

From: Fitzpatrick, Keith [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 26, 2017 11:19 AM
To: Brannen John
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Plane Crash Statement / FM980 Huntsville 4-25-17

From: David Warner [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 25, 2017 4:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Fitzpatrick, Keith
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Plane Crash Statement / FM980 Huntsville 4-25-17

Reporting Officer: D. Warner

I am a police officer with Huntsville Police Department and have been commissioned since June of 2000.

On Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at approximately 0737 hrs. I was at my residence located at [REDACTED] Huntsville, TX 77320. It is the residence located on the south east corner of O'Bannon Ranch Rd and FM 980 approximately 3 miles north of Huntsville.

I had just arrived at my residence and was preparing to wash my wife's vehicle outside. While hooking up our pressure washer, I heard an aircraft flying overhead. Low flying private aircraft are somewhat common in the area due to a grass strip less than a half mile to the west of our house and Air National Guard training out of Conroe.

I looked up and saw what appeared to be a dark blue and white twin-engine aircraft flying parallel and just above O'Bannon Ranch Rd. It was flying east to west at about 100 to 150 feet and banking left at about 45 degrees. At first glance it appeared normal. I actually waved as it neared my location. The pilot then dipped the nose briefly as it flew directly overhead. I now believe he was trying to gain airspeed in doing this.

As it continued the turn to a southbound direction almost parallel with FM 980, I noticed the left prop on the plane was not turning, and the aircraft appeared to be losing altitude. I immediately got on my phone and called the non-emergency phone line to contact the Walker County Communication Center as I feared Huntsville Regional Airport might have an aircraft coming in with troubles. I also immediately grabbed my keys to get into my vehicle.

As I opened the door to my car, I heard the one engine running on the aircraft either idle down or shut off completely. It disappeared over a tree line to the south and west of my property on the west side of FM 980. At that time, I knew something was seriously wrong. I got into the car, turned southbound on FM 980 and proceeded in the direction of the aircraft. I was on the phone with the dispatcher when I observed a large plume of black smoke just to the west side of FM980 about ¾ of a mile south of my residence.

I pulled up and opened the gate at 675 FM 980 and proceeded behind the residence and barn on the west side, through another gate and down to the crash site. There was a grass fire to the north and the aircraft appeared to have struck several trees before it ended up upside down in the pond.

There was one other gentleman who pulled up behind me as I was opening gates, and he and I arrived at the scene together. We were both thinking of going into the water right as a small explosion occurred. Fuel was also burning in a small area across the water surface making it

impossible to get to the aircraft.

I remained on scene until after fire crews and law enforcement arrived. I advised Trooper Fitzpatrick, whom I've known for years, of what I had seen leading up to the crash. I checked with Chief Deputy Davis and confirmed that I did not need to "sign out" of a crime scene before leaving.

When the aircraft passed over my residence, I do recall that the flaps appeared to be either fully retracted or at a very low angle. The landing gear was also fully retracted even though I noticed they were down at the crash scene. The right engine did not sound as though it was sputtering or experiencing difficulties until I heard it idle down. I did not see any smoke coming from the aircraft as it passed overhead either.

No Further Information.

If there is anything at all I can do to help, please do not hesitate to call.

David Warner

[REDACTED]
Huntsville, TX 77320

[REDACTED]

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