Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	HENRYETTA, Oklahoma	**Accident Number:**	FTW93FA132
Date & Time:	April 18, 1993, 10:35 Local	**Registration:**	N4689P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-23-250	**Aircraft Damage:**	Destroyed
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Ferry		

Analysis

THE PILOT AGREED TO FLIGHT-DELIVER THE LIGHT TWIN ENGINE AIRPLANE TO THE NEW OWNER AS PART OF THEIR SALE AGREEMENT. AFTER OBTAINING A SPECIAL FERRY PERMIT FOR THE VFR FLIGHT, THE PILOT DEPARTED IN AN AIRPLANE EQUIPPED ONLY WITH A HAND HELD VHF TRANSMITTER, AN ALTIMETER, AIRSPEED INDICATOR, AND A TURN AND BANK INDICATOR. AFTER AN OVERNIGHT STOP, WHEN THE PILOT ARRIVED AT THE AIRPORT, THE WEATHER WAS REPORTED AS NEAR ZERO-ZERO IN FOG. AT THE FIRST SIGN OF WEATHER IMPROVEMENT, WHEN THE CEILING STARTED TO BECOME DEFINED AND THE VISIBILITY INCREASED TO BETWEEN 1/4 AND 1/2 MILE, THE PILOT STATED 'IT LOOKS TO BE A THOUSAND FEET' AND CLIMBED IN HIS AIRPLANE. THE AIRPLANE WAS OBSERVED EXECUTING A RIGHT DOWNWIND DEPARTURE, CLIMBING TO APPROXIMATELY 500 FEET AGL BEFORE DISAPPEARING IN THE FOG. THE AIRPLANE IMPACTED TREES AND TERRAIN APPROXIMATELY 1/2 MILE FROM THE AIRPORT. WEATHER AT THE SITE WAS REPORTED AS 1/4 MILE VISIBILITY AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S DECISION TO FLY INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND THE ENSUING SPATIAL DISORIENTATION. FACTORS WERE THE WEATHER, AND THE PILOT'S DECISION TO FLY INTO IMC WITH INADEQUATE FLIGHT AND NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT INSTALLED IN THE AIRCRAFT.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: CLIMB - TO CRUISE

Findings
1. FLIGHT/NAV INSTRUMENTS - NOT INSTALLED
2. (F) OPERATION WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES IN EQUIPMENT - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
5. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings
7. TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH VEGETATION

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On April 18, 1993, at approximately 1035 central daylight time, a Piper PA-23-250, N4689P, was destroyed upon impact with terrain following a loss of control while maneuvering at low altitude near Henryetta, Oklahoma. The airline transport rated pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, was fatally injured. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed throughout the area for the ferry flight.

The pilot sold the airplane to the new owner on March 25, 1993 on an "as is" condition, with an overdue annual inspection. As part of the sales agreement, the pilot agreed to flight deliver the airplane to the new owner in Drew, Mississippi, within 30 days. A VFR ferry permit was obtained from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) in Scottsdale, Arizona, and the flight was initiated from Payson, Arizona, on April 17, 1993, with the Ruleville Drew Airport in Drew, Mississippi, as the final destination. After four intermediate refueling stops, the pilot arrived at the Henryetta Airport at approximately 1900 that night and remained overnight at a local motel.

At the time of the pilot's arrival at the Henryetta Airport, approximately 0900, the weather was reported by witnesses at the airport office as "near zero-zero in fog." At approximately 1010, the weather started to show signs of improvement, with the ceiling becoming more defined and the visibility improving up to a quarter of a mile. The pilot was reported going outside to check the weather and reporting that "the ceiling looks to be over a thousand," as he proceeded towards his parked airplane on the ramp.

Within minutes the airplane was observed taxiing to runway 17 for departure. The pilot radioed on his portable transmitter that he was taking the active runway for departure and he was going to be turning his radio off since he could not hear any radio calls while the engines operated at takeoff and climb power setting. The airplane was observed departing runway 17, executing an immediate right turn and proceed on a close downwind departure. Witnesses further reported that the airplane climbed to approximately 500 feet above the ground prior to disappearing in the fog on a northbound heading.

The airplane impacted in wooded terrain on a measured heading of 055 degrees, coming to rest on a measured heading of 067 degrees, approximately one half mile from the approach end of runway 17. The property owner was in his house approximately 200 yards from the point of impact, and he stated that he heard what sounded like a burst of engine power, just before he heard the airplane impacting the trees. The property owner confirmed that the visibility was approximately a quarter of a mile. A fisherman on a stream to the west of the accident site, who reported hearing the crash, stated that the visibility was less than a quarter

of a mile.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot was the owner of West End Aviation, a used aircraft dealership and repair station. He was recently hired by a part 121 operator as captain of a transport aircraft, and was in the process of liquidating his inventory of used airplanes, prior to relocating to the state of Nevada. He was the holder of 17 type ratings in assorted aircraft.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

The weather reports derived from the FAA Aviation Weather Processor for several reporting stations within the State of Oklahoma are enclosed in this report.

COMMUNICATIONS

All communication and navigation radios were removed from the airplane prior to the sale of the airplane. A portable hand held VHF radio was found with the wreckage sandwiched between the bottom and cushions of the right front seat.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

Three craters were found at the initial point of ground impact. The propellers, engine oil, and small engine components were found in two of the craters. The right crater, approximately 24 inches deep, contained one propeller blade, while the left crater, approximately 18 inches deep, contained two propeller blades. Two smaller trees were uprooted near the base of the third crater, measured as 12 inches deep. Hardware from the nose landing gear was found in this crater and paint transfers from the nose section of the airplane were found on the trees adjacent to the crater.

Seven trees varying in size from 25 to 70 feet tall, with trunk sizes varying from six to fourteen inches in diameter were damaged. Several tree branches in the path of the airplane exhibited slash marks. Both wing tip panels separated from the wings and were located approximately 60 feet short of the point of ground impact on both sides of the flight path.

Both engines were found separated from their respective mounts. Both propeller assemblies were found sheared at the propeller flange.

Physical examination of the wreckage revealed that all navigation and communications radios, along with most other flight instruments had been removed from the airplane prior to this flight. An altimeter, an airspeed indicator, and a turn and bank indicator were the only instruments that remained installed in the cockpit.

All flight control surfaces were accounted for and continuity was established to the control

wheel and rudder pedals. The wing flaps and the landing gear were found in the retracted position. The rudder trim was found in the neutral position, while the position of the elevator trim could not be determined. Both throttles, mixture controls, and propeller controls were found in the full forward position.

Both front seats remained anchored to the cabin floor. Both aft cabin seats had been previously removed.

SURVIVAL ASPECTS

The airplane was not equipped with shoulder harnesses. None of the cargo being transported in the cabin and cargo compartment of the airplane was found secured or retained in any fashion. Most of the cargo was found either outside the airplane or imbedded into the instrument panel.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

An autopsy and toxicological tests were ordered and performed. The autopsy was performed by Ted S.E, Lewis MD, of the Oklahoma Office of the Medical Examiner on April 19, 1993. Toxicology tests were negative.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The wreckage was released to the property owner at the accident site following the completion of the field investigation. The owner and his insurance carrier were informed of the disposition of the wreckage.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight instructor; Private	**Age:**	45,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Balloon	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Helicopter	**Toxicology Performed:**	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	April 8, 1993
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	**Registration:**	N4689P
Model/Series:	PA-23-250 PA-23-250	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Special flight (Special)	**Serial Number:**	27-218
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	4800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	**Engine Model/Series:**	O-540-A
Registered Owner:	BEDNAR, GENE	**Rated Power:**	250 Horsepower
Operator:	BEDNAR, GENE	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None
Operator Does Business As:		**Operator Designator Code:**	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		**Distance from Accident Site:**	
Observation Time:	10:35 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 600 ft AGL	**Visibility**	0.25 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	600 ft AGL	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	180°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:		**Temperature/Dew Point:**	22°C / 22°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:		**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	DREW , MS (M37)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	10:32 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:		**Runway Surface Condition:**	
Runway Used:	0	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	**VFR Approach/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:**	35.439929,-95.979087(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Casanova, Hector
Additional Participating Persons:	RONALD CHAMBERS; OKLAHOMA CITY , OK
Original Publish Date:	June 30, 1994
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=18651