



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	RICH, Mississippi	Accident Number:	MIA98LA181
Date & Time:	May 24, 1998, 10:30 Local	Registration:	N1008Y
Aircraft:	Air Tractor AT-401	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot reported to the NTSB that while he was on an aerial application flight the airplane's engine 'failed...at a low level,' and he had to set down 'immediately.' He landed in a bean field. He said, '...the plane landed fine but the tailwheel broke off and the plane ground looped...the terrain was rough...but was flat.' According to the FAA, the pilot stated that was returning to the airstrip and was sight seeing, flying slow when he saw some power lines in front of him. He panicked and shoved the power up abruptly, the engine coughed and backfired and the aircraft mushed into the ground. Examination of the airplane disclosed no discrepancies with the airframe or the engine.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: a loss of engine power for an undetermined reason, resulting in a forced landing and subsequent impact with rough terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings
1. REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings
2. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN

Factual Information

On May 24, 1998, about 1030 central daylight time, an Air Tractor Inc. AT-401, N1008Y, registered to a private owner, and operating as a Title 14 CFR Part 137, aerial application flight, impacted with the ground near Rich, Mississippi. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed. The airplane was substantially damaged. The commercial pilot reported no injuries. The flight had departed from Clarksdale, Mississippi, at an unknown time.

The pilot reported to the FAA that he was cruising at a low altitude, when he had to suddenly add power to avoid some power lines. The pilot told the FAA, the engine flooded and he lost power. The airplane nosed over and the pilot pulled back on the controls to avoid impacting the ground nose first. The airplane impacted the ground tail first, the right wing struck the ground, and the airplane struck a fence post.

The FAA inspector said he interviewed the pilot and the pilot said, "...he was returning back to the airstrip and was sight seeing, flying slow when he saw some power lines in front of him. He panicked and shoved the power up abruptly, the engine coughed and backfired and munched into the ground." The person that removed the airplane from the field told the FAA inspector that there "...was plenty of fuel." No discrepancies were reported with the airframe or the engine.

Several attempts by the NTSB and FAA to reach the pilot and have him return the NTSB Form 6120.1/2, were not successful. On November 25, 1998, the pilot returned the 6120. 1/2. He said he had many addresses since the accident and never received the form. A new form was sent to him and he said while he was on an aerial application flight the airplane's engine "failed...at a low level," and he had to set down "immediately." He landed in a bean field. He said, "...the plane landed fine but the tailwheel broke off and the plane ground looped...the terrain was rough...but was flat."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	37, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical—no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 28, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	800 hours (Total, all aircraft), 340 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 25 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Air Tractor	Registration:	N1008Y
Model/Series:	AT-401 AT-401	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	401-0704
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 5, 1998 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	86 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3100 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	R1340
Registered Owner:	PAYTON PITTMAN	Rated Power:	600 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	GWO ,155 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	50 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	10:40 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	170°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	4 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2200 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	230°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	26°C / 21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Haze		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	00:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

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

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	34.360988,-90.519569(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Yurman, Alan
Additional Participating Persons:	MEL ATHEY; JACKSON , MS
Original Publish Date:	December 1, 1999
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=38535

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](#).