



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Michael J. Hodges
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Office of Aviation Safety
National Transportation Safety Board

Date: December 21, 2021

Person Contacted: James Wirt (FAA Will Rogers FSDO, Aviation Safety Inspector - Airworthiness)

NTSB Case Number: CEN22LA066

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by James Wirt to the NTSB investigator-in-charge, via telephone conversation.

- The accident occurred on December 3, 2021; however, the FAA and NTSB were not notified of the accident until December 8, 2021.
- On December 8, 2021, an airplane flying in the local area observed the inverted airplane in tall grass and local law enforcement was notified.
- James traveled to the Tahlequah Municipal Airport (TQH), Tahlequah, Oklahoma, on December 15, 2021, to examine the wreckage of N3372A (Piper PA-22-135 "Tri-Pacer" airplane with a Lycoming O-235 series engine).
- The airplane sat inverted for several days before the FAA arrived at the accident site to examine the airplane.
- The pilot, stationed in the left seat, reported there was an inflight failure of the rudder system, as the left rudder pedal was stuck in the full left position on short final. The pilot reported he made sure the passenger, stationed in the right seat, did not have his feet resting on the rudder pedals.
- The left-wing lift struts, the vertical stabilizer, and the rudder sustained substantial damage from the impact sequence. The nose wheel assembly and lower engine cowling sustained impact damage.
- Flight control continuity was established for the airframe. The left rudder pedal was able to be freely manipulated back and forth by hand, with no feedback, binding, resistance, or sloppiness. No foreign object debris was found lodged in or around the rudder pedals.
- Pre-accident flight control rigging settings could not be determined due to the airframe damage sustained.
- The left- and right-wing fuel tanks were found with the fuel caps attached. The left- and right-wing fuel tanks were intact and showed no signs of being breached or any impact damage. There were no signs of a fuel leak on the airframe.
- The airplane was inverted when James removed the wing fuel tank sumps. There was no fuel found in the left- and right-wing fuel tanks.

- The fuel strainer (gascolator) on the firewall was found breached and about 4 ounces of fuel was found.
 - Outside of the fuel strainer on the firewall, no other signs of fuel were found anywhere.
 - It could not be determined if any fuel leaked out of the wing tanks or if the wing tanks were empty before the accident.
- **** Nothing Follows ****