



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region, Office of Aviation Safety (AS-ERA)
National Transportation Safety Board

Date: 8/28/2020, 1:02 pm EDT
Person Interviewed: Mr. John "Phil" McLanahan, airplane owner
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20CA298

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- Mr. McLanahan stated that it was his airplane and he was seated in the right seat and considered himself the passenger even though he was the more experienced pilot.
- He and the other pilot, who had installed the MFD, were going up to calibrate the newly installed MFD.
- Once airborne, Mr. Reddick asked him to fly two 360° turns while Mr. Reddick calibrated the heading indicator. After completing the turns, he let go of controls and Mr. Reddick did some maneuvers to test other items.
- He stated that, at one point, he was looking down at MFD and had noticed they were flying about 500 ft over water and figured that Mr. Reddick was looking at a bird or something. He stated that he was somewhat uncomfortable flying over water that low but did not say anything.
- A couple minutes later, he looked up when he felt Mr. Reddick pull the nose up, and thought to himself, "Ooh, we were a little bit closer than I thought!" He said it made him uncomfortable, but he did not say anything.
- A few minutes after that, he looked out and noticed that they were about to hit the ground, and he yelled, "Pull up!" but it was too late. "He flew it into the ground. It impacted on all three gear, then cartwheeled."
- He stated that each of them thought that the other was flying, and that they never did a positive exchange of controls or discuss who was acting as the PIC.
- He stated that in his mind, he was confident that Mr. Reddick was flying. "He was in the left seat. In my mind, when I'm in the right seat, I am the passenger. I am in passenger mode, and not thinking about flying."
- He added, "We didn't connect the dots. We were both fixating on the panel and thought that the other was flying."



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- He stated that it is a wonderful airplane and it was flying perfectly and that there were no preimpact anomalies or malfunctions before the impact.



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Date: 8/31/2020, 10:22 EDT
Person Interviewed: Mr. John Reddick, pilot
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20CA298

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- Mr. Reddick stated that he was the PIC for takeoff and landing, and that they had discussed beforehand that Mr. McLanahan would be flying while he configured the new equipment.
- He stated, "I did bump the stick when we were configuring the g-meter to let John see how it registered."
- He indicated to Mr. McLanahan that they should head back to the airport because the alternator was not working, and the voltage was low "and the airplane turned that way."
- He stated that as the airplane descended before 500 ft, he started to get a little concerned, but he figured that Mr. McLanahan was flying over to see the VOR.
- He stated that "at one point he got so low that I jerked the stick back." He made a comment like, "When I'm not in control, I don't like things like that," believing that this would effectively let Mr. McLanahan know that he did not care for that type of flying.
- He stated that "It happened a second time, and I was thinking, 'I do not like this!'" and he pulled back on the stick again.
- He stated that he did not understand why Mr. McLanahan was not saying anything, and he wondered if Mr. McLanahan was "messing with him."
- He determined that if they got too close to the treeline in front of them that he was just going to take over the controls, and as they passed over the tree line, he was thinking that they were going to hit the trees, and then Mr. McLanahan yelled "Pull up!!"
- After they exited the crashed airplane, Mr. McLanahan asked him, "What were you doing?? Why were you doing that???" and he thought to himself, "Because you were trying to kill me, that's why!"
- He stated that although they have known each other for 4-5 years, and they talk about every 6 months or so, they had only flown together once previously.



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- He stated that he realized that as the pilot in the left seat who took off, he should have taken more responsibility.

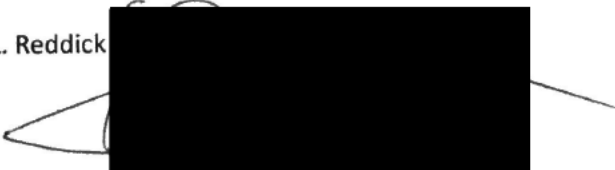
Accident Report

Accident Date: 8/28/2020

The purpose of the flight that resulted in this accident was to test and calibrate a newly installed radio and EFIS. Due to my familiarity with the functionality of the Dynon EFIS, I was in the left seat and John McInahan (Phil) was in the right. I began the flight as PIC and we departed Eagle Crest at approximately 1:45pm. After leveling off at 1500 feet and setting power and trim, I asked John to take the controls and fly a series of 360 degree turns while I worked through the process of calibrating the magnetometer. After completing these turns, I moved to the next menu item which was calibration of the Angle of Attack meter. Reading through the instructions revealed that it would require a series of stalls and, since we were only at an altitude of 1500 feet and it had become apparent that our alternator wasn't charging the battery, I recommended against it and John agreed that we should move on. At some point after this exchange, I entered the settings for the G-meter and explained that it would automatically appear in place of the DG on the EFIS screen and asked at what level he wanted it set. I set the G-meter to take over the display at somewhere around 1.5 G's. Wanting to demonstrate for Phil how the EFIS would handle that transition, I either bumped or grabbed the control stick slightly in order to load the wings to about 2g's. In a split second, we both registered that the G meter was displaying accurately, and I released the controls to allow Phil to continue flying. Whether it was before the G-meter calibration or after, I do not know but I believe it was after that I continued on to the autopilot setup and I remember going into the menu to determine whether or not the Dynon was communicating with the servo and looking for the autopilot controls on the screen. I made a comment at this time that we should plan on landing very soon due to the reduced voltage and lack of alternator support. We had probably been in the air no more than 10 minutes. It was my belief that Phil was acting as PIC at this time and I wondered to myself if I should offer to land the plane or allow him, as the owner and current PIC the privilege. Around this time I noticed a distinct turn toward the Broadkill river which, to my mind, confirmed that Phil was in control and that he probably just wanted to check out a piece of property or the handling of the plane before landing. As we neared 500 feet above the river, I saw a boat and was concerned that we were dangerously close to breaking minimum distance requirements. At some point we became so close to the river that I instinctively grabbed the stick to recover the aircraft but released it again after we had established level flight. I attempted to share my concern about this dangerous maneuver in a non-threatening way, but I was scared! My words were intended to convey that I didn't like the feeling of not being in control in such a dangerous situation (I alluded to the fact that it's one of the reasons I'm not as comfortable in a car when someone else is driving). It was only after the fact that I realized that this comment was not clear to Phil and had only served to reinforce his opinion that I was the one flying and was doing these dangerous maneuvers on purpose! Once I recovered the airplane, I mentally released control again to Phil, assuming that he understood and would cut out the "hotshot" piloting. A second near miss that again caused me to have to recover sent my mind spinning as to why he would be flying this close to the ground. I determined that if we got any closer to the tree line that I would seize control and take us home. While this mental argument was happening, I do not remember how or if any of these concerns were verbalized. I recall thinking "Why are you doing this?" but am not sure if it was spoken. A third time the plane descended and just as I was about to take over control I heard Phil yell "pull up." I did, but it was too late to prevent impact. The aircraft bled some energy and collided with a soybean field. After coming to rest upside down, we egressed quickly and assessed damages. Even as we were climbing away from the wreckage I heard Phil ask "why in the world were you doing that." It was then and only then that I had even the first indication that he had not understood himself to be flying the plane.

I attest to the truth of the statements contained in this report to the best of my recollection

Jonathan L. Reddick
PPL#

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature and PPL# information. A handwritten signature is visible to the left of the box, and a handwritten checkmark is visible to the right.

TO: Philadelphia FSDO

8/28/2020

From: John P. McLanahan

SUBJ: N628JB RV6A

Our flight departed Eagles Crest, DE25 around 2:00 p.m. local. Aircraft had 7 gallons fuel in left tank and 14 gallons right tank. We were on right tank. Weather was clear and temps around 90 degrees f. I was in the right seat and Jonathan Reddick was PIC in left seat. The purpose of flight was to calibrate the MFD and Garmin G5. Jonathan departed runway 32 and departure was uneventful and we climbed to about 1500 feet within 3nm radius of DE25.

Jonathan asked me to make 2 360 degree turns, one to left and one to right which I did while he calibrated the equipment and heading numbers. After I made my turns I took my hands off the controls while Jonathan made a pull up maneuver to verify the G meter which worked once 2 G was obtained. We discussed going back to DE25. On the way back I observed the airplane descending and following the channel. I thought Jonathan was following a boat along the channel. At one point I thought it was a little lower than comfort zone but he pulled up and climbed so I felt everything was ok. My head went back into the panel monitoring the MFD. The next time I looked up we were very low and I hollered pull up and when he did there was not enough altitude to avoid impacting ground.

John P. McLanahan

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]