

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

May 22, 2020

**Attachment 1 – Accident Pilot’s Recent Training Certificate and
Most Recent Non-Current Flight Instructor Interview**

OPERATIONAL FACTORS

CEN20MA044

Interviewee: Mr. Brian Blessing

Date: December 31, 2019

Location: Via Telephone

Time: 0958 CST

Present on the Telephone: Brian Blessing (Instructor) and Shawn Etcher (NTSB)

During the interview Mr. Blessing stated the following:

He had been flying since 1988 has worked for 4 or 5 different people. Answered a job announcement in 1999 for flying a Cheyenne out of Louisiana. He met the accident pilot when he started work at Global Data and the owner of the company knew the accident pilot for a lot longer than he had. He further classified the owner of the company as similar to a "second father" to the accident pilot. He knew that the pilot went to the army and then worked in the oil fields; however, had not graduated from high school. The owner of the company was also a pilot and had flown for Eastern Airlines and then for some corporations. He moved to Louisiana and began flying for Global in 2000 and worked with the accident pilot while there and additional has given him his recent training events.

He signed off the accident pilot for a private certificate, then the accident pilot went and got his instrument and multiengine ratings through someone else. Mr. Blessing and the owner of the company started a flight management company during his time working for Global Data. The accident pilot was like a crew chief for all of the flights. Mr. Blessing had left the company in 2007 or 2008 for another company.

The accident pilot took over flying the Cheyenne. The pilot and owner would fly to Houston and he would conduct their training the last few years. In 2002 or 2003, they had changed insurance companies and he was authorized to do all of the in-house training on all of the airplanes expect for the citation.

Mr. Blessing and the accident pilot were good friends. He felt that the accident pilot worked really hard to do his best and that he had wanted to impress the owner of the aircraft.

When he conducts training, he follows Flight Safety's program on training. In March, he trained that after takeoff raise the gear and flaps; however no flaps were required on takeoff in the Cheyenne, and then "don't touch a thing" until after the first turn or 400 feet. He has taught that for the past 15 years and the accident pilot knew it well, also.

When he conducted the training on the accident pilot, both the accident pilot and the owner did the training together. They used the manuals and discussed any abnormalities that they had seen in the previous 12 months. Typically, they had observed no "big anomalies" in the past 12-months, just some weird ones.

For the flight portion of the training, they practiced hot start and hung starts. After departure, they would then do a stall series but not to a full stall just to the first indication. They would also practice steep turns at 5,000 feet. They also practiced single-engine go around at 4,000 feet to remind and educate that if they were lucky, they would get 300 feet of climb. He would have the pilot start the maneuver at 5,000 feet and set up an approximate 700 foot per minute descent, similar to that of an instrument landing system (ILS) approach, then around 4,000 feet he would zero-thrust one engine and have the pilot being trained to go-around. Something he has always taught the multiengine propeller pilots was that they may have to maintain level flight to get airspeed to climb. He further stated that he has shown pilots that they

may have to fly straight and level for many miles away from an airport just to get the airspeed to climb and that was what they should do as long as they would not hit something such as powerlines, buildings, etc.

The accident airplane had been installed with 4-bladed propellers and he always taught the pilots to keep 200 to 300 pounds of torque on the engine for landing, and no power off landings. He further stated that the Cheyenne did not have an autofeather system so the pilot would need to feather it quickly, if they had an engine failure, especially at low altitude. Once the airplane was stable and climbing out, he would give the pilot in training both engines back. They would then return to an airport and practice approaches, usually ILS, VOR, etc. Then go through various types of failures. He also would have them, before departure, conduct the standard checks on the ground. The Cheyenne has a stick pulling system and he would have the pilot receiving training test the Stability Augmentation System (SAS) so they would be able to feel the pull of the shaker during slow flight training. He did not conduct any VMC demonstrations.

After they landed, they would discuss anything that needed to be discussed but he stated that the accident pilot never needed retrained. He would also discuss with the pilot receiving training how they could determine airplane's single-engine climb performance at 95 degrees and sea level via the charts.

He did not think that the accident pilot got disoriented if the airplane would have had an engine failure as the accident pilot was always trained not to touch anything until 400 feet.

The accident airplane was sold in the past and the engine had been overhauled. The current owner bought the aircraft back and has owned it since.

Mr. Blessing provided that the accident pilot was "a great pilot" he was "all serious" when it came to flying airplanes.

When asked if he could recall when he provided the training to the accident pilot, he stated that he thought it was March of 2019 when he conducted the accident pilot's most recent training event. He does a signature in the pilot receiving training's logbook and printed out a flight safety syllabus that he can get online to conduct the training. They did CRM and all of the basic items. He always did all the training and checkride events in visual flight rules (VFR). He required pilots during any checkride, on a single-engine go-around at 4,000 feet, to hold the assigned heading to within 5 degrees or they would have to redo the checkride.

They did not do "hood" or simulated instrument work but he could load a pilot up enough so he would not have a chance to look outside. His personal philosophy was that they would do inflight engine shutdowns with 3-bladed propellers, but he did not like doing it in the air with 4-bladed propellers.

When asked about the weather conditions and specifically about instrument experience in and around Lafayette, he stated that around late September they would take pilots up and practice lots of instrument approaches. He knew that beginning in October, when the season would change, they would start encountering "a lot of extreme fog." They would practice conducting approaches down to minimums and felt that because this had been a warm winter, the weather was similar to what they would encounter in October. He felt the pilot had a lot of instrument experience but not sure on the actual amount. He further stated that the accident pilot would have flown a lot along the gulf coast.

When asked if he could recall ever needing to conduct additional training with the accident pilot rather for challenges during checkrides, for insurance reasons or as a requirement for the FAA he stated that he had never had to do any additional training with the pilot.

When asked when he had flown the airplane as part of working for Global Data, he stated that he flew the airplane beginning in April 2000 when Global Data had hired him. He further stated that the accident pilot was hired in March of 2000.

When asked how he felt the airplane's handling characteristics were, he said that the accident airplane flew great and the 4-bladed props gave it more yaw on takeoff. Its instrumentation was the "normal steam gauges" and a Garmin 530. He never experienced any issues with instrumentation. He further stated that the owner was detailed in that he wanted the airplane maintained and wanted all the latest technology in it, as much as was financially feasible.

The airplanes seating configuration was 7 seats total and included club seating with a belt equipped toilet at the door and 2 pilot seats. He would guess that someone would have been in the copilot seat and likely would have been the 15-year-old who loved to fly, as that would have been what he would have done.

The airplane did not necessarily have a predominately aft center of gravity (CG). The SAS system was installed on the airplane, but he restated that it was "not a weird CG airplane." Typically the airplane will provide a 1,000 foot per minute climb at or near maximum takeoff weight. He always taught pilots to never pull the plane off the ground until at or after blue line. He teaches to fly a lot of the time at only half bank except in the pattern.

He further stated that one of the good things about the accident pilot was that he learned from everyone he flew with and he knew that the accident pilot never pushed a flight with weather nor did the owner of the aircraft would ever try and push the pilots they employed to fly in bad weather.

During the training, he conducted with the accident pilot in March, the accident pilot did everything well he hand flew the airplane "a lot." He felt the biggest deficiency for the accident pilot was knowing what he didn't know, as he had only been flying for about 15 years and did not have 10,000 hours of experience. He was a "great stick and rudder guy." The accident airplane had an autopilot, but the accident pilot was not an autopilot pilot as he enjoyed flying the airplane.

When asked if he could recall how much flight time the accident pilot had when he conducted his training in March, he stated that he could not recall the amount of total or instrument flight time the pilot had.

He further provided that one thing he did not like about the 4-bladed propeller was that a pilot needed to feather it quickly during an engine failure, he felt it had "a lot of drag" until it was feathered. He also, when flying at altitude, would train pilots when operating with the 4-bladed propellers was if an engine "spoiled down", they should retard the power off of the good engine also. That would minimize the VMC roll possibility then once they identified the failed engine bring the power up on the good engine slowly. He would inform pilots that they will lose altitude doing that but would be able to maintain control of the airplane if they inadvertently got to slow.

He had never heard of the 15-year-old grandson flying and he did not feel that the accident pilot would have allowed the 15-year-old to fly.

Interview concluded at 1111 CST¹

¹ This Interview Summary was reviewed by Mr. Blessing for accuracy on January 1, 2020.



CERTIFICATE
OF COMPLETION

This Certifies that

Jan Biggs

*Has successfully completed the training
program requirement for recurrent Cheyenne 2*

April 22, 2019

DATE

_____/INSTRUCTOR