

Keliher Zoe

From: Max Trescott - [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 05, 2008 9:30 PM
To: Keliher Zoe
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: December 31, 2007 SR22 crash

Zoe,

I see from press reports that you're involved with the investigation of the fatal Cirrus SR22 crash on December 31, 2007. In addition to looking into the physical evidence, I hope you'll also investigate the behavioral aspects. I'm copying William Knecht, as he's an FAA Research Psychologist who works on trying to lower the general aviation accident rate and I thought he might find this interesting.

I met and talked with the deceased pilot, Thom Leveque twice in the past year. The first time was in April, 2007 at San Luis Obispo Airport in conjunction with a Cirrus critical decision making seminar I attended. The Cirrus demo van was on the other side of the field, and Thom was staffing it and giving demo rides. We talked for perhaps 6-8 minutes and I was surprised that he almost seemed to be bragging about landing a SR22 in a very short distance on a road at Mammoth Lakes, CA in preparation for putting the aircraft on static display in the town. When I asked him how he did it, he said something like he'd "flown in at 56 knots just hanging it on the prop." As a Cirrus CSIP instructor, I know the short field landing speed for this plane is 77 knots. First, it seemed odd to me that he would have brought this up in our first ever conversation. Second, the act itself sounded risky.

Later in the day, as I was walking away from the Cirrus trailer, Thom was taxiing a SR22 at very high speed into an area I'd just walked through a moment or two before. While perhaps 100 feet away, he killed the engine, coasted in at high speed, and then did a quick 180° turn and stopped. To me, the incident was showboating and I made a mental note that his behavior was not risk adverse.

A few months later, I heard that he'd performed the same maneuver at the Palo Alto airport resulting in an incident. I've pasted in below a post from www.cirruspilots.org from a first person observer who, coincidentally, is a client of mine. John Ferrell is a local attorney that runs a 100 person law firm in Palo Alto.

Zoe, while at the time I thought that Thom's behavior was risky, I didn't think that it rose to a level where it would ever lead to an accident, much less a fatal one. I think my key takeaway from all of this is that even small, risky attitudes and behaviors can later lead to even riskier behavior and ultimately to accidents.

Sincerely,

Max Trescott, Master CFI, FAA FAASTeam member; aviation author

From www.cirruspilots.org
jferrell
(John Ferrell)
Los Altos Hills, CA United States
✉ [COPA Member](#)
12/31/07 11:30 PM

5/27/2008

Thom sold me my plane this past summer. I am deeply saddened by his death, and my heart breaks for his family and close friends.

That said, if the eye-witness reports are true, then his death will be at significant cost to the reputation of Cirrus Design and to all pilots who fly their planes.

In my demo flight with Thom at KPAO in May, I stood on the ramp and watched him recklessly taxi at high speed, a brand new G3 into the prop of a brand new Diamondstar (the Diamondstar engine required a complete teardown). He then borrowed a pocket knife from a bystander, and after shaving some loose composite off the end of the G3 wing, asked me to hop in for the demo. I declined.

If the reports of this accident turn out to be true, then this is just one more needless Cirrus fatality that will contribute to the stress of our families and passengers.




Fly safe!

-john

John Ferrell Palo Alto CA N518BP (SR22 G3/Turbo) N429BP (C-T182 G1000) com instr sel mel ses

predmond
(Pierre Redmond)
Henderson, NV United States

~~COPA Member~~ ~~SR22~~
12/31/07 11:49 AM

  **Re: SR22 Down, 1 Dead**  [re: turbo]

I took a demo flight with Thom last month. If I had to boil down my reaction to this story to one of two responses: A. "I can't believe he did that", or B: "Doesn't greatly surprise me"; I would go with "B".

My deepest condolences to his loved ones.

Post Extras:    