



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Eleazar Nepomuceno**  
**Air Safety Investigator**  
**General Aviation Accident Division**

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**Date: 7/25/2018**  
**Person Contacted: William Howie**  
**NTSB Accident Number: GAA18CA437**

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### **Narrative:**

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by the pilot in a written statement on 7/23/2018:

I was returning from a local flight in the training area northwest of the airport and, as R12 was extremely busy, I asked for a different runway. Tower cleared me to runway R3. The wind was 010 @ 4 knots. I set up for final and decided on a wheel landing. The approach was stable through the touch down. I let the plane settle and when the tail came down it started a violent shaking. I tried to stop the shaking by easing the pressure on the tail wheel by pushing the control wheel forward. This had no effect. I then tried adding power, raising the tail and letting it resettle. This had no effect. I then decided that I would ride it out. This was fine until the rudder lost its effectiveness as I slowed down. The plane started drifting to the left. I corrected the drift. The plane then made a sudden pitch to the right, which I was unable to control. The right wheel went off the pavement and the plane slewed counterclockwise. I watched the left-hand wing tip dig into the dirt and the plane came to a stop. I sat for a moment, stunned. I realized I was OK, shut the plane down, shut off the gas and got out of the plane. The fire truck quickly came and shortly after, the tow vehicle from Arlin's Aircraft Service located on the airport.

Before the plane was moved, I was contacted by the NTSB via the fireman's cell phone and gave him a report of what happened. I was then contacted by the FAA and repeated my story. The tug towed the plane to Arlin's and later in the day, returned it to my hanger. I hitched a ride with the fire truck and asked him to stop and let me photograph the skid marks made by my tail wheel. The skid marks were highly visible on the white center line showing the back and forth path of the tail wheel and that I was straight and stable during the landing as the marks continued the white center line for a good distance.

On Monday morning the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I met my FAA contact, Mr. Robert Radtke, at Arlin's FBO. Mr. Radtke wanted to inspect the plane and, at the instruction of the NTSB, wanted to inspect the tail wheel. I certainly wanted to know what happened to the tail wheel and gave my permission. Mr. Arlin Wass, owner of Arlin's FBO, inspected the tail wheel and found that the 3 springs that prevent shimmy were badly damaged and ineffective. Mr. Radtke asked Mr. Wass if the damaged tail wheel could have been the cause of the sudden pitch to the right. Mr. Wass replied "Absolutely."

A footnote. I have owned tail wheel airplanes for many years. Champ, BT13, Citabria and now the 180. I am aware of the need to keep the airplane straight while landing and the use of differential braking when the need arises. What I was not aware of was the loss of directional control when the tail wheel has a pronounced shimmy. I don't know what happened in the split seconds it took to lose directional control. I do know that the right slew was faster than anything I have experienced, and, I believe that the ineffective tail wheel was the major contributor to the ground loop.