



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Dennis Diaz
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Date: October 23, 2014 at 1240 EDT
Person(s) Interviewed: David Lahman - Witness
NTSB Case Number: ERA15FA023

Narrative:

- Mr. Lahman was friends with the airplane owner/instructor, Mr. Ratty. Mr. Ratty had purchased the airplane around July, and flew it home from South Bend, Indiana. The airplane came with a fresh annual inspection and was generally in good condition. He estimated that Mr. Ratty had accumulated 12 total hours of flight time in the airplane, about 3.5 hours of which were accumulated during the flight from Indiana to North Carolina. Other hours were accumulated during flights to and from the avionics shop in Liberty, NC, and on other local flights. The insurance company required Mr. Ratty to complete 10 takeoffs and landings, in that time as well. Mr. Lahman had also flown with Mr. Ratty in the airplane and during those flights they practiced maneuvers and instrument approaches to KTDF airport.
- On the date of the accident, the purpose of the flight was for Mr. Thomas to receive multi engine training. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Ratty were scheduled to meet at 1000, but Mr. Thomas arrived late at 1010. They then started the airplanes at 1030, and after a 7 to 8 minute runup, taxied to runway 32, and departed about 1040. Mr. Lahman stated that the engines sounded "strong" as the airplane departed, and he watched as the airplane departed straight out to the northwest. The landing gear remained extended until the airplane was about 3 miles from the airport. The departure path also happened to be the on-course heading to KTDF.
- Mr. Ratty and Mr. Thomas planned to be gone for about an hour, after which they would return and go with a group to lunch. The group waited until 1215, and when the flight still had not returned, realized something was wrong.
- The only other airplane Mr. Lahman observed flying that morning was a Flight Design, which departed around 0845.



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Doug Brazy
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Date: October 22, 2014 at 0830 EDT
Person(s) Interviewed: Harold Ellis - Witness
NTSB Case Number: ERA15FA023

Narrative:

On the morning of the accident Mr. Ellis had been moving some lumber when he saw a "double engine airplane" flying nearby. At the time he was located about 3 miles to the southwest of the accident site. Mr. Ellis said the airplane appeared to be "leaning to the right" with the "rear end scooped down, as if it didn't have any power." When asked about any sounds he observed, Mr. Ellis stated that "it sounded like the motor was dying out, as if it were out of gas." He further described the sound as being continuous, and it did not seem to get louder or softer or sound faster or slower over the time he heard it. Mr. Ellis could not recall the precise time of his observation; however he estimated that it was around 11:00 am.



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Date: October 23, 2014 at 1000 EDT
Person(s) Interviewed: Joe Piatt - Witness
NTSB Case Number: ERA15FA023

Narrative:

- Mr. Piatt lives at:
[REDACTED]
Bahama, NC 25703
- Mr. Piatt was barbecuing outside of his home when he heard an airplane flying overhead. The airplane sounded like a slow-moving, single-engine, vintage airplane. He looked up and saw the airplane's right wing through the trees, heading toward him on a heading of about 300 degrees magnetic. The airplane appeared to be of a high wing configuration, and was fabric covered, and he could see the wing ribs through the fabric. The color of the fabric was "dusky rose." The airplane then turned left and shortly thereafter he could not hear the sound of its engine.
- He then heard another airplane, with a louder engine sound and about 10 to 15 seconds later he heard a very loud impact sound, similar to an aluminum baseball bat striking wood. He then went into the woods to see if the airplane he had previously saw had crashed. After searching the woods behind his home, he returned, and called a friend who was a pilot to see if he was flying at the time. That call was placed at 1050, and he estimated that the impact sound occurred at 1030.