RECORD OF CONVERSATION

FINAL DRAFT

All persons listed were interviewed by Michael Hicks:

The following is a summary of conversation:

Jesse Alexander McNeil (16SEP2020@1742PDT)

The preceding six months or more previous to the crash, the pilot, Jesse McNeil, thoroughly researched the Lake LA4-200 aircraft. N93AB was listed for sale in Florida. In late July 2020 he coordinated purchasing N93AB and pursued flight training in N93AB so he could be checked out in the make and model, including obtaining a seaplane rating. Both Florida flight instructors, Mr. Greg O'Neal and Mr. Ed Moon, and the mechanic, Mr. Ray Torres, were fully aware of the planned route of travel that Jesse McNeil was going to fly to Washington State in N93AB, including picking up two passengers en route in Georgia and Missouri.

The pilot of N93AB reported that on 16AUG2020 he departed FA94 to NBQK (near Orlando, FL to Brunswick, GA). He stayed over until 20AUG2020 and then departed for KCVC (Covington, GA) to pick up his friend, Stefan Primke. On 22AUG2020, the pilot and Mr. Primke departed for 3LF (Litchfield, IL) with one stop for fuel along the way. In Litchfield, the pilot picked up his second friend, Corey Hale, and on 23AUG2020, the pilot and his two friends departed for Lake McConaughy, NE. Between Litchfield, IL and Lake McConaughy, the pilot stopped for fuel on two occasions. On 24AUG2020, after a short leg to OGA (Ogallala, NE) to refuel N93AB departed for RWL (Rawlins, WY).

After about one hour into the flight from OGA to RWL the pilot stated he experienced a mechanical malfunction of the airplane's trim system. The pilot described that the trim selector, located between the left and right front seats, would not hold a trim setting and would automatically reset the trim position indicator and trim surface to produce a nose down default trim position. The hydraulic pressure gauge remained in the green around 1,200PSI. While in cruise speed, approximately 100 mph, he was able to reset the trim to its desired setting, but every 5-8 seconds, he felt the nose down attitude resume with a "pull" on the control wheel.

Upon approach to RWL the pilot noticed that the long Runway 04/22 was under construction, which was not noted on Foreflight during pre-flight planning prior to departure at OGA. The pilot landed on Runway 10. The pilot taxied to parking and shut down the airplane systems. He began to troubleshoot the trim setting issue and located maintenance personnel. The sole line technician at the airport offered to have the airplane pushed into an open hangar, out of the sunshine, so the pilot, two passengers and line technician could investigate the malfunction trim issue.

The pilot called Ray Torres, a mechanic in Florida, had extensive knowledge and hands-on experience with this same airplane. Mr. Torres had personally performed the last two annual inspections on this aircraft, in addition to installing multiple aftermarket upgrades including two rear passenger doors and a baggage access door. With the telephone on speakerphone for all to listen, the pilot sent a cell phone video of the faulty action of the trim selector in the cockpit. After reviewing the video, Mr. Torres instructed the pilot to remove all inspection plates related to the hydraulic trim system. A thorough inspection was done by the pilot, the two passengers, and the line technician and they found no signs of leakage or loose parts. The pilot reported back to Mr. Torres that no anomalies were observed.

At that point, Mr. Torres told the pilot to ask one of his passengers to push down on the trim surface while the pilot checked for hydraulic fluid leakage and the security of the trim actuator. Once again, Mr. Torres was told that

this inspection revealed no abnormal findings. At this point, Mr. Torres told the pilot that he could now reinstall the inspection plates.

The pilot asked Mr. Torres if he felt it was safe to proceed with the flight westward. Mr. Torres replied that it was unlikely that the pilot would find a mechanic in the immediate area that would be skilled in troubleshooting and repairing the trim actuator. Mr. Torres, the mechanic, then deemed the airplane airworthy by recommending that the pilot proceed with the flight and find a mechanic in Washington State. Knowing Mr. Torres' extensive mechanic and piloting experience with this particular type of aircraft, the pilot was going to proceed to his destination in Washington State where he would then locate an appropriate mechanic.

The pilot then refueled the airplane as the line technician monitored the gas filling. Twelve gallons of fuel were pumped into the plane making a total of 22 gallons. About 1530 MDT, the pilot decided to wait until the morning to depart as the day temperature was high and the pilot was aware that the heat would affect a lift-off. Around 1600 MDT, the line technician drove the pilot and passengers to a local hotel for the evening.

About 0600 MDT, the pilot and passengers returned to the airport via an Uber ride. The pilot proceeded to do a full, comprehensive pre-flight inspection including rechecking the security of the inspection plates. The baggage was loaded with proper weight and balance configuration. Mr. Hale took the rear passenger seat and Mr. Primke took the right passenger seat. Seat belts were fastened, doors secured, and the pilot started the engine. The pilot taxied to the run-up area for departure on Runway 28, due to a quartering headwind from the southwest. At the run-up area, the pilot commenced a full standard run-up checklist with no anomalies. The flaps were cycled during the run-up checklist and left at the "down" position for departure.

No other airplane traffic was taxiing at the airport or heard on the local communication frequency. The pilot double-checked with the passengers that their seatbelts were secured and they were ready for take-off; the passengers agreed they were set to go. At approximately 0700 MDT, the

pilot taxied to the hold short line, stopped, and announced on the local communication frequency that N93AB was turning onto Runway 28 to backtaxi, then depart on Runway 28 in the pattern and cross at mid-field to exit the airspace to the WNW.

The pilot turned the plane around at the end of the pavement and pointed the plane down Runway 28, held the brakes, applied full power, released the brakes, and proceeded down the runway with his right hand on the throttle control located on the ceiling and his left hand on the control wheel. At two-thirds down the runway, the aircraft rotated and became airborne at standard configuration with the flaps down. Upon reaching positive rate of climb the pilot retracted the landing gear. The pilot proceeded on the runway heading with the flaps down. At approximately 500 feet AGL, the pilot experienced an abnormal heaviness in the yolk control consistent with the trim setting malfunction he had experienced before. The pilot then banked left to return to the airport believing there was a mechanical malfunction. The next recollection the pilot had was of becoming conscious at the sound of a rescue helicopter as he was being transported to a hospital.

MGW is 2,600lbs
FL (PILOT)= 160
FR (PAX)= 170
R (PAX)= 192

BACKPACKS AND CARGO
25lbs per backpack =75
20lbs misc. (oil, etc.)
20lb ballast used when single pilot (he'd put it up front)
20lbs of (sleeping bags and accessories)
20lbs of misc. items
200lbs max tunnel cargo weight per POH
AGW was about 300lbs less than MGW.
Heavier items placed beside the rear passenger; lighter items placed in the fuselage tunnel. All items weighed on a portable scale. Pilot and passengers were weighed in Missouri prior to the second passenger joining the trip.