



Christopher Freeze  
Air Safety Investigator  
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region (AS-ERA)

**Date:** 24 May 2023

**Subject:** ERA21FA135

**Contact:** Christy Hobbs  
Benton, KY

Phone: [REDACTED]

On February 22, 2021 - the Graves County Sheriff Department provided the eyewitness testimony of Christy Hobbs to the NTSB Investigator-In-Charge:

"Christy Hobbs stated she was east bound on Interstate 69 headed to Benton. She observed a plane taking off from Mayfield/ Graves County airport and gain altitude. As the plane went higher she said the tail dropped and the plane went into a back flip. She then said that she observed the plane come out of the "flip" and headed nose first toward the ground. Christy stated that when it got close to the ground she lost sight of the plane. Not knowing if the plane crashed or not she turned around and went to the airport office to confirm with personnel. From there airport personnel went to check on the pilot and plane and found both in the field just North of the runway."



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**Contact:** Michael Fagan  
Martin, TN

Phone: [REDACTED]

On February 22, 2021 - the Graves County Sheriff Department provided the eyewitness testimony of Mike Fagan to the NTSB Investigator-In-Charge:

"Mr. Fagan stated that he had just arrived at the airport when the plane took off. Mr. Fagan identified the pilot of the airplane as Henry D. Babenco. Mr. Fagan stated that Mr. Babenco was a doctor out of Paducah. Mr. Fagan is the president of the Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 807 based out of the Mayfield-Graves Airport, in which Mr. Babenco was a member."



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Contact: Jason Crockett  
Mayfield, KY  
Phone: [REDACTED]

Mr. Crockett stated to the NTSB Investigator-In-Charge that he had met the accident pilot about 3 years earlier at an EAA event. The accident pilot was trying to sell the accident airplane to the EAA chapter. He recalls the accident pilot talking about doing aerobatics in his airplane, but has never witnessed any aerobatics. He stated seeing the accident airplane that day doing touch and goes on runway 1, but noted the wind favored using runway 19. He also stated that on other occasions he had witnessed the accident pilot taking off from M25 and stated he was an "aggressive pilot", he recalls seeing the airplane climbing at a high angle of attack.



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Contact: Dennis Mason  
Vienna, IL  
Phone: [REDACTED]

On February 22, 2021 - the Grave County Sheriff Department provided the eyewitness testimony of Dennis Mason to the NTSB Investigator-In-Charge:

"Mr. Mason stated that he was at the airport when Mr. Babenco took off. Mr. Mason also confirmed Mr. Babenco's identification. Mr. Mason advised that Mr. Babenco was supposed to be taking someone else up with him today. Shortly after this Mr. Mason received a phone call and confirmed that the rider did not show up so Mr. Babenco took off alone. Mr. Mason did not observe the crash but was notified by a witness that did. Mr. Mason stated after being notified he and Mr. Fagan went to look for the plane."