

I have read your preliminary report about the accident at KBKL last December 21. Ever since I heard about the accident last month, I have been thinking about a situation I had at that same airport during a night takeoff in clear VFR weather conditions. I was flying my C182 and after takeoff on a westbound runway, I was expecting a left turn after takeoff towards KHLG. I was assigned a right turn out over the lake. When I made that turn, it was instantaneous IFR conditions. There was a black hole!! No horizon at all. No stars, no lights anywhere. If I had not transitioned to the gauges until completing my turn towards the SE, I would have had severe spatial disorientation. When completing the turn, the lights appeared along the shoreline and everything was OK again.

I am in no way saying that is what happened in this accident, just letting you know what happened to me.

Bob Marshall



John G. Lawton, Ph.D.

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Louisville CO, 80027
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TIM
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Gentlemen:

Jan. 24, 2017

I have just learned about the crash of N614SB at Cleveland's Burke Lakefront airport, KBKL, on Dec 29, 2016.

I encountered a similar situation at the same location 20 to 30 years ago. I can consult my logbooks for more detailed information, but remember that the location, time of day, clearance etc. were comparable. The make and model aircraft should also be available in my logbooks.

While I was able to handle the situation without undue difficulties, I believe that turning away from the lights of Cleveland into the absolute darkness over Lake Erie may result in pilot disorientation at too low an altitude to recover. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
John G. Lawton.

SMEL, Cmcl, Inst, Wright Brothers Master Pilot, apx. 7,000 hrs.