

LeBaron Timothy

From: Jack Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 21, 2008 12:08 PM
To: LeBaron Timothy
Subject: Piper Meridian crash in San Antonio

Mr. LeBaron,

My name is Jack Kelly. I am chief pilot for Rush Enterprises, Inc. out of New Braunfels; we operate a Challenger 601-3A/ER. I called you yesterday to relay my story about meeting this gentleman, Mr. Easterling, in Waco on either November 19 or 30, 2007; but I believe it was the 19th as I had trips there both those days. These are the facts as I best remember them.

My co-pilot, William Young and I were in the pilot lounge around mid-morning when Mr. Easterling came in talking sternly on his cell phone. After he hung up, we chatted. He was disgusted with the new airplane he was flying because he had so many continuing problems. He mentioned that it was a single-engine Piper turboprop and he had just told Cutter Aviation here in San Antonio to come get it because he was not going to fly it any more. In other words he had no confidence in the aircraft. He said that day he had EFIS and autopilot problems and that every other week it had been something else. I think he said maintenance had just replaced a tube and he already had it go out. I believe he said he had just flown the airplane back from Florida, but I regret that I am not exactly sure of where he had come from that day. Regardless, I had the impression that he used good ADM, as he said he did not want to fly to San Antonio because the weather was not that great. I remember telling my CP in private what was he worried about, the WX wasn't low IFR but maybe 1500 and 5, or even better. It really was not, as I remember, challenging weather but this man did not have enough confidence in his aircraft to fly from Waco to San Antonio that day. He seemed knowledgeable and reasonable about everything we talked about, but someone who was clearly disturbed by the problems with his new aircraft.

I submit this to you in hopes it will give you some insight into what William and I observed that day, and prevent any future reoccurrences.

I can be reached at [REDACTED] I also gave your e-mail address to William and asked him to send you his observations.

Good luck in your investigation.

Jack Kelly