his airplane flying southbound over runway N18/S36 at a height of approximately one hundred feet as if completing a landing approach as he was seated on the rear porch of their residence. Richard DeBruler stated he observed the airplane continue flying southbound over the runway at an estimated seventy-five to one hundred feet. Richard DeBruler stated the airplane did not appear to attempt to land, nor completed a "touch and go" landing. Richard DeBruler stated as the airplane approached the south end of the runway, the plane made an abrupt left hand ascending turn, then appeared to quickly fall from the air. Richard DeBruler advised he did not observe the falling aircraft, but heard a loud sound which he believed was the fallen aircraft. Richard DeBruler immediately entered his residence and notified Sue DeBruler of the incident and directed her to call "911" and report the incident. Richard DeBruler advised he immediately responded to the scene of the fallen aircraft and discovered the pilot, Smoak, and the passenger, Maehr, were deceased. Highlands County Emergency Medical Services responded and confirmed the death of Smoak and Maehr on scene. The aircraft is a yellow colored 1989 Piper Cub single engine, single fixed wing, fixed landing gear aircraft bearing Florida aviation registration #N988PC. The aircraft was observed with the propeller of the airplane in the ground located just east of the runway. Apparent damage from the impact was observed to the landing gear and nose of the aircraft. The body of the airplane appeared twisted in a counter clockwise direction near the tail of the aircraft. The nose of the aircraft appeared crushed to the area near the windshield of the airplane.

impact.

A crime scene log was maintained until 3:40 PM on this date. The second half of the crime scene log was maintained by Sgt. Hood from 3:40 PM until completion. The crime scene that I maintained was turned into central records.

This case is open/pending

6/20/2008 23:11 INVESTIGATIVE DAVIDSON, JAMIE D 2395 JDAVIDSON 6/21/2008 13:41

Friday, June 20, 2008

At approximately 1145 hours the listed witness identified as Sue DeBruler stated she is personally familiar with and identified the pilot as Mason Gabelein Smoak. Sue DeBruler is the office manager of the Placid Lake Airport located at 100 Airport Road in Lake Placid, Highlands County, Florida. Sue DeBruler advised she observed Smoak outside of his airplane hanger awaiting the arrival of a passenger who was later identified as David S. Maehr. Sue DeBruler stated she estimated Smoak and the passenger were airborne for for approximately thirty minutes before her husband, Richard DeBruler advised her of the airplane accident. Richard DeBruler stated he was mowing the lawn of their residence which is parallel to the Placid Lakes Airport runway identified as N18/S36. Richard DeBruler advised he is also familiar with Smoak and recognized his airplane flying southbound over runway N18/S36 at a height of approximately one hundred feet as if completing a landing approach as he was seated on the rear porch of their residence. Richard DeBruler stated he observed the airplane continue flying southbound over the runway at an estimated seventy-five to one hundred feet. Richard DeBruler stated the airplane did not appear to attempt to land, nor completed a "touch and go" landing. Richard DeBruler stated as the airplane approached the south end of the runway, the plane made an abrupt left hand ascending turn, then appear to quickly fall from the air. Richard DeBruler advised he did not observe the falling aircraft, but heard a loud sound which he believed was the fallen aircraft. Richard DeBruler immediately entered his residence and notified Sue DeBruler of the incident and directed her to call "911" and report the incident. Richard DeBruler advised he immediately responded to the scene of the fallen aircraft and discovered the pilot, Smoak, and the passenger, Maehr, were deceased. Highlands County Emergency Medical Services responded and confirmed the death of Smoak and Maehr on scene. The aircraft is a yellow colored 1989 Piper Cub single engine, single fixed wing, fixed landing gear aircraft bearing Florida aviation registration #N988PC. The aircraft was observed with the propeller of the airplane in the ground located just east of the runway. Apparent damage from the impact was observed to the landing gear and nose of the aircraft. The body of the airplane appeared twisted in a counter clockwise direction near the tail of the aircraft. The nose of the aircraft appeared crushed to the area near the windshield of the airplane.



=====
Contact was made with the Highlands County EOC for the weather report at the estimated time of the crash which was faxed to the Highlands County Sheriff's Office and marked for Detective Tyson's attention. Detective Tyson was advised of this arrangement. I spoke to Erin Gercken, Emergency Management Receptionist to obtain this information. I had no further involvement.

6/25/2008 09:43

SUPPLEMENT

ANDREWS, STACY L

2064

SANDREWS

7/30/2008

14:44

On 06/20/2008 at approximately 13:00, I arrived at the scene of an airplane crash, with two fatalities. The crash occurred at the Placid Lakes Airport in Lake Placid. The runway runs North to South with the office, hangers and fuel station located at the north end. Numerous Law Enforcement and Fire/Rescue personnel were present prior to my arrival. The pilot was Mason Smoak (W/M in 30's) and the passenger was David Maehr (W/M in 50's).

The airplane is yellow in color with a single top wing and fixed landing gear. It is marked in black lettering "N988PC" on the body leading back to the tail. The plane appears to be intact with the exception of what appear to be 2 fuel tank caps and windshield fragments. These items are located on the ground approximately 5-10ft SE of the plane. The nose of the plane appears to have been driven straight into the ground. The tail of the plane is still in the air, almost at a 90 degree angle to the ground. The section between the passenger compartment and tail is slightly twisted. A blue tarp was covering the passenger compartment.

The planes location is a grassy strip of land between the east side of the runway and the west edge of Seneca Drive NW. A measurement (approx 938ft) was taken (north) from the south edge of the runway. A measurement (approx 133ft) was taken from the east edge of the runway (eastward) to the plane. A measurement (approx 62ft) was taken from the west edge of Seneca Dr (westward) to the plane. No slide or bounce marks were discovered in the vicinity of the plane. If the tail of the plane was pulled to the ground, the plane would be pointing SE. Numerous digital images were taken of the scene, prior to the body recovery.

the plane was stabilized by placing a large strap through the rear of the passenger compartment and attaching it to the boom arm of a large tow truck (Rodney's Towing). All portions of the plane disturbed by Fire/Rescue personnel, while removing the bodies, were painted orange in color, prior to each cut. A portion of the left side, passenger compartment (fabric/sheet metal) was cut away. A switch panel was exposed. The two switches appear to be magneto switches. Both were in the on position.

width of the wings. The indentation depth was measured and found to be 2 inches deep. The indentation of the wings in the ground were photographed. A dark blue baseball hat was observed near the front of the aircraft, near the windshield area. The dark blue baseball hat was photographed in place then collected for evidence. A cell phone was located near the front body portion of the plane. The cell phone was photographed in place then collected for evidence. The body of the plane was removed from the ground and placed on a flatbed tow truck, to be transported to a secured hanger. I observed a very large crater in the ground where the nose of the airplane impacted with the ground. The hole was measured and found to be 1 foot, 10 inches by 2 feet across and 1 foot, 4 inches in depth. The aircraft was transported to hanger # 17 and secured. The aircraft was re-photographed as it was placed into the hanger. The hanger door was locked then sealed with evidence tape. The sealed door was then photographed.

Items I collected from scene: (1) - 1 dark blue baseball hat

(2) - 1 "Nikon D300" digital camera, 1 camera lens

(3) - Various aircraft logs and journals

(4) - Various aircraft journals and maps

(5) - 1 black and yellow flashlight-found behind passenger

victim

(6) - 1 "Compact Flash" camera card from Nikon D300 digital

camera

(7) - 1 CD w/digital images of scene

I swear the above report is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature _____ ID# _____

Sworn and subscribed in my presence, before me the undersigned authority on this
date _____ 20 _____.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

ID# _____

7/30/2008 15:06 SUPPLEMENT TYSON, ALFREDRICK TYRONE 2159 ATYSON 9/2/2008 14:52

At approximately 1215 hours, Sergeant Darin Hood, Detective Anthony McGann, and I (Detective Tyrone Tyson), of the Criminal Investigations Unit responded to 100 Airport Rd., Lake Placid, Florida 33852 in reference to a reported plane crash. While en route to the crash location, we monitored radio traffic transmitted by the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Central Communications Center (dispatch). The radio communications indicated there were two people inside the aircraft and at least one of the occupants appeared to be deceased. Sergeant Hood assigned me as the lead detective and we proceeded to the crash site.

At approximately 1232 hours, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Central Communications Center contacted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and informed them of the plane crash.

At approximately 1234 hours, Detective McGann, Sergeant Hood, and I arrived at the crash site. Detective McGann photo documented the crime scene in its initial state while Sergeant Hood arranged for crime scene tape to be erected. I observed Richard Debruler at the crime scene. Debruler identified himself as the airport manager and said he observed the plane going down at which time he instructed his wife to call 911 while he responded to the crash site. Debruler said he located the downed aircraft and observed there were two occupants inside the aircraft. Debruler said he checked the occupants and couldn't locate a pulse. Debruler said the aircraft belonged to Mason Smoak and he suspected Smoak was the pilot. I located Mrs. Susan Debruler near the crash site. I advised Mr. and Mrs. Debruler I would like to conduct an interview with them in reference to anything they may have witnessed leading up to the plane crash. The Debrulers said they would remain at their residence located at [REDACTED] Lake Placed, FL until a detective came to speak with them. Detective Jamie Davidson responded to the Debruler's residence to conduct the initial sworn interviews with them. The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. The recording device was later downloaded onto a compact disc and placed into evidence at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. The following is a synopsis of the interview Detective Davidson conducted with Richard Debruler:

Debruler had just come inside his residence after cutting grass and was sitting on his back porch which faces the runway of the airport. Debruler observed the aircraft approaching the runway from the north traveling in a southern direction. The aircraft didn't land as Debruler expected, but rather flew the length of the runway at an altitude of approximately 75 to 100 feet. As the aircraft approached the southern end of the runway it took a "drastic left bank coming over" and Debruler observed the plane going down. Debruler lost sight of the aircraft, due to its positioning behind some trees located at the southern end of the runway. Upon losing site of the aircraft, Richard heard a "thud" that he associated with an aircraft crash. Richard yelled to his wife, Susan Debruler, who was located in the office area of the residence and instructed her to call 911, because he thought an airplane just crashed. Richard said he instructed Susan to bring the fire extinguisher when she responded to the crash site. Refer to the transcript of the interview with Debruler for complete details of the entire interview.

The following is a synopsis of the interview Detective Davidson conducted with Susan Debruler:

Susan said she observed Mason Smoak waiting near the plane about a half hour before Richard called and told her the plane had gone down. Susan said she didn't see Smoak conducting any per-flight inspections or leave the airport, because she was busy conducting airport business. Susan said after calling 911 she responded to the crash site with the fire extinguishers. Susan said she realized Smoak was one of the occupants of the plane upon arriving at the crash site, because when she saw Smoak earlier he was wearing a blue shirt. Susan said she didn't witness the aircraft crash. Refer to the transcript of the interview with

=====

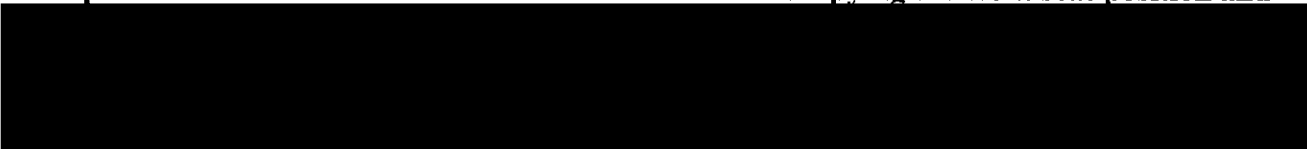
Susan for complete details of the interview.

CRASH SITE:

The crash site was located at the southern end of the airport's single runway in an open grass area located between the runway and Seneca Avenue (Latitude N27 degrees, 14.437', Longitude W81 degrees, 24.769'). Members of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office, Highlands County Emergency Medical Service and the Placid Lakes Fire Department were on scene. Paramedic Kerry Harris and EMT James Morgan examined the occupants of the wreckage. Harris pronounced both occupants deceased based on his medical examination and the mechanism of death.

ON-SCENE INVESTIGATION:

The aircraft was identified as a yellow 1989 Pipe Cub, single-engine, fixed-wing aircraft bearing Aviation Registration/Tail #N988PC. The nose of the aircraft was completely crushed and impacted into the ground causing the tail of the aircraft to stick straight up into the air. The tail of the aircraft was slightly canted in a southeastern direction. The front nose area of the aircraft was completely crushed up to the point the aircraft was resting on both wings. Detective Davidson cut the seatbelts off the pilot and passenger to gain access to their wallets. Both occupants were positively identified from their driver licenses found in their possession. The pilot was identified as Mason Smoak. Smoak was occupying the front seat position and



Crime Scene Detective Stacy Andrews and Crime Scene Technician Katherine Perez responded to the crash site to process the crime scene. Crime Scene Detective Andrews and Crime Scene Technician Perez photographed and processed the crime scene collecting any and all evidence. Crime Scene Technician Perez took possession of a Nikon camera found around Smoak's neck. The memory card from the camera was later removed and the images were downloaded onto a compact disc. The images on the camera from the memory card depicted in-flight photographs taken just prior to the crash according to the time/date stamp on the photographs. Crime Scene Detective Andrews and Crime Scene Technician Perez obtained the above listed GPS coordinates to document the exact location of the crash site. Refer to Crime Scene Detective Andrews diagram of the crash site for complete details. CSD Andrews and CST Perez photographed emergency workers as they extracted Smoak and Maehr from the aircraft. The emergency workers marked each area of the aircraft with orange paint prior to making necessary alterations to the aircraft for the extraction process. Refer to Crime Scene Detective Andrews and Crime Scene Technician Perez' reports for complete details of items they processed, photographed, and collected from the crime scene. **Note: Prior to any extrication efforts, Rodney's Towing was contacted and requested to respond to the crime scene. Rodney's Towing Company utilized their large commercial tow truck to stabilize the aircraft for safety purposes.

Upon arrival at the crime scene, I notated the current weather conditions as being clear with no rain, and sunny. Clouds were forming on the horizon. Detective Gunthorp made contact with the Emergency Operations Center and requested a weather report documenting the weather conditions in the area at the time of the plane crash.

At approximately 1245 hours, I made contact with Ken Ziegfield at FAA's Regional Command Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Ziegfield said FAA will have personnel responding to the crash site. Ziegfield placed me on a conference call with Bill Edwards of FAA Flight Standards (Orlando, Florida) and Tim Monville of NTSB (Miami, Florida). I provided Edwards and Monville with all known information about the plane crash.

At approximately 1343 hours, Monville authorized the removal of the bodies from the wreckage. Monville said NTSB would not be responding to the crash site, but FAA inspectors would be responding to the crash site.

At approximately 1347 hours, Bill Edwards contacted me via cell phone and informed me FAA Inspector Marco Grillo would be responding to the crash site to conduct the follow-up investigation for FAA.

At approximately 1514 hours, I was contacted by Crystal McGann from the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Central Communications Center. McGann stated Officer Rick Little of the Sebring Police Department reported he received information of a low-flying aircraft in the Sebring area. I made contact with Detective Burch and requested he make contact with Officer Little to obtain the name of the witness calling to report the low-flying aircraft. Detective Burch made contact with Officer Little and obtained contact information for the witness identified as Jim Dow. Detective Burch followed up on the information provided by Officer Little by contacting Dow and arranging to conduct a sworn interview with him. Detective Burch recorded the sworn interview with Dow using a digital recording device. The interview was later downloaded onto a compact disc and submitted to evidence at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. The following is a synopsis of the interview Detective Burch conducted with Dow:

Dow and his daughter Trina Dow were at the intersection of Kenilworth Blvd. and S.R. 17 at approximately 1145 hours, when they observed a bright yellow "low wing" airplane flying in a southern direction. The airplane flew under the power lines on the south side of the road and pulled up to fly over the power lines on the north side of the road. Dow estimated the airplane was traveling at an altitude of approximately 50 Ft. when flying under the power lines. Dow observed the aircraft again at the intersection of Desoto Rd. and Peters Road. Dow observed the airplane made a sharp bank and travel in a western direction towards Lake Jackson. Dow didn't suspect the airplane was having any mechanical problems.

At approximately 1535 hours, I made contact with the answering service for the District 10 Medical Examiner's Office and spoke with Linda. I reported the airplane crash related deaths of Smoak and Maehr. Linda took the report and indicated the information would be forwarded to the Medical Examiner's Office.

At approximately 1620 hours, Detective Burch contacted me via Nextel and briefed me on the information he obtained from Jim Dow. Detective Burch said Dow indicated his daughter Trina Dow resides in Lake Placid, Florida.

I made contact with Detective Dewayne Proctor and requested he make contact with Trina Dow and obtain a sworn taped statement from her. The interview was recorded with a digital recording device. The interview was later downloaded onto a compact disc and placed in evidence at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Detective Proctor made contact with Dow at the outer perimeter of the crime scene. The following is a synopsis of the interview with Tina Dow:

Dow was in the area of Kenilworth Blvd. with her father when they observed a small yellow airplane flying in the area. Dow observed the airplane was flying dangerously close to power lines. The airplanes actions caused Dow to brake, due to her fear of the airplane striking her moving vehicle. Dow said the airplane flew back and forth across Kenilworth

Blvd. in Sebring, Highlands County Florida at times flying a figure eight type pattern. Dow was unable to positively identify Smoak's plane as the same airplane she observed flying erratically earlier during the day. (It's possible this aforementioned plane was spraying a grove in the area, due to the flying pattern described.)

At approximately 1835 hours, I returned a phone call to Dr. Gary Ginn at phone [REDACTED] at the request of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Central Communications Center. Dr. Ginn said one of Maehr's graduate students from the University of Kentucky spoke with him about the "pilot's" (Smoak's) flying habits. Dr. Ginn stated the graduate student indicated Smoak liked to take the aircraft up and put it into a fall prior to pulling out. According to Dr. Ginn, the graduate student considered Smoak as a "hotdog".

At approximately 2143 hours, at the completion of the on-scene investigation by FAA and the Highlands County Sheriff's Office, the wreckage was transported to Hanger #17 for storage, at the request of Inspector Grillo. The hanger was secured with a Masterlock obtained by the Highlands County Office and sealed with evidence tape by Crime Scene Technician Katherine Perez.

At approximately 2330 hours, I made contact with Smoak's sister-in-law, Laurie Plank Howerton at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Substation located in Lake Placid, FL. I provided Howerton with Smoak's personal property for its return to the family. Refer to the property receipt for a complete listing of the items turned over to Howerton.

SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 2008:

At approximately 0900 hours, I received a call from the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Central Communications Center requesting I make contact with Dr. Gary Ginn (Lexington County Coroner). Dr. Ginn identified the graduate student he previously spoke with me about as Joe Guthrie. Dr. Ginn said Guthrie had been to Florida with Dr. Maehr while working on the Bear Project. Dr. Ginn said Guthrie had information about the flying habits of the pilot Dr. Maehr was working with on the bear project. Dr. Ginn said he would contact Guthrie and request he call me or tell Guthrie to expect a call from me. Dr. Ginn provided me with phone [REDACTED] as a contact phone number for Guthrie.

At approximately 0931 hours, I received a call from Mrs. Diane Maehr who was inquiring about her husband's personal property. Mrs. Maehr stated she spoke with Sergeant Hood prior to me returning her phone call and he answered several of her questions.

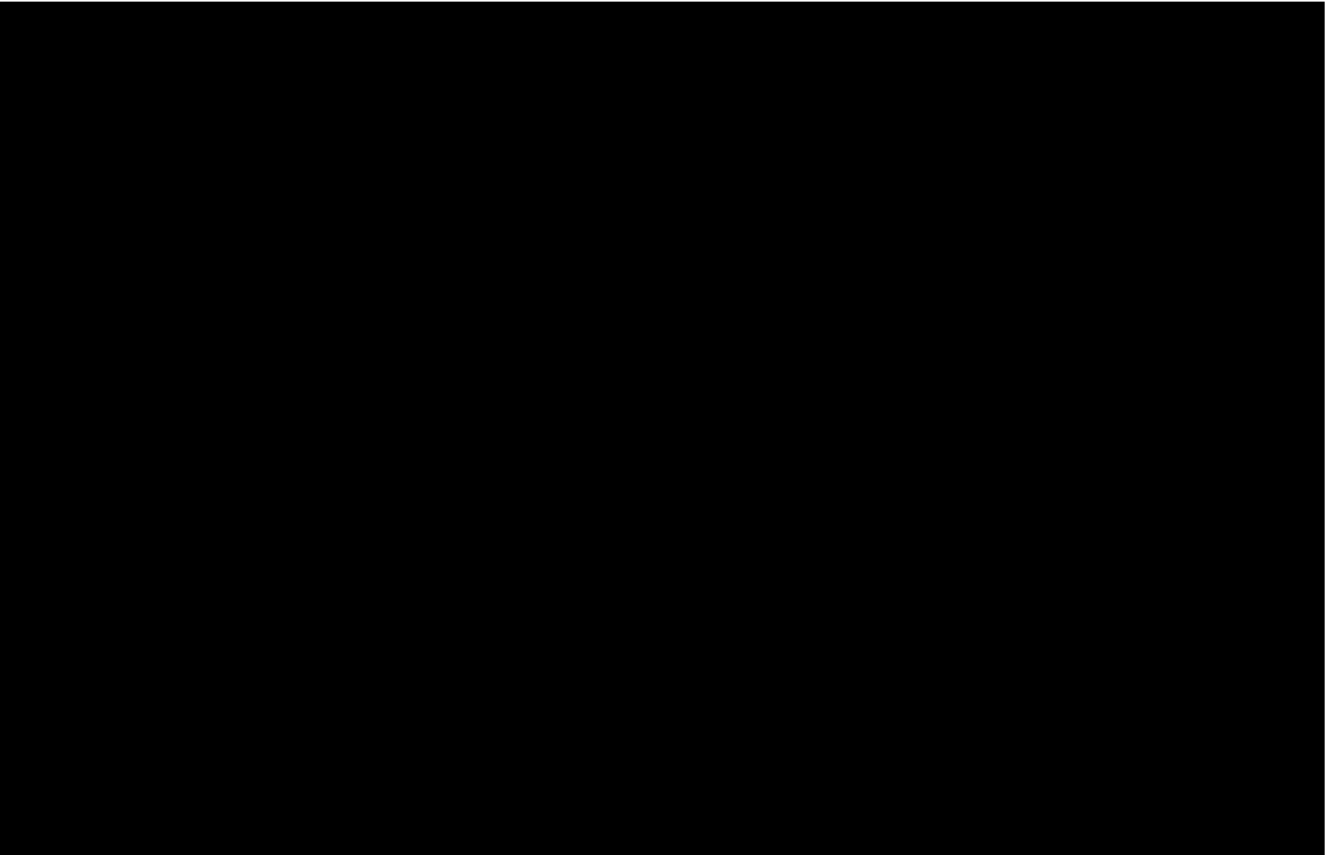
At approximately 1354 hours, I called Matthew Roberts after receiving a page from dispatch indicating Roberts had information about the plane crash. I called Roberts using the phone number provided by dispatch, [REDACTED]. Upon making contact with Roberts, he described events he witnessed on the date of the plane crash. Roberts said he was on Lake June in a boat with his family when they observed a yellow airplane flying close to the water. Roberts said the plane appeared to be out of control and was going in circles.

I made contact with Roberts' mother, Carolyn Roberts, and spoke with her about the events she witnessed on the date in question. Mrs. Roberts said when they observed the airplane it was traveling south towards Highway 27. Roberts said the plane "buzzed" their boat. Roberts said when the plane turned, it started sputtering. Roberts said it appeared as though the airplane was having mechanical problems. I arranged to make contact with Mrs.

=====

Roberts at a later date to speak with her family about the incident.

At approximately 1730 hours, I made contact with Sue Debruler by phone. I asked Mrs. Debruler about information she provided to Detective Davidson referring to the Pahokee Airport possibly having radio transmissions of any in-flight radio transmissions Smoak may have made prior to the plane crash. Mrs. Debruler said she has overheard several radio transmissions from Pahokee Airport while they were conducting parachute jumps. Mrs. Debruler said this occurred due to their transmissions bleeding over on her frequency at the Lake Placid Airport. Based on this, Mrs. Debruler suggested it may be possible someone monitoring the radio transmissions at the Pahokee Airport might have overheard any transmissions made by Mason Smoak.



MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2008:

At approximately 0849 hours, I made contact with Michael Patterson via cell phone [REDACTED] in response to a page received from dispatch on June 22, 2008 indicating Patterson had information about the plane crash investigation. Patterson said on the date of the plane crash he was working on a residence under construction on the very back side of Lake June. Patterson said he was standing on the roof of the two story residence painting with Mike Davis, cell [REDACTED], and Bill (unknown last name) when he observed a yellow airplane flying so low it appeared to be skimming the lake. Patterson said he called Bill and Mike to come up and look at the airplane. Patterson said when the airplane circled the roof top where he was standing he could see two guys inside the airplane and it appeared the pilot waived at him. Patterson said when he first saw the airplane it was level with or slightly lower than his position on the roof top. Patterson said it appeared the airplane was playing around and not

=====

experiencing any mechanical problems. Patterson said the airplane had been flying very slow, but it picked up speed after skimming the water. Patterson said he later heard about an airplane crash and looked up the incident on the internet. Patterson said he identified the crashed airplane pictured in the media as the same aircraft he observed during the previously described incident.

At approximately 0918 hours, Hilary Swain from Archbold Biological Station faxed a copy of email correspondence between her and Kevin Main to the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Main indicated he was on Lake Annie with Keith Menges when they observed Smoak's airplane flying low, but not abnormally low, in a southern direction. Main said they waived at Smoak and Maehr and the airplane came down and circled their (Main and Menges) boat. The airplane got fairly low coming just above them when it pulled up and headed back north. Refer to the copy of Main and Swain's email for complete details.

At approximately 1204 hours, I received a call from Mrs. Maehr stating she was traveling to Florida to obtain Maehr's personal property. Mrs. Maehr identified the Nikon camera and the Nokia cellular phone found in the wreckage as Maehr's personal property.

At approximately 1300 hours, Detective Robert Burch and I made contact with members of the Roberts' family at [REDACTED] Lake Placid, FL 33852 which is their vacation home. The entire Roberts' family, John (father), Carolyn (mother), Marni (Daughter), and Matthew (son) were boating on Lake Jackson on the date of the airplane crash.

The interviews conducted with the Robert's family were recorded using a digital recording device. The interviews were later downloaded onto a compact disc and placed in evidence at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Detective Burch conducted a sworn interview with Marni Roberts. The following is a synopsis of the sworn interview with Marni:

The plane was flying very, low close to the lake, and was flying around in circles skimming "us". It appeared the plane was having problems and appeared to be stalling, due to the way the airplane was flying. The airplanes engine never stopped running. It appeared the airplane was trying to land on the water prior to leaving the area. The airplane was observed at approximately 1200 or 1300 hours.

Detective Burch conducted a sworn interview with Matthew Roberts. The following is a synopsis of the interview with Roberts:

Matthew was boating on Lake June with his family on the date of the airplane crash. Matthew observed a very loud yellow airplane flying in a circle. The airplane then dove down towards the water and appeared to be out of control. The plane pulled up and departed the area. Matthew and his family observed the plane at about 1130 or 1145 hours. Matthew estimated the plane came within 20 feet of the water.

I conducted a sworn interview with Carolyn Roberts at approximately 1323 hours. The following is a synopsis of the interview with Mrs. Roberts:

On Friday morning (06/20/2008) the Roberts' family launched their boat from the Lake June Public boat ramp when they observed a yellow airplane flying very low nearly buzzing the family's boat. It appeared the plane might have been attempting to land on the water. The plane was very loud when it flew from the south and continued in a northern direction. The airplane was flying slowly when it was low to the water. As the plane flew, it was wavering a little and turned slight as it left the area. Mrs. Roberts said the aircraft appeared to be having mechanical problems based on the way it was flying. Refer to the transcript of the interviews for complete details.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2008:

At approximately 1055 hours, I conducted a sworn interview with Michael Duran Patterson at [REDACTED] Sebring, Highlands County, FL. The interview was recorded using a digital recorder. The interview was later downloaded onto a compact disc and placed in evidence at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. The following is a synopsis of the interview with Patterson:

On Friday, June 20, 2008 Patterson was working on a roof top of a residence in Lake June Pointe in Lake Placid, FL 33852 when he observed a small yellow plane with round shaped tail fins flying over Lake June a little erratically. The plane was flying low over the nearby tree and roof tops prior to dipping down and flying low over and nearly skimming the water. The plane circled the residence where Patterson was located prior to diving back down towards the lake. The plane flew low to the water and then increased its speed as it began gaining altitude. When the aircraft circled the house where Patterson was working with Mike Davis and another co-worker named George, they were able to see two subjects inside the plane. At this time the plane was flying at an altitude level with or just lower than Patterson's height on the rooftop. Refer to the transcript of the interview with Patterson for complete details.

At approximately 1448 hours, I sent a request to Heather Carr (Dispatch Supervisor) to obtain copies of all the related 911 calls and Highlands County Sheriff's Office communication logs. Carr made a copy of the 911 calls and placed it in evidence at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. I later obtained a copy of the 911 calls for my case file.

At approximately 1527 hours, I made contact with an operator at the Federal Aviation Administration office in Tampa, FL and obtained their agencies case numbers. The operator said the case number for NTSB and FAA is the same case number #NYC08LA221.

THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2008:

At approximately 1015 hours, I made contact with Detective Gunthorp (HCSO), Inspector Marco Grillo and Inspector Hector Diaz (FAA), and Ron Maynard (Investigator for Piper Air Safety) at the Lake Placid Airport (Hanger #17). While Maynard and Grillo conducted the airplane inspection, Diaz and I met with Highlands County Sheriff's Office Evidence Supervisor Sergeant James Casey at the intersection of Lake June Rd. and U.S. Highway 27 in Lake Placid, FL. Sergeant Casey provided Inspector Diaz with various aircraft logs and journals obtained from the crash site. Inspector Diaz signed the property receipts accepting the documents on behalf of his agency and NTSB.

Inspector Diaz and I returned to the Lake Placid Airport where Diaz assisted Grillo and Maynard with the inspection of the aircraft. Inspector Grillo said they discovered the aircraft had been highly modified to increase its ability to fly at slower speeds. [REDACTED]

At approximately 1200 hours, Inspector Grillo and I made contact with the Debrulers at their residence located at [REDACTED] Lake Placid, FL. I used a digital recorder to record the entire interview with the Debrulers. The audio recording was later downloaded onto a compact disc and placed into evidence at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. The following is a synopsis of statements made by Richard Debruler:

The runway at the airport is one mile long and his residence is located at about the ¾ mile point of the runway. Richard said Smoak had been flying for approximately 30 or 40 minutes. Richard was sitting on the front porch when he observed Smoak's plane approach from the north traveling south along the runway approximately 40 to 50 feet off the ground

=====

(just above the airport hangers). Smoak's plane continued flying the length of the runway until he approached the south end of the runway when the plane made a rounded left turn. Richard Debruler indicated the plane appeared to be conducting what he later learned to be a tear drop maneuver. Richard Debruler said he heard the plane's engine rev up as it began to make the maneuver. Richard Debruler indicated the airplane wings were vertical with the ground (left wing down and right wing up) when the plane left his field of vision due to the plane being concealed by tree tops located at the southern end of the runway. Richard Debruler said he expected to see the plane level out and land. Instead of seeing the airplane emerge from behind the trees Richard heard a loud "thud". Richard Debruler said he associated the "thud" with an airplane crash and yelled for his wife, Susan Debruler, to call 911 while he rushed to the accident scene. When Richard Debruler arrived at the southern end of the runway he observed the downed aircraft. Richard Debruler said he was unable to locate a pulse for Smoak or Maehr.

John Marrs arrived at the Debruler's residence during the interview. Susan Debruler said Smoak called her at approximately 1115 hours and told her the handle of the fuel nozzle had broken. Susan said it was common for Smoak to have problems when refueling at the airport. Susan Debruler said after Marrs brought the new fuel nozzle she tested the repaired handle at approximately 1129 hours. Susan Debruler provided me with Smoak's fuel receipts for the fuel he purchased on the date of crash. Susan indicated the times on the fuel receipts are off by two hours. Susan Debruler said the true times on the fuel receipts should be: 10:48 A.M., 10:50 A.M., and 10:52 A.M.

Marrs said Susan Debruler called him and asked if he still had the old fuel nozzle. Marrs said Susan Debruler told him she needed the old nozzle to replace the newer nozzle that was broken when Smoak fueled up.

Inspector Grillo and I departed the Debruler's residence and returned to the crash site. I noticed the grass in the immediate area where the airplane fuel tanks had been located was discolored.

At approximately 1315 hours, Sheriff Benton requested I call Hilary Swain. I made contact with Swain at approximately 1320 hours. Swain requested to know if a black VHF receiver with an antenna and black tool box used for the bear tracking research was located in the crash. I located a Telonics TR-5 receiver and the black tool box in question among the debris located at the crash site. I confirmed the items were present for Swain. I advised Swain that Inspector Grillo said everything at the crash site would be maintained by FFA and NTSB until the investigation was concluded.

FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2008:

At approximately 1102 hours, I received a phone call from Air Safety Inspector Mike Huhn (NTSB). Huhn identified himself as the investigator in charge for NTSB. Huhn requested a copy of all interviews conducted as part of the investigation. Huhn requested the original memory card obtained from Maehr's camera. Huhn requested a copy of all reports be forwarded to FAA upon their completion.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2008:

At approximately 1340 hours, I received a call from Huhn indicating Quality Aircraft Salvage would be contacting me to make arrangements to have the aircraft recovered and moved to a secure compound for further examination.