



Memorandum of Record

Witness Statement

Patrick Murray
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

April 29, 2013

Subject: ERA13FA219 – N85KY, 29 April, 2013.
Name: Mr. Larry Hughes, personal friend

In a personal interview on the day after the accident, Mr. Hughes stated:

-He has about 160 hours of flight experience in gyroplanes

-He performed an uneventful preflight on the accident gyroplane the morning of April 27, 2013. The pre-flight was conducted for the purpose of the witness doing the initial test flight of the gyroplane before the accident pilot took it flying for the first time. The witness stated that he was unable to test fly the gyroplane due to inclement weather at the airport.

-The witness also added that the accident pilot had practiced taxiing it around the airport without the rotor blades attached to get the feel for the differential braking. The witness stated that the accident pilot was due to return to his summer home in the northeastern United States on or about April 30, 2013, and that the accident pilot really wanted to see if fly before he left. The accident pilot had planned to return to X59 in about two weeks to trailer the gyroplane back to the summer home.

-The witness stated that he would not have test flown the gyroplane on the morning of the accident because of the approximate 10 knot winds that were present at the airfield when he arrived at about 0815. The witness stated that the more experience that you have with a gyroplane increases your proficiency of flying in higher winds, and or," if you are learning how to fly gyroplanes, you should be doing so with no wind." A NTSB investigator asked the witness "in his opinion, was the pilot ready to solo?" The witness stated "no."

END _____



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Subject: ERA13FA219 – N85KY, 29 April, 2013.
Name: Mr. Gregory Hish, personal friend

In a personal interview on the day of the accident, Mr. Hish stated:

He is a certified flight instructor who witnessed and videotaped the flight, stated that on the morning of the flight, the pilot ran up the engine and did his preflight checks at the approach end of runway 10. During this procedure; the pilot turned the engine off and then back on again for an unknown reason. The pilot then started a takeoff roll, engaged the rotor head pre-rotator, the gyroplane jerked to the left, and the pilot aborted the takeoff attempt. On taxi back, the pilot told the witness that the pre-rotator system was slipping. The pilot reached the approach end of runway 10, reengaged the pre-rotator and started a second takeoff roll. The witness stated that the takeoff roll was about 1,500 feet in length, and was an unusually long takeoff roll compared to the other gyroplane takeoffs that he had witnessed in the past.

The witness stated the rotor blades slowly accelerated and the pilot lifted off the runway to about 300 to 400 feet above ground level (agl). The witness added that the rotor blades were not "coning" as the pilot lifted off of the runway. The pilot made a left downwind in the local pattern and then flew down runway 10 at about 175 feet agl. The pilot then overflew the aircraft apron where several aircraft were parked and as he approached runway 14, he made a left turn for a right downwind and right base turn for runway 14. After crossing the approach end of runway 14 the gyroplane pitched down about 30 degrees followed by an abrupt 45 degree pitch up attitude. As the gyroplane reached the top of the upward arc, the witness stated that the airspeed decreased to near 0 knots and the gyroplane began a downward descent. The gyroplane assumed a left wing down attitude just prior to impact with the apron on the east side of runway 14.

The same witness also stated that the pilot had most of his flying experience in powered parachutes. The accident pilot had recently purchased the gyroplane about 5 months prior to the accident flight. The accident pilot was receiving instruction in dual seat gyroplanes at an off-site location. About two weeks before the accident, the pilot told friends that he had been "signed off" to solo in his single seat gyro. A NTSB investigator asked the witness "in his opinion, was the pilot ready to solo? The witness stated "no."

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