

Paul Rho  
Air Safety Investigator  
Western Pacific Region

**Date:** February 21, 2023

**Subject:** WPR23FA110 / Record of Interview

**Contact:** Kevin Edward, Airport manager, Nevada Co Airport (GOO)

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by the airport manager of GOO, Kevin Edward interview at the airport.

According to Mr. Edwards, he has been the airport manager for about 5 years and first saw the airplane at GOO around October 2022.

Around November 25<sup>th</sup> Mr. Edwards received numerous complaints of the pilot flying low, around 100 to 200 feet above ground level over the Morgan Ranch housing development. Mr. Edwards sent an email to the pilot advising him to comply with regulations and altitudes. A copy of the email is attached.

When asked, Mr. Edwards stated that the pilot flew often but when the weather got cold, he flew less frequently, possibly because it was an open cockpit.

Mr. Edwards stated that when he heard of the accident, he stopped fuel sales and took a fuel sample from the truck and the tank. He provided the samples to the IIC who performed a visual inspection. No visible contaminants were noted. A test for water, using a Sargel compound revealed no evidence of water in the fuel.

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Air Safety Investigator  
Western Pacific Region

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**Contact:** Juan Brown / Witness to previous low flying

During a telephone interview, Mr. Brown reported that he had a hangar on the Nevada County airport that was next to Jim Menconi's. He reported that the accident pilot's low patterns were very common. A day or two before the accident flight, he saw the accident airplane depart on runway 7. The pilot did a fly by that was low and slow and then performed what he described as an almost wing-over maneuver about 300 to 400 feet above ground level.

He stated that Loren always left the landing gear down, and it was explained to him that the pilot left them down because he didn't want to forget them.

Mr. Brown provided a photograph that showed the airplane, on the day of the accident operating with the landing gear down.

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**Contact:** Juan Fernandez / First Passenger of the day

In an interview, taken near the accident site, Mr. Fernandez stated that he was the pilot's brother-in-law. He stated that he had just spent a family weekend with the pilot and his family. He said the pilot seemed to be in perfect health.

He said that on Sunday morning they checked the winds and determined they were calm, and the pilot offered to take him for a flight. Mr. Fernandez stated that he also had hundreds of hours in fixed-wing airplanes.

Mr. Fernandez stated that they did a preflight inspection and then went to the runup area and did runup tasks. He said that the pilot made a call on the common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF) and they departed on runway 25.

When asked, Mr. Fernandez thought that the pilot stayed on the CTAF frequency of 122.7. He said that they were never outside of five miles from the airport.

He stated that he was rather impressed at how quickly the airplane rotated. He stated that the pilot did a few clearing turns then showed him where the homeless camped. He said that they then went south over some pastures. He said that they were about 1200 feet in altitude at that time. Mr. Fernandez stated that at one point of the flight he took a photo of the instrument panel that showed them at 2800 feet mean sea level. He said that at one point they were at 130 knots, but the pilot did slow down when they overflew the pilot's property. He said that they did a few full power climbs, and "the engines were running smoothly, with no hesitations and no hiccups or anything." He did not recall the rate of climb during the full power climbs.

In review he said that they did a few loops around the pilot's property, went over some pastures. He said that he asked the pilot how much room he needed for a soft field landing, to which the pilot stated, "I could probably put it down in 80 feet." He said that they then went over the old part of Grass Valley and then the pilot made a CTAF call to return to the airport. He said that they landed on runway 25 and did a touch and go because the pilot had forgotten that he wanted to show him the new storage unit. They over flew the new storage unit and returned to the airport where the pilot again landed on runway 25, this time with a full stop.

They returned to the pilot's hangar on his property. He said that Nichole was there. They had been helping with a snowplow attachment. He walked to the house and then returned to the hangar where he saw that the pilot and Nichole were taxiing away. He said that he heard them taxi to the runup area, do mag checks and depart.

When asked, he said, "the gear appeared too always be down." When asked he stated that he did not hear a gear up or gear down call made by the pilot when the pilot was taking off or landing.

When asked about the lowest and slowest they got, he replied, "800 feet was the lowest because he saw powerlines below them." He said that he didn't note the speed. He stated that the back seat had flight controls, throttles, and an instrument panel.

When asked he stated that he didn't know if they got fuel before Nichole and the pilot's flight. He said that even though he had a hangar on his property, the pilot stored the airplane at a hangar on the airport.

When given the time that the pilot picked up fuel at 1305, he stated that they must have picked up fuel after the pilot dropped him off and after picking up Nichole.

He said that their entire flight time was maybe 25 minutes. When asked, he stated that the pilot didn't give him a safety briefing.

When asked if he had ever landed on water with the airplane, he said that he did not know.

He stated that his jacket did get caught on the throttles during the full power climb.

He said that the pilot was very methodical about checking the passenger's seat belts.

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**Contact:** Jim Menconi / Spoke with the pilot at fuel island

During a telephone interview, Mr. Menconi stated that he and his wife were at the fuel island with their helicopter and had just shut down when the accident airplane arrived. The wife had gone back to the hangar, so the pilot of the accident airplane was allowed to fuel before the helicopter. Mr. Menconi had a conversation with the pilot. During the conversation it was reported that the pilot stated that he doesn't fly above 500 feet. Mr. Menconi told the pilot that he had to be careful when flying at less than 500 feet agl because of the powerlines and trees. Mr. Menconi stated that the pilot told him that he was pretty careful about that kind of stuff.

When asked if the pilot topped off the airplane, Mr. Menconi stated "yes."

When asked if the pilot was alone, he said that the female passenger was in the airplane.

Mr. Menconi indicated that the pilot didn't take warnings very well, and that he wasn't very receptive to advice [about flying low].

When asked about the pilot's helicopter and the fuel, he stated that he flew for about 1.5 hours and didn't have any issues with the fuel that he took on immediately after the accident airplane.