



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

From: Michael Huhn
Date: July 11, 2008
Subject: Telephone Interview with Mr. John Cox (Colleague of passenger), Regarding Accident Involving Piper PA-18-150, N988PC, June 20, 2008

- The witness was a colleague of the passenger at the University of Kentucky
- The passenger was conducting a bear survey as part of a research program for the University of Kentucky
- The passenger had been conducting the bear survey for approximately four years
- The passenger flew with the accident pilot "a lot"
- The pilot's family owned a large amount of property in Florida that were used as citrus groves, and the bears were known to inhabit the groves
- The pilot frequently volunteered his airplane and piloting services, as well as land vehicles, to assist with the bear survey
- There was no formal business arrangement or contract with the pilot
- The survey flights were typically conducted at approximately 1,000 ft agl
- An organization/FBO named "Lockwood" also conducted some of the survey flights
- The purpose of the survey flights was to physically locate the bears in order to define their territories/habitats
- The bears were outfitted with GPS tracking collars that could be detected from the air
- The witness understood that the accident flight was solely for the purpose of locating a "dropped collar" which had been shed by a survey bear

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Michael Huhn", is written over a solid black rectangular redaction box.

Michael Huhn
Air Safety Investigator



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

From: Michael Huhn
Date: July 11, 2008
Subject: Telephone Interview with Ms. Diane Maehr (Wife of passenger), Regarding Accident Involving Piper PA-18-150, N988PC, June 20, 2008

- The witness was the wife of the passenger
- The passenger was conducting animal surveys as part of a research program for the University of Kentucky
- The passenger was not a pilot, and he had never taken any flying lessons
- The passenger "didn't have the strongest stomach," and he "got sick easily" when flying in airplanes
- The passenger lived in Kentucky with his wife; he was in Florida to conduct his research activity
- The witness did not recall any passenger comments, either positive or negative, about the accident pilot's survey flights, skills or behavior

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Michael Huhn
Air Safety Investigator



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

From: Michael Huhn
Date: May 11, 2009
Subject: Telephone Interview with Mr. David Plank, (Father-in-law of pilot), Regarding Accident Involving Piper PA-18-150, N988PC, June 20, 2008

- Mr. Plank was the father-in-law of the accident pilot the airplane
- He was somewhat familiar with the pilot's flights with the researcher
- He questioned the undersigned as to what equipment was carried by the researcher on the accident flight
- He suggested that the researcher carried a laptop computer and possibly other devices used to track the animals
- He suggested that these items, if on board, would not have been secured in the cockpit, and could have shifted and possibly interfered with the operation of the flight controls
- He was familiar with the pilot's low altitude runway pass and course reversal maneuver
- He stated that the course reversal maneuver was conducted using a "fairly small radius turn"
- He stated that he understood that the pilot performed the maneuver as a means to ensure that the runway was clear of animals and debris
- He stated that he had flown with the pilot in the accident airplane, and that his most recent such flight was approximately 6 months prior to the accident
- He did not have any knowledge of the pilot's use of flaps during the course reversal maneuver
- He did not have any information regarding the current condition/operational status of the flaps on the accident airplane

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Michael Huhn
Air Safety Investigator



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

From: Michael Huhn
Date: May 12, 2009
Subject: Telephone Interview with Mr. Charles 'Mac' Selvidge, (CFI of PIC), Regarding Accident Involving Piper PA-18-150, N988PC, June 20, 2008

- The three individuals on the telephone call included Mr. Selvidge, Mr. Darryl Bloodworth (an attorney), and the undersigned.
- Mr. Selvidge had provided the PIC with his most recent flight review, was a relative of the PIC, and had flown with him on multiple occasions
- When asked about the PIC's non-standard, low-altitude downwind pass and course reversal for landing that other witnesses had reported, he stated that he "had never experienced it with [the PIC while Mr. Selvidge] was in the airplane
- He stated that the airport adjoined pastures and fields, and that the PIC had learned this maneuver from the PIC's father as a means of ensuring that the runway was clear of "critters" and debris
- He stated that most of his experience in the accident airplane with the PIC took place at an unpaved airstrip, and not at the accident airport
- He stated that the PIC was "among the best" of the pilots he was familiar with, and that he was a "meticulous, careful" pilot
- He stated that the PIC always conducted a preflight examination of the airplane, regardless of the time interval since the prior flight
- He reiterated that he never flew the referenced maneuver with the PIC, but he suspected that the PIC flew the downwind segment with the flaps retracted
- He stated that the airplane was well maintained, and that he did not believe that the PIC operated or would operate the airplane with any known deficiencies
- He estimated that the last time he was in the accident airplane was approximately 1 month prior to the accident
- He did not have any information regarding the operational status of the flaps
- In response to a question by the undersigned during this conversation, Mr. Bloodworth contacted the father of the PIC to ascertain whether he had any information concerning the recent condition or operability of the flaps prior to the accident flight. Subsequent to the conversation, Mr. Bloodworth telephoned the undersigned and reported that the father did not have any discussions with the PIC regarding the recent condition of the airplane.

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