



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Brian C. Rayner
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: April 3, 2023
Person Contacted: Robert Gainor – Mechanic
NTSB Accident Number: ERA23FA137 Farmingdale, New York

Narrative:

-Mr. Gainor was a mechanic for Danny Waizman Flight School. He was interviewed at the airport where he was employed and the following is a summary of the interview. Mr. Gainor was a mechanic with ratings for airframe and powerplant. According to Mr. Gainor, "I am an A&P mechanic. We have 5 other airplanes in the school besides the accident airplane."

-Do you work for Mr. Weizman?

"That's a debate, but he's my only employer. His lawyer wants to consider me an independent contractor, but I don't consider myself as such and neither does Mr. Weizman."

- How are aircraft squawks recorded?

"The squawks are recorded in the red folder of each plane. If the airplane is 'deadlined' they put the folder off to the side. If I deadline the airplane I keep the folder in my car with the keys."

- What is the procedure for returning aircraft to service following a mx squawk?

"I would make a corrective action in the logbook and remove the squawk from the red folder."

- Are pilots/CFIs encouraged to report safety issues?

"I like them to tell me, but I want them to officially report it to the office manager."

-What is the process for doing so?

"It would be written in or on the book with a post-it, and the office manager would control it."

- How did you become aware of the report of smoke in the cockpit involving the accident airplane?

“Mr. Waizman was on vacation. I had just put a #4 cylinder on the airplane, and we had to wait a month for the cylinder, and I replaced the cylinder, returned the airplane to service after doing a ground-test run. Somebody flew the airplane and reported smoke in the cockpit.

I inspected the engine exhaust, and found nothing visual wrong with the airplane, but then none of the pilots would fly with me, so I had to wait for Danny to come back. We did several touch-and-goes and flew it around and found nothing wrong.

I ran it up, did mag checks, but I did not turn on radios or instruments. Did not replace any electrical parts or switches. I put a scat hose on the shrouding from the mufflers to the heater box. The airplane did not fly at all between the 7th and the 16th.

I got a wiff of the smoke and thought it might be a solvent that was used to clean the engine and cowling. But in retrospect, it couldn't have been the solvent because that was used a long time prior to that. And, it had neither and oil or electrical smell.”

Mr. Gainor said he could not duplicate the problem.

- Did you speak with the pilot who made the report? Did they describe the event? (Mr. Gainor could not remember.)

- Describe your troubleshooting actions (*systems that come to mind here are battery/electrical, oil, fuel...*) (Previously discussed above)

- Were you able to reproduce the issue? “No.”

- Did you find any anomalies? “The scat hose had holes so I replaced it.”

- What sort of corrective actions did you take before returning the airplane to service? (see above)

- Were there any subsequent issues between return to service and the accident flight? (none reported by Mr. Gainor)

- Describe the safety culture at the flight school. Mr. Gainor took a minute to answer, and then said, “It's safety first.” There was no debate between Mr. Waizman and his pilots.

Were there debates between Mr. Waizman and himself? “No, if I tell him we need something, he'll get it.”

When asked about fire extinguishers, Mr. Gainor said, “most of the airplanes have them, but I can't remember which ones.” When asked about how they were mounted, he said, “They weren't. they were tucked in the seat-back pocket.”

“My impression was that it was a discovery flight. Find out if they want lessons, or somebody might buy the flight as a gift and give it to someone else.”

END OF STATEMENT