

Aircraft Accident Witness Statement-

Who: Alvin Joseph Reinauer [REDACTED]
Home Address: [REDACTED] Clearwater Beach FL 33767
Home Phone: [REDACTED]

Incident Date: 19 March 2022
Incident Time: Estimated time 1850 Local
Incident Location: Lumpkin County – Whimpys (9A0) – Georgia

Conditions prior to the incident:

At approximately 1820 March 19, 2022 I flew into (9A0) in my personal aircraft, an overhead approach to survey the airfield conditions showed indications on calm winds, clear skies, and 10+ miles visibility. My initial plan was to land from North to South using Runway 15; however indications including distant rising smoke to the NW of the airport, and the airport windsock showed that the very light wind favored using runway 33.

I changed my plan and announced my approach on the airport frequency, and executed a landing on runway 33 – or the north facing runway. My landing was without incident and I had just completed tying down my aircraft when I witnessed the approach of the incident aircraft.

Incident Statement:

My location was on the approach end of the airport ramp, about 25 yards from the airport FBO shack on the South End of the airport, with an excellent view of the approach end of the tree line and runway hold short.

At approximated 1850 local (UTC -4) I was talking with another pilot when we witnessed the incident aircraft (White / Cessna / One occupant) approach very low over the approach end tree line. The aircraft appeared to be below a normal glide path and fast. I did not observe any flaps, certainly not in full flaps position during the entire approach.

The aircraft entered a low / ground effect glide over the displaced threshold and appeared to be in control, while a few feet off the ground in a normal landing attitude bleeding off airspeed in an attempt to land. I observed the aircraft appear to “float” in ground effect past the normal landing area, I would estimate to be well past the windsock before applying power, hearing high rpm / engine exhaust, consistent with a normal go-around – the airplane was in a positive rate of climb in a normal takeoff attitude as I had my last view of it. I do not recall any sound or visual of the aircraft making a touchdown prior to applying takeoff power and executing a go around.

I do recall a 2 or 3 rapid “pop” sounds resembling a detonation/backfire only at the initial onset of estimated takeoff power. The engine sounded otherwise normal and routine from this point to the end of flight – high rpm, no abnormal sounds.

The aircraft went out of my sight as it was in a low altitude climb, on runway heading, passing the hangars and trees that blocked my view of the remaining runway/departure end.

After an estimated 10-15 seconds (engine rpm did not seem to decrease at any time), myself and the other pilot at the ramp heard an apparent 3 impacts with what sounded like trees, and engine noise was immediately absent.

We entered a Jeep style vehicle and drive to the departure end of the runway, a short distance to the West of the airfield, and located the aircraft in a clearing I estimate to be less than ½ mile West of the airport. The aircraft was in a small clearing with tree branches on the asphalt road, and one scarred tree branch on the high tree line on the east side of the asphalt road.

Other persons were already on the scene, I approached the left side of the aircraft and located the pilot, who was incapacitated, wearing lap and shoulder belt. He had no pulse and no breathing. The Pilot was motionless and bleeding from the nose or mouth. I checked on left wrist, and left cartrorid/neck artery for signs of a pulse). I noted that there was a significant odor or aviation gas (AVGAS), and attempted to secure the scene or our safety. I did observe significant amounts of avgas dripping from the right wing leading edge, and a constant stream of avgas from the lower right of the engine firewall from a round cylinder.

After checking the pulse (negative for pulse or breathing) of the Pilot, I located the magneto/ignition key and rotated it to the left stop in an attempt to depower electrical systems – I believe the key was in the far right positon. I then attempted to locate the master switch for the same reason (unsuccessful/unable to locate the master switch in the folded appearance of the instrument panel). As I did so, I also observed several radios in the center of the panel and attitude / DG screens remained powered. The tail red beacon continued to operate showing the aircraft was still electrically powered.

As the scene was no longer safe, myself and others began to direct people away from the aircraft – as the risk of fire from significant fuel leaks were present. I was able to see fuel leaking from the leading edge of the right wing, and from what I believe to be a fuel strainer on the lower right firewall of the aircraft. It appeared that avgas was streaming from this round cylinder at the lower right of the engine firewall – I could not locate a cutoff to stop the fuel leak.

I then circled the aircraft while taking photos in order to preserve the accident scene – including photos of the airfield windsock and a flag pole to the West of the airfield showing little to no wind speed or direction. These photos were provided to the officer 742 of the Lumpkin County Sherriff's Office.

Estimated cause:

Loss of control of the aircraft while executing a left climbing turn following a go-around from a long landing. The engine appeared to be operating, and the aircraft appeared to be controllable based on the low approach to landing.

Cummings, Andre T (FAA)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2022 2:41 PM
To: Cummings, Andre T (FAA)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: N1410F Accident

I was at Lumpkin County airport on March 19 2022. At approximately 6:45 PM I left my hanger and got in my truck to go home. As I was leaving I received a phone call so I stopped to answer it. I was parked on the ramp facing the approach end of runway 33. After a few minutes I saw N1410F coming in on final to land. The aircraft was on a lower than normal approach and at an extremely excessive airspeed and no flaps. I would guess around 120mph. The aircraft then pointed the nose down straight toward the end of the runway gaining more speed. I knew right then it wasn't going to end well. The aircraft touched down on the end of runway 33 nose wheel first then the mains very hard and bounced back up in the air. He then continued down the runway using a little power and pushed the nose over to force the plane back to the runway. He then touched down nose wheel first and bounced back in the air again. He immediately forced the nose down again nose wheel first and bounced back into the air and the plane veered slightly to the left. He then went full power and turned to the left. He was full power climbing and turning left away from the runway and I lost sight of him from the trees right as he was headed into the trees. The engine sounded like it was making was making full power then all the sudden there were two loud distinct impact noises from the crash. I immediately drove down the runway and couldn't see him. I then drove back down to the hangar and picked up Tim Moss for help and we drove around the airport to the crash site.

Jimmy Lee Berrong Jr.

If you need any thing else or I can help in any way please don't hesitate to ask

Thanks
Jimmy

From: "Cummings, Andre T (FAA)" [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 20, 2022 12:01:02 PM
Subject: N1410F Accident

Mr. Berrong,
it was a pleasure speaking with you this morning. Let me first say thank you for your time and attention in providing me with an eye witness statement. In your own words please describe what you saw on 03/19/2022 concerning the accident with N1410F.

Witness:

I was at the airport on Saturday, March 19, 2022, when the accident happened. I was on the ramp with a clear view of the threshold of runway 33 at 9A0 airport. The aircraft came in very low, very fast, clean, and bounced on the first 50 feet of the runway. (Very low: Barely clearing trees then the field before the runway. Very fast: More than 90 Knots.) I only witnessed the first bounce. There were no flaps, a high airspeed, and the aircraft continued down the runway in ground effect. I heard the power come up and then shortly thereafter, the crash noises.

Opinion:

I believe the pilot waited so late to initiate a go around that it was not possible to clear the tall trees on the departure end of the runway. I would have wished for him to not add power, and accept an overrun of the runway. I believe he simultaneously added power, snatched up, and turned left away from the tall trees. At that point, he never turned back to the right because there were trees everywhere and it all looked the same. (These trees should have been cut down years ago.) In years past, it was possible to fly the valley if you were low because there were no trees. If you were low you just continued straight ahead and turned left at the end of a mountain into the valley. The tall trees are a significant factor in this horrible accident that took a young man's life.

Observations:

1. The pilot made a straight-in landing with no field reconnaissance. He did not know the winds blowing earlier in the day had died down.
2. He should not have come in hot, clean, and low. He was taught this is what you do if it is gusty by the head of the flying club who also owned the aircraft. It is unclear if "gusty" was defined in this instruction. His flight instructor and the head of the flying club should both be disciplined for this. I am serious. This is a travesty, and would be a major point in a wrongful death suit.
3. I have been to several meetings of the airport committee, and at the last meeting on December 21, 2021, I explained the danger the tall trees at the end of the runway posed, even to the point that something like this could potentially happen; however, as the committee is mostly comprised of non-aviators, my statements got no attention or action. I am hopeful that the NTSB will petition the state to cut the trees soon.
4. This is unfortunately a ground hog day scenario in that the pilot would do the same thing again if you were able to put him back in the same situation. It was considered a windy day and he came in hot and clean as he was taught, but without the wind and gusts, there was less time to go into a go-around. The pilot was behind the aircraft.

This statement is made freely and without encumbrance.

Jeffrey Robert Gilbert
March 22, 2022