

June 7, 2022

Cy Mireles

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Danny Cox

FAA/ATLFSDO-11

[REDACTED]

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To Whom it Concerns,

Rob Blevins came to In The Pattern Flight School and Rentals in March-April 2022 looking to get training in a Piper Comanche 250. He wanted to get his High Performance and Complex endorsements and he wanted it in a Comanche 250. He mentioned he needed a certain number of hours in that plane for insurance purposes. I learned he was planning to purchase a Comanche 250 that was turbocharged.

April 8, 2022 – Cancelled 2 hours prior to flight due to high winds in the area.

April 12, 2022 – Cancelled at time of lesson due to MVFR and windy conditions. He asked to see the airplane since he was already at the airport. I spent about an hour covering pre-flight, the POH and we sat in the cockpit for familiarization. The airplane Rob was planning to purchase did not have auto-pilot and had older avionics. We discussed lowering the gear manually if required. I explained that everything happens faster and with more to manage, the workload on the pilot was heavier. I asked how and when he would be getting the airplane he was looking to purchase back to Texas. He explained that he would be hiring a ferry pilot. He was hoping to fly back in his own airplane with the ferry pilot who was also a CFI. He did not have a specific date at the time as the airplane was in annual. When he said he was not planning to fly alone back to Texas, I liked what I heard. This was a good plan in my opinion.

I referred him to “How a Constant Speed Prop Works” by the Bold Method by Colin Cutler on 12/19/2017; the Pilot Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge, FAA-H-8083-25B specific chapters of Aeronautical Decision Making and Aircraft Systems; the Airplane Flying Handbook, FAA-H-8083-8C specific chapters over Transitioning to Complex Airplanes and Emergency Procedures, and the POH for ITP’s Comanche 250. I told Rob to plan for 3-5 flights together.

April 14, 2022 – Flight of 1.2 hours. We covered flight training maneuvers and getting the feel of the airplane including a glide demo, and one landing. On the ground, in addition to pre-flight, we discussed the glide characteristics of the airplane and the faster decent rate when the gear is lowered. I told Rob that an airplane that was turbocharged would be different, and he should be sure to fly with someone with experience with turbocharged airplanes as well.

April 18, 2022 – Flight of 1.7 hours. During this flight, we did slow flight, power on and power off stall recovery, and 5 landings. Rob's abilities in flying the airplane were better during this lesson. On the ground, we discussed emergency procedures and the importance of flying the airplane first and memorizing emergency procedures or flows because there may not be time to find and read a checklist in an emergency. He asked if he could fly to the airport he would be flying from once he purchased his plane.

April 19, 2022 – Flight of 1.6 hours. Rob did well handling the airplane during the flight and he had 5 landings with full stop taxi-backs. We flew to the airport, KGYI, where he would store the airplane, he was planning to purchase. On the ground, I explained to Rob that he was proficient enough to get the endorsement in the airplane we were training in. We discussed additional flights that would keep him proficient. He still did not have a date to get his own plane to Texas. I explained that if he didn't continue to fly, his proficiency would deteriorate over time. He agreed and we made plans to fly again.

April 21, 2022 – Ground 1hour. Topics covered included Aircraft Systems, Instruments and Radios, Constant Speed Prop Operation, Retractable Landing Gear and some items on ForeFlight he had questions about. During this session, I also reiterated to Rob the airplane we were training in was different than the one he was planning to purchase, and he should fly with a CFI in that airplane before flying it alone and especially before carrying passengers. He talked about how he was working with a pilot/CFI to get his airplane back to Texas.

April 23, 2022 -- Rob scheduled a flight for April 28, 2022; however, the weather on the 28th was MVFR and this flight was cancelled.

We had a total of approximately 3 hours of ground instruction and 4.5 hours of flight instruction time as of April 21, 2022. I explained that although Rob had the endorsement, that he needed to stay proficient and fly about once a week if possible.

Millicent Hill
Aviation Accident Investigator
Office of Aviation Safety

Date: May 18, 2022
Subject: ERA22FA223
Contact: Bobby White, CFI

To Whom It May Concern,

This is a statement concerning the events of May 9th and 10th, 2022 with Rob Blevins in N8007P.

I arrived at approximately 0900 on May 9th at KLHZ to meet Mr. Blevins and to fly with him in N8007P. Mr. Blevins had requested that a pilot fly with him until he got comfortable in the airplane. Todd Huvad asked if I could fly with him and make sure that he was comfortable and satisfied with the airplane.

We did an extensive pre-flight on the aircraft. I asked him questions about the aircraft and its operation while we completed the pre-flight. He was knowledgeable about the PA-24 and stated that he had completed a PA-24 checkout with an instructor in Texas. We completed the pre-flight and started the airplane. We taxied out and performed our runup. Everything checked out. We had good drops on the Mags and the aircraft was running smoothly. Our purpose for this first flight was to take off, depart the pattern, and climb to 10,000 feet to check out the RayJay Turbo-normalizer system. He said that there was not turbo-normalizer on the aircraft that he had gotten checked out in. We departed the area and attempted to climb to 10,000 feet, but the aircraft was not developing power like it should. Manifold pressure was low. We returned to KLHZ and landed. We took the airplane to maintenance, and they troubleshot the aircraft and found a loose wire on the noise suppression unit that was grounding one of the magnetos. They replaced the wire – ignition to magneto to repair the problem. I had a prior responsibility that afternoon and we planned to get together the next morning to fly some more.

I arrived at KLHZ on May 10th at approximately 0900. We pre-flighted the aircraft and decided that we would stay in the pattern and practice some landings and see how the airplane was performing. We performed an extensive runup with no problems and departed. The airplane was running better, but the aircraft was still not making as much manifold pressure as it should. We

landed and brought it back to maintenance for them to look at it. Maintenance made a couple of adjustments, and we took the airplane back up after lunch. We made one landing and we got a radio call from maintenance that they could hear the airplane backfiring. We had no indications of that in the cockpit or could we hear it. We landed and brought the airplane back to maintenance.

I could not make it back to KLHZ the next day, May 11, 2022, because of previously scheduled responsibilities. I called Mr. Blevins that afternoon to inquire about the aircraft and how the troubleshooting was going. He said they had cleaned the spark plugs and performed a fuel setup on the airplane. He told me that it was making the proper manifold pressure and power. He told me that he planned on leaving that afternoon to go back to Texas. I suggested that he wait a couple of days to get a little bit more flying in and he wouldn't be so rushed. He said that he felt capable and would be departing to beat the weather. I wished him well and asked that he call me when he stopped for the night.

To Whom It Concerns:

I first spoke with Rob Blevins late January or early February of this year when he called inquiring about a flight review. He indicated he had relatively few hours and had not flown in a number of years. He began the flight review process by completing a 40 to 50 question review. Once complete we sat down, reviewed all the questions and corrected them to 100%.

Upon beginning the flying portion of the flight review it was obvious his flying and communication skills were very rusty. We flew approximately 10 hours together reviewing fundamental maneuvers, emergency procedures, cross country planning, communication and landings. Despite flying almost 10 hours together his flying skills were still only marginal at best despite the progress he had made and I was not willing to sign off on his flight review.

In addition to marginal flying and communication skills a second reason I was not willing to sign off on his flight review was his attitude toward flying in general. It is my personal and professional opinion that he did not possess a full grasp of the seriousness of flying. He acted with little sense of urgency when practicing emergency procedures, was slow to respond with proper control inputs when landing in normal or gusty conditions and, at the end of the time we spent flying together, still lacked a good situational awareness. Furthermore, he seemed not to understand the importance of getting the proper training after not flying for such a long time.

Regards,
Mark Berglund

