



## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

**Stephen Stein**  
**Aviation Accident Investigator**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**  
**Office of Aviation Safety – Western Pacific Region**

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**NTSB Accident Number: WPR20CA142**  
**Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: N363EX; Cubcrafters CCX-2000**  
**Accident Location: Heber City, Utah**  
**Accident Date: May 8, 2020**

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Note: The following interview was documented by the Investigator –In-Charge (IIC), Stephen Stein.

### Interview #1 Summary

#### **Brad Damm**

Rear Seat Occupant and Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Cubcrafters

Interview Date & Time; May 11, 2020 1434 PT

Mr. Damm reported that the accident flight was a sales demonstration conducted by him to a prospective buyer, who was the front seat occupant at the time of the accident. He reported that there was confusion during their preflight discussion during which time he gave Mr. Knotts the opportunity to fly as pilot-in-command of the front seat or he could ride in the rear seat. He remarked that the front seat occupant was a tailwheel endorsed pilot who recently sold his airplane and was looking for another. After a 30 minute cockpit briefing they departed and went around the airport traffic pattern 3 times. During each approach he talked the front seat occupant through the airplane's landing and touchdown speeds. After the pattern work they flew to an area nearby and performed some slow flight and stalls and then returned to their departure airport where they performed a few more touch and goes. In his opinion the communication was not at a level he would normally prefer as they were both wearing masks that forced them to shout. During the final landing, the front seat occupant touched down normally, the airplane did not bounce, but it started to drift to the left. The front seat occupant applied right rudder, but overcorrected and the airplane departed the right side of the runway. Mr. Damm announced that

it was his airplane and tried to correct with left rudder and right aileron, but the airplane was moving too fast and ground looped.

Mr. Damm remarked that his company self-insures its aircraft. Prior to the accident flight he explained to the front seat occupant that he would be the pilot-in-command (PIC) and that Mr. Damm would assist. However, after the accident the front seat occupant informed him that he was not comfortable as PIC.

### Interview #2 Summary

#### **Brad Damm**

Rear Seat Occupant and Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Cubcrafters

Interview Date & Time; June 8, 2020 1424 PT

Mr. Damm was asked what his company's policy is for determining a pilot's qualifications prior to a sales demonstration flight. He reported that it's a verbal conversation about their tailwheel experience. He added that he may not ask this question directly as he may ask "what do you fly and how recently have you been out flying?" Mr. Damm stated that he did not ask prospective buyers to bring logbooks or show proof of a license as the verbal discussion is based on trust and judgment.

After the accident he constructed recommendations with the goal of being more formal about the sales team's expectations for prospective buyers acting as pilot-in-command (PIC) and sitting in the front seat. His goal is to ensure the person best equipped to take responsibility for the safe outcome of the flight is the person in the role of PIC. If the customer is not comfortable as PIC then the expectation would be for a member of his sales team or himself or take the role of PIC.

Mr. Damm recounted that on the day of the accident there could have been better communication. He placed more responsibility on the front seat occupant than he should have because he did not "chase down his level of proficiency and experience."



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Brandon Knotts**  
Front Seat Occupant

Interview Date & Time; May 20, 2020 1400 PT

Mr. Knotts reported that he was a retired military fighter pilot and instructor. According to Mr. Knotts, who was the front set occupant, the rear seat occupant (a sales representative of CubCrafters) and front seat occupant did not communicate well about their respective responsibilities before the flight. On the day of the accident, he showed up at the departure airport for a sales flight an airplane he was considering purchasing. Mr. Knotts stated that he never had an opportunity to talk about his flight proficiency and capabilities nor did they discuss who would be responsible for pilot-in-command (PIC) duties. He further remarked that had this discussion taken place, he would never had assumed the role of PIC as he was unfamiliar with the flight characteristics of the accident airplane. Additionally, he did not have a current flight review at the time.

Prior to the flight, the rear seat occupant told Mr. Knotts that he would have to sit in the front if they were going off-airport or he wanted to get a good “feel” for the airplane. He described the flight as “monkey see, monkey do” where the rear seat occupant recited a command that Mr.

Knotts would follow. Following takeoff they performed about 3 touch and goes and then slow flight maneuvers in an area near the airport before returning. Mr. Knotts reported that he was concerned going into the final landing (the accident) because the airplane “swerved” a little after the prior touchdowns. At the time Mr. Knotts asked the rear seat occupant if he was flying the airplane and he replied that Mr. Knotts was in control. During the last landing, it felt like the rear seat occupant was asking him to land the airplane, while he was still at the flight controls. He further remarked they were fighting each other on the flight controls during the accident landing. Mr. Knotts had difficulty manipulating the rudder pedals after touchdown.

After the accident, the rear seat occupant told Mr. Knotts that he was the PIC and Mr. Knotts asked how he made that determination when he did not know his background.