



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 24 October 2016
Person Contacted: Mrs. Hensler
NTSB Accident Number: CEN17FA024

Narrative:

I spoke with the widow and daughter of Mr. David Hensler, the pilot of N20078, a Beech C23 airplane, that collided with trees and terrain while departing the Lee C Fine Memorial Airport (AIZ), Lake Ozark, Missouri. Mr. Hensler and his other daughter, Sarah, were fatally injured in the accident.

When asked about when was the last time that she spoke to her husband or daughter, the widow stated that she had last talking to her husband on the Friday about 6pm. They were in Boulder City, NV.

When asked where the two were headed on the day of the accident, she replied that her husband had previously informed her that they were aiming to get past Saint Louis, MO.

When asked why her husband would stop at the Lee C. Fine Airport, they replied for a possible bathroom stop or for lunch. They said that they did not have friends or family in the area and that there was no reason for them to stop at this particular airport.

They stated that a Garmin camera was attached in the windscreen of the airplane. It would likely be forward facing, but he would often pan the camera back at him and any passengers.

When asked how the pilot bought the airplane, they replied that he bought the airplane off Ebay. He was looking for either a Tomahawk (Piper PA-38) or a Beech. He had flown Sierras (Beechcraft Model 24s) about 10 years prior and liked the style of airplane. He wanted an airplane that was easier for him to fit in (they commented that the pilot was a little heavy), and that he wanted to take his son-in-law flying and wanted the extra capacity for weight.

The pilot was introducing his daughter to flying hoping to encourage her to want to fly airplanes. He was excited to demonstrate the airplane's instrumentation to his daughter and wanted her to

learn about how the airplane flew. They reported that the pilot did not let the passenger actually manipulate the controls.

When asked about the pilot's route of flight, they replied that the plan was "flexible." The passenger was recently diagnosed with depression and the pilot hoped to have a relaxing trip with his daughter, so he let her help set their route of flight. Using an online trip site, the passenger gave updates about the trip's progress. In part, she communicated:

On October 19, 2016, the pilot and passenger arrived in Reno, Nevada.

On October 20, 2016, they departed Reno and flew to Half Moon Bay, California, flew near the Golden Gate Bridge, and landed near Boulder City, Nevada.

On October 21, 2016, they departed Boulder City and overflew the Grand Canyon stopping for fuel in Gallup, New Mexico, where the passenger had gotten air sick. They fueled in Gallup and then flew to Tucumcari, New Mexico for the night, where they all fueled the airplane.

On October 22, 2016, they departed Tucumcari, and were planning to get past Saint Louis, Missouri, that night.

No updates on stops were given on the trip site, and at the time of the interview there were no pending charges on the day of the accident for fuel on the family's credit card that the pilot had been using for fuel, food, and lodging expenses.

When asked about the pilot's health, they reported that the pilot was in good health. When asked about the continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine this investigator found in the wreckage, they replied that the pilot used that machine and had no other medical conditions. The widow reported that the pilot had been on blood pressure medications previously, but that his physician had stopped their use.

When asked about the pilot's familiarity with flying, the widow reported that they used to own a small fleet of airplanes and that they rented them to other pilots. After the 2011 attacks, the cost became too great and they had sold their fleet off at a significant financial loss. The pilot had been wanting to spend more time flying, which is what led him to purchase the Beech. Despite the airplane having spent a number of years in Pennsylvania (the family's home state) prior to its transfer to Arizona and Nevada, the pilot had not previously flown the airplane, although he was knowledgeable that the airplane had been based near their home in New Britain, PA.

The widow reported that the pilot was very particular about how things were done. She compared her husband to Felix Unger from the *Odd Couple*. She recalled how closely he followed checklists when flying, and had emphasized the importance of doing the same procedures over and over. She described how he used to tell her that he had to yell "clear" when starting the engine, even if no one was around because it was the safe thing to do. She explained his behavior led him to put together his pilot books, that stored all of his information in an organized manner.

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