N38HP PIC -Pilot Statement- Roland Betker 7/19/2023 at 10:38 am

Inspector Patricia Chriscoe

Mr. Betker was very forthcoming with the details of the flight. I began by asking his condition and the other passenger. He said he was fine and when he was upside down in the water and strapped in he was concerned about getting out of the plane, but it took a few minutes to get out. He found his passenger to be OK and holding onto the float. He said he was not in the Cape Fear River, but rather ½ to 1 mile out in the open ocean. He left the Cape Fear Jetport (KSUT) and got the weather from the ASOS and also the windsock was pointing down showing calm winds. He said the ASOS was reporting 1-2 knots of wind. He said he never flies the Cam in winds more than 10 knots. When he was assessing the water to land, it didn't look that bad. He said that it was only when he was approaching and near touch down that he realized the swells were big, but by that time he said he was committed because he was at a low airspeed and the wings weren't flying at that point. He said that he knows the Cam can take off in a very short distance and he saw the swells were spaced out far enough that he thought he could get out. When he took off, he said he was on the step at between an estimated 35-40 mph and started to get airborne, but that a swell came in and caught the float and wing tip and rolled the plane right and flipped it upside down. He said the swells were coming towards him at a faster rate than he anticipated and cutoff his takeoff distance. He said the conditions were swells and not white caps. When asked what he would do differently looking back, he said he wouldn't land but that it was difficult to judge the swells at the time. He said that taxiing back was an option but they were really far out in the open water. I asked about his technique on takeoff in the conditions and he said the stick was back into his gut. He said he has gone out there many times before. He owns 2 AirCams (38HP and 37HP which is in Michigan).