



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Heidi Kemner
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

April 23, 2020

Subject: ERA20CA155
Who: Lannie Lee – Witness and Friend of Pilot

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Lee stated the following:

- I know him and have flown the airplane several times.
- I was sitting at my house and heard him crank up the airplane. He lives next door to me.
- Then he had his plane canopy pulled back with towel over his seat. It was just him going flying.
- He warmed it up and did a 360-degree turn testing brakes and all. And then he started down the street toward the runway.
- The engine sounded fine.
- I've heard that engine many times.
- From my back deck I can see runway 31.
- I can see when an airplane gets onto the runway.
- He did the checking of the instruments and was getting everything set.
- He's a meticulous person.
- I listened to the engine and it sounded fine.
- Then, he throttled up and took off on runway 31.
- About 30-40 minutes later, I heard him come back. I was still on my back porch with my dog.
- He flew over midfield and had the throttle pulled back.
- Entering left downwind for runway 13.
- Didn't hear anything abnormal with the engine.
- A few mins later, I heard trees popping.
- I hoped that was Gary working in the woods doing tree work.
- I sat there and waited for the airplane to taxi out because I would see the airplane there.
- He didn't come taxi out, so I jumped on my motorcycle and got out there to the airplane.
- They pulled him out of the woods.

- I've flown in and out of this airport many times.
- I have a Cessna 172 so I know the runway and the airport.
- Since I've lived here from 1996, the trees have gotten thicker and a lot taller. They are about 100 ft tall now.
- If you get a crosswind with gusts, it'll push you around.
- When I was at the airplane, the flaps were at full flaps. I went into the airplane to help pull out the pilot's things.
- He came in on runway 13, and about 70-75 ft is where I saw the first limb broken
- When you get a crosswind, he just caught one limb with the left wing and it yawed the airplane into the woods.
- The right rudder is slapped on the floor, he stepped on the rudder trying to get it back onto the runway.
- He caught a gust which made him run into a tree off the runway.
- The pilot helped engineer a wing at Gulfstream.
- He had full flaps in during the landing.
- When we were there just after the accident, the wind was gusting from 24 and he was landing 13.
- When it hits the trees it'll be turbulent.
- If he had been further down, to 30 ft off the ground, he wouldn't have had any wind. He was just at that point when the wind is turbulent.
- I've had my Cessna do the same thing, it's just at the wrong time at the wrong altitude. When the airplane hit that one branch, it yawed him just enough to carry him into the woods.
- He's an iceman and I'm a maverick, he's right on the numbers.
- Everything worked out well, the wing was a wet wing so when the wing came off the fuel sprayed out. The airplane didn't catch fire.
- I went into the airplane right after we got him out and I turned the fuel selector off and master switch off.
- Fuel was pouring into the cockpit.
- I told him he was so lucky!
- When he crossed over centerfield, the engine sounded good! He looked good when turned downwind. But when I heard the trees I thought this is not good.
- I got the pilot's personal things out.
- The first tree strike was 50 ft from where the airplane came into the trees.
- The rudder pedal is locked down, the right rudder pedal. He was compensating for the yaw, but he just couldn't compensate for it.
- 70 ft down of a 100 ft tree is where the first damage is on the tree.
- When we pulled him out, he was kinda in shock, he didn't know where he was, he couldn't get his blood pressure.
- He didn't know what happened.
- The guys pulling him out put a towel on his head since he had a cut on his head.
- He said he's through with flying.
- The pilot's had the airplane for 20 years. He's had it refurbished and all. He was meticulous.
- From 50 ft down to the ground, you don't have any wind because of the tall trees blocking it.

- I've lived next door to him for 30 years.
- He probably keeps the maintenance records at his house.
- He used my mechanic, Randy, not too long ago. I think the annual was not too long ago.