

# **Aviation Investigation Final Report**

Location: ROMULUS, Michigan Accident Number: CHI98LA129

Date & Time: April 19, 1998, 18:09 Local Registration: N234Q

Aircraft: Good VELOCITY Aircraft Damage: Destroyed

**Defining Event:** 1 Fatal

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General aviation

### **Analysis**

The U.S. Customs Service Air Interdiction Coordination center (DAICC), received notification from a park ranger at Big Bend National Park, TX, of an unidentified airplane entering the United States from Mexico. This airplane did not notify U.S. authorities of its arrival. A U.S. Customs Service aircraft was dispatched, and it intercepted the airplane near Alpine, TX. The U.S. Customs Service aircraft followed the airplane on a northeasterly heading for over 8 hours, until arriving in the Detroit, MI, area. The airplane was observed overflying the Detroit Metropolitan Airport and circling over the downtown area, until it descended and crashed into an athletic field. Examination of the wreckage revealed that the airplane was void of fuel. No other anomaly was found. Approximately 408 pounds of marijuana was recovered from the wreckage.

## **Probable Cause and Findings**

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: improper planning/decision by the pilot, by using the airplane in an illegal activity and allowing the fuel to be exhausted before landing. Factors relating to this accident were: the pilot being under pressure to reach his destination with his illegal cargo, and trees in the forced landing area.

#### **Findings**

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

#### **Findings**

1. (C) PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

2. (C) STOLEN AIRCRAFT/UNAUTHORIZED USE - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND

3. (F) PRESSURE INDUCED BY CONDITIONS/EVENTS - PILOT IN COMMAND

4. (C) FLUID, FUEL - EXHAUSTION

-----

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

-----

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings

5. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)

-----

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Page 2 of 6 CHI98LA129

#### **Factual Information**

On April 19, 1998, at 1809 eastern daylight time (edt), a Good Velocity, N234Q, operated by a commercial pilot, was destroyed when during cruise flight, the airplane's engine lost power. During the subsequent forced landing, the airplane struck some trees and impacted the terrain. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The illegal smuggling flight was being conducted under 14 CFR Part 91. No flight plan was on file. The pilot was fatally injured. The origin of the illegal flight was unknown; however, the airplane crossed the United States-Mexico border near Big Bend National Park, Texas, at approximately 0830 edt.

A U. S. Customs Service official said that at approximately 0830 central daylight time (cdt), the U. S. Customs Service Air Interdiction Coordination center (DAICC), at Riverside, California, received notification from a park ranger at Big Bend National Park, Texas, of an unidentified airplane entering the United States from Mexico. This airplane did not notify U. S. authorities of its arrival.

At 0840 cdt, a U. S. Customs Service aircraft was dispatched from its home base and intercepted the airplane near Alpine, Texas. U. S. Customs Service aircraft followed the airplane on a northeasterly heading for over 8 hours, until arriving in the Detroit, Michigan area. The flight covered a distance of more than 1,200 miles. The airplane was observed overflying the Detroit Metropolitan Airport and circling over the downtown area, until it descended and crashed into an athletic field.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector examined the wreckage at the accident site. The accident site was located in a park area approximately 10 miles northeast of the Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Trees on the south-southeast side of the park showed shear impact damage to trunks and branches approximately 50 feet up from their bases. The airplane was found resting inverted in a nearby baseball field, oriented on a 360 degree heading. The airplane's forward fuselage and cockpit area were crushed down and inward. The windscreen was broken out. The wings were broken downward and aft. Both vertical stabilizers and rudders were broken aft. The airplane's engine was broken off and found resting 200 feet north of the airplane. Examination of the airplane's engine and fuel system revealed that the airplane was void of fuel. Flight control continuity was confirmed. Examination of the airplane's other systems revealed no anomalies. Approximately 408 pounds of marijuana were recovered from the wreckage.

The results of FAA toxicology testing of specimens from the pilot revealed the following volatile concentrations: 44 micrograms per milliliter(ug/ml, ug/g) of Acetaminophen was detected in urine. 30 (ug/ml, ug/g) Salicylate was detected in urine.

The Director of Quality Control for the FAA Toxicology and Accident Research Laboratory

Page 3 of 6 CHI98LA129

stated that acetaminophen is taken for reducing fever or headaches. Volatile concentrations of 10 to 20 (ug/ml, ug/g) of acetaminophen detected in body fluids is considered normal. Toxicity occurs at 150 (ug/ml, ug/g). Acetaminophen can be purchased over-the-counter without a doctor's prescription. Salicylate is a by-product of aspirin. When aspirin breaks down in the body, salicylate is produced. Volatile concentrations of 30 (ug/ml, ug/g) of salicylate detected in body fluids is considered normal. Medications which break down into salicylate can also be purchased over-the-counter without a prescription.

#### **Pilot Information**

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	66,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medicalno waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 14, 1982
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	21000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

### **Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information**

Aircraft Make:	Good	Registration:	N234Q
Model/Series:	VELOCITY VELOCITY	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	DMO 82
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	10-360
Registered Owner:	MARVIN F. GOOD	Rated Power:	200 Horsepower
Operator:	DOUGLAS C. DUFRENSE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Page 4 of 6 CHI98LA129

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:Visual (VMC)Condition of Light:DayObservation Facility, Elevation:DTW ,640 ft mslDistance from Accident Site:10 Nautical MilesObservation Time:17:56 LocalDirection from Accident Site:225°Lowest Cloud Condition:UnknownVisibility7 milesLowest Ceiling:Broken / 2800 ft AGLVisibility (RVR):Wind Speed/Gusts:19 knots /Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:/Wind Direction:20°Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:/Altimeter Setting:30 inches HgTemperature/Dew Point:8°C / 7°CPrecipitation and Obscuration:Light - None - RainDeparture Point:UNKNOWNType of Flight Plan Filed:NoneDestination:Type of Clearance:NoneDeparture Time:00:00 LocalType of Airspace:Class B				
Observation Time:       17:56 Local       Direction from Accident Site:       225°         Lowest Cloud Condition:       Unknown       Visibility       7 miles         Lowest Ceiling:       Broken / 2800 ft AGL       Visibility (RVR):         Wind Speed/Gusts:       19 knots /       Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:       /         Wind Direction:       20°       Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:       /         Altimeter Setting:       30 inches Hg       Temperature/Dew Point:       8°C / 7°C         Precipitation and Obscuration:       Light - None - Rain         Departure Point:       UNKNOWN       Type of Flight Plan Filed:       None         Destination:       Type of Clearance:       None	Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Lowest Cloud Condition:  Unknown  Visibility  7 miles  Lowest Ceiling:  Broken / 2800 ft AGL  Visibility (RVR):  Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:  Wind Direction:  20°  Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:  Altimeter Setting:  30 inches Hg  Temperature/Dew Point:  Precipitation and Obscuration:  Light - None - Rain  Departure Point:  UNKNOWN  Type of Flight Plan Filed:  None  None	Observation Facility, Elevation:	DTW ,640 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	10 Nautical Miles
Lowest Ceiling: Broken / 2800 ft AGL Visibility (RVR):  Wind Speed/Gusts: 19 knots / Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:  Wind Direction: 20° Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:  Altimeter Setting: 30 inches Hg Temperature/Dew Point: 8°C / 7°C  Precipitation and Obscuration: Light - None - Rain  Departure Point: UNKNOWN Type of Flight Plan Filed: None  Destination: Type of Clearance: None	Observation Time:	17:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	225°
Wind Speed/Gusts:  19 knots /  Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:  /  Wind Direction:  20°  Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:  Altimeter Setting:  30 inches Hg  Temperature/Dew Point:  8°C / 7°C  Precipitation and Obscuration:  Light - None - Rain  Departure Point:  UNKNOWN  Type of Flight Plan Filed:  None  Destination:  None	<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Unknown	Visibility	7 miles
Wind Direction:  20° Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:  Altimeter Setting: 30 inches Hg Temperature/Dew Point: 8°C / 7°C  Precipitation and Obscuration: Light - None - Rain  Departure Point: UNKNOWN Type of Flight Plan Filed: None  Destination: Type of Clearance: None	Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2800 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting: 30 inches Hg Temperature/Dew Point: 8°C / 7°C  Precipitation and Obscuration: Light - None - Rain  Departure Point: UNKNOWN Type of Flight Plan Filed: None  Destination: Type of Clearance: None	Wind Speed/Gusts:	19 knots /	<del>-</del> -	/
Precipitation and Obscuration:  Light - None - Rain  Departure Point:  UNKNOWN  Type of Flight Plan Filed:  None  Type of Clearance:  None	Wind Direction:	20°	<del>_</del>	/
Departure Point: UNKNOWN Type of Flight Plan Filed: None  Destination: Type of Clearance: None	Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	8°C / 7°C
Destination: Type of Clearance: None	Precipitation and Obscuration:	Light - None - Rain		
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Departure Point:	UNKNOWN	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Time: 00:00 Local Type of Airspace: Class B	Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
	Departure Time:	00:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class B

## **Airport Information**

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

## **Wreckage and Impact Information**

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	42.229064,-83.389877(est)

Page 5 of 6 CHI98LA129

#### **Administrative Information**

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Bowling, David

Additional Participating Persons: MARVIN V SOLVBERG; BELLEVILLE , MI

Original Publish Date: October 30, 1998

Last Revision Date: Investigation Class: Class

Note: https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=10856

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, "accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person" (Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB's statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 United States Code section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 United States Code section 1154(b) is available here.

Page 6 of 6 CHI98LA129