



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Pilot

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: October 19, 2021
Person Contacted: Paul Upson (Pilot)
Contact # [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA020

Narrative:

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

Mr. Upson was contacted by phone on October 19, 2021, at 1428 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

Mr. Upson stated that he landed his airplane the same way he has the last 200 times. He stated that he and his daughter flew from Pickens, Georgia, where he was visiting his daughter.

The accident occurred on Sunday, October 17, and it was a "beautiful day." He was on an IFR flight plan and was lined up on a 2-mile final approach when he put his landing gear down. He stated that he yanked on it several times like he typically does to ensure it was down. He explained that one time he put the gear down and it came unlatched about a minute later, so from that day forward, he puts the lever in forcefully then jerks on it to make sure it is latched.

He stated this his landing was "less than a perfectly smooth landing," and that within a half a second of landing, maybe less, he heard a "bang" and the airplane settled onto the runway and then skidded to a stop. He presumed "bang" was the landing gear mechanism snapping back to the floor. He cannot think of what else that bang could have been.

He stated that he was sure that the gear was down and locked, and he recalls putting the gear down. He explained that, when you put the gear down, you have to reach down and pull it over and then lock it in. His daughter recalled feeling him doing this. She told him that because the distance between the front seats in their Mooney is narrow, she can feel his arm brush her side as he actuates the landing gear and she stated that she felt his arm as usual as he extended the gear. He added that there was a pilot waiting to take off near at the approach end of the runway and, after the accident, he heard the tower controller contacting the pilot waiting to take off and asking him if the gear was down; that pilot reported that it was.

He stated that it is conceivable that he didn't have it latched in properly, but in his mind, it was locked down.

I asked if there were any other anomalies or malfunctions during the flight, to which he responded, “no.” He added that he has about 160 hours in the airplane since Sept 2019 and that he flies “pretty regularly.”

The call ended at 1440 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on October 19, 2021. He replied on October 19, 2021, at 2307 EDT with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on October 20, 2021.



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Narrative:

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

Mr. Upson was called at 12:24 EDT to further discuss the approach, landing, and controller interactions after I reviewed the air traffic control transmissions for this approach and landing.

Mr. Upson stated when ATC vectored him to the approach end of runway 4 and turned him over to the tower, he was expecting to be cleared for a visual landing directly onto runway 4. In his past experiences this has always been the case. He stated that if ATC was setting him up for a base or downwind approach, ATC usually vectored him to a place where entering that approach was logical. Those were his assumptions when he contacted the tower, but since ATC had kept him at the 9000 ft altitude until he was very close to the runway, it was clear to him that he could not make a stabilized landing from that position, so he requested a 360° turn to lose the extra altitude. He stated that at that point the tower controller's response was confusing to him. And when he tried to get a clarification, the tower controller was not very pleasant or helpful. He said that he had never been treated that way by a tower controller and he does not believe it was appropriate conduct; however, he does not believe it impacted his ability to fly. He added that it was very gusty and windy, and he was focusing on getting the airplane down. He was cleared by the tower to land on runway 4, which he proceeded to do.

He stated that he lowered the landing gear just as he was ending the 360° degree turn to lose excess altitude.

When asked to describe his landing, he stated that he may have "dropped it in a little" and it may have been a harder than normal landing. The "bang" may have also been the propeller hitting the pavement. He said that it was not a great landing, but it was not an abhorrent landing.

I inquired about the maintenance history of the airplane's locking mechanism, and he responded that he has a good mechanic, but the locking mechanisms (top or bottom) have not been replaced or worked on recently. He added that while it is conceivable that the landing gear lever was not completely locked, he did his usual yanking on it to verify it was locked, as he always does, and it seemed to be locked.

The call ended at 1239 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on October 21, 2021. He replied on October 21, 2021, at 1039 EDT with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on October 21, 2021.