



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Elliott Simpson
Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: September 9, 2022
Person Contacted: Andres Gomez, Mechanic at Bills Aviation [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR22FA338

Narrative:

During an in-person conversation Mr Gomez stated:

- He was working on a Piper airplane facing hangar, at Bills Aviation, which was located in the hangar next to Santa Monica Fliers, southeast of the runway, about midfield.
- Another mechanic then called for him to look to the runway, and when he did, he saw the accident airplane in a nose up attitude beyond the R21 threshold, transitioning into a steep climb.
- The flaps were fully extended.
- The airplane reached about 100 ft agl when he heard the engine go to the sound of full power.
- The airplane continued to climb, and slow down, then roll left and descend while spinning.
- As it came down, he saw it rotate around the longitudinal axis about one time before it hit the ground nose-down, and an explosion erupted.



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Person Contacted: Andrew Zizik, [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR22FA338

Narrative:

The following is an email from Andrew Zizik dated September 9, 2022:

"Good morning,

My name is Andrew Zizik, I am a flight instructor at Santa Monica Flyers flight school at KSMO in Santa Monica, California. I was a witness to the accident that took place today September 8, 2022, at Santa Monica Airport KSMO involving PiperSport N126WK. I am a coworker to the CFI who was sitting right seat when the accident occurred. This is my full factual written statement of what I witnessed.

I was standing at our parking area on the tarmac at KSMO, in front of our flight school hangar, assessing the condition of one of our other planes when I heard someone yell "Watch out!"

I looked up to see a sport cruiser LSA (N126WK) going inverted about 50-100 feet above ground level, veering left away from runway 21 at KSMO. The aircraft started into a spin and therefore into an unrecoverable attitude at this low altitude. Subsequently the aircraft struck the ground and instantly exploded in a large fireball just on the edge of taxiway Bravo.

The only thing I could discern that was still recognizable from the aircraft after it made impact with the ground was its cowling, everything else was basically incinerated.

If I had to guess as to what caused the accident I would say most likely it resulted from an uncoordinated stall (or possibly uncoordinated secondary stall) at low altitude, which put the plane into an incipient spin, turning it inverted and therefore into a situation that attitude not be recovered.

I also wanted to inform NTSB that I listened to the KSMO tower frequency recording on LiveATC from the time of the accident, and you can clearly hear Christian yelling "Let go! Let go!" multiple times. I'm not sure what that insinuates, but it seems like the student had control of the aircraft at the time of the accident. I have attached the audio file below for reference. Listen to time starting 25:52 on the mp3 and you will hear it."



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Interview Date: September 11, 2022
Person Contacted: Barry Rosen [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR22FA338

Narrative:

The following is a summary of emails and a conversation with Mr Rosen, who was flying a Cirrus SR22 at the time of the accident:

"As no one has spoken to me yet about the crash of N126WK, I thought I would send an email to give a detail that potentially got lost. I was heading inbound to KSMO around the Dodger stadium area and was monitoring KSMO tower getting ready to make my initial call to the tower. As I initially started to key the mic to make the call, I heard an open mic with someone saying pull up, quickly followed by something I couldn't discern at the time that sounded like a lady making strange possibly panicked sounds. I remember that three thoughts went through my mind very in short succession. First, that the open mic call was odd. Second, that an instructor giving a student an instruction on final and third, it reminded me of the an open mic that I had heard online from an accident. I hearing the audio from ATC live, I was surprised not to hear the "pull up" initial portion and I suspect that my having keyed my mic may have blocked it out (as I have 16 watt radios). Hopefully it can be heard on the actual tower tapes of the accident. I note that I saw the fireball and the smoke column afterwards..... I hope this information helps."

Follow up email:

"I'm certain that I heard the instructor telling a student to pull up (or pitch up) when the open mic started which was followed by what at the time I couldn't discern what was said but just sounded like a woman. I remember that It happened right as I was keying my mic to make my call to the tower. I had no idea until Friday that the part I couldn't discern at the time it happened (that sounded like a woman) was someone saying "let go." I also know that I described that same fact to a couple of people immediately after I arrived at Van Nuys while that fact was still very fresh in my mind. When I listened to the events, everything played out exactly as I remembered it, except for that that one piece of transmission being missing."



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: September 12, 2022
Person Contacted: Bernard Scoffie, [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR22FA338

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Mr Scoffie stated:

- He was providing flight instruction to Student Kesh in, N724TT specifically pattern work.
- They had been cleared for the option, #2 by the tower while on downwind. He was facing the other side of the airport.
- He then heard an odd radio call. English is not his native language, so he did not know what was said, but it sounded like someone was screaming. He initially thought it was someone making fake radio calls.
- The student then observed smoke rise from the runway.
- Mr Scoffie then took the controls, and they diverted to VNY.
- While enroute, the student stated that he heard someone say, "pull up" followed by a sound of someone in distress.



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Interview Date: September 12, 2022
Person Contacted: Kesh (Tekeshi) Ayashi, [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR22FA338

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Mr Kesh stated:

- He was a student pilot, flying in N724TT with his flight instructor, Bernard Scoffie.
- Their flight consisted of pattern work, and they had already accomplished multiple take-offs and landings.
- They were on a downwind leg, and just been cleared for the option by the tower, when he heard a male voice say, "pull up", and a panicked sound of what appeared to be a woman screaming. He could not recall which he heard first, because it all happened so fast.
- He then saw an explosion on the runway, and his instructor took the flight controls, and they diverted to Van Nuys.
- On the trip to Van Nuys, he discussed the event with the instructor, and talked specifically about the "pull up" comment, and what it could mean.
- Later that evening he listened to the LiveATC audio recording of the event, and realized the screaming sound was a man, but he found it odd that the recording did not have the, "pull up" comment.



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Interview Date: September 9, 2022
Person Contacted: Yasmin Ozgur
NTSB Accident Number: WPR22FA338

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation Ms. Ozgur stated:

- She works at the front desk at Santa Monica Aviation.
- She is not sure how the student arranged for the flight but thinks it may have been a gift certificate from his mother. It was a pre-scheduled flight.
- The student arrived alone, seemed in good spirits, "chilled", and she sensed nothing out of the ordinary.
- She called Mr West, who came in and they both went into the instruction room to perform ground instruction, which lasted about 1 hour. They were not interrupted.
- Mr West then took the airplane log, and they both went outside to perform a preflight together.



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Western Pacific Region

Interview Date: Various
Person Contacted: Witness Statements Provided by Santa Monica Fliers
NTSB Accident Number: WPR22FA338

Narrative:

Collin Dennis Howard Casey - Ph. # [REDACTED]
CFI, CFII, MEI, Cert. # [REDACTED]

I was pre-flighting N593EH, which is parked around 300ft south west of the spot of impact, at the time of the crash so I did not see 6WK's approach until they were very short final. They came in seemingly fast and hit the runway very hard causing it to bounce pretty far back into the air. The aircraft then went full power and pitched back to go around but the nose was brought too far back putting the aircraft into a stall. It seemed to me that the aircraft was almost recovered from the stall at the last second as I could see the nose lowered but then it drifted to the left and the aircraft entered a spin which it was not recovered from. N126WK hit the ground nose first at full power and exploded immediately on impact.

Daniel David Collier - Ph. # [REDACTED]
CFI, Cert. # [REDACTED]

After landing, my student and I were pushing back our airplane into its parking spot. Just prior to landing, I had heard Christian's voice over frequency in N126WK coming back to land from his intro flight. While pushing our airplane back we heard 6WK go full power and it began to climb vertically almost immediately. It looked as if the plane was going to turn towards us while we were parking, but then it began to turn back towards the ground going into a nose-dive. The plane hit the ground nose-first and exploded on impact.

Alden Jan Martija Marquez - Ph. # [REDACTED]
CFI, Cert. # [REDACTED]

At first, standing at the SMF ramp, I heard the engine rev up as I looked toward the runway. I saw the belly of the aircraft, and it appeared to be in a 90 degree vertical climb. About 200' AGL, as the plane started to level off, it spun to the left. It spun once and crash landed. Flames ensued soon after.

Darien Echeverry - Ph. # [REDACTED]
CFI, CFII, Cert. # [REDACTED]

I was checking an airplane's alternator circuit breaker with a fellow instructor at the SMF ramp when another instructor preflighting the plane next to us ran and yelled "watch out". I looked up and saw

126WK entering a spin and started to run as it seemed the plane was going to crash near where I was. I saw the airplane spin and hit the ground and explode. I immediately ran and grabbed a fire extinguisher from the plane I was in and ran onto the taxiway where the crash happened but I saw there was clearly nothing that I could do.

Incident At KSMO

At around 16:20 on September 8th, I was instructed by Bills Air Aviation to get a tach time for N353MV (This aircraft was around 75 feet from where N126WK crashed at) in order to complete the work order and bill the company (Santa Monica Flyers) for the job that was done to the aircraft. As I was approaching the aircraft, I noticed my friend (Darien) and a student standing next to the aircraft with the pilot door open. Although I was instructed to get the tach time for the aircraft, I proceeded to ask my friend (Darien) to get the tach time for me because he was next to the aircraft with the door open, while I was a couple feet away from them. As I was waiting to get the tach time, Darien proceeded to tell me that "It is taking a while because it is booting up" (N353MV has a G1000 and takes longer than usual for the PFD to turn on). As I was waiting for this G1000 to turn on I saw a Sportcruiser on final but did not think anything about it, due to the fact that I see many arrivals at the airport on a daily basis. As a couple of seconds passed, I heard a Sportcruiser go full power. While being familiar with the noise a Sportcruiser does when going full power, this noise seemed a bit different to me. As soon as I processed the different noise, I decided to look up. When I looked up, I noticed a red and white Sportcruiser go on a vertical climb about 100 feet above the runway. As the Aircraft stalled, I noticed it banking to the left and coming straight towards where my friend Darien, a student, and I were at. When I noticed that, I proceeded to scream out "Watch out, watch out, watch out!" Fearing the aircraft would come towards us, while I was screaming that out, I proceeded to run in a different direction. While I ran away from the aircraft pointing towards us, I noticed N126WK enter a spin and crash directly to the ground after about 1.5-2.5 spins. I immediately froze for a second or two, looked at the canopy (to see if they survived and were trying to open up the canopy), and proceeded to grab a fire extinguisher from the fuel truck that was nearby. When I ran back to extinguish the fire, I witnessed two small explosions and saw the dead bodies all burned up. As soon as I noticed that, I immediately put back the fire extinguisher on the bed of the truck, due to the fact that nothing could possibly be done in order to save them.

Pablo Bernal, [REDACTED]