



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	CANON CITY, Colorado	<b>Accident Number:</b>	DEN99LA104
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	June 16, 1999, 08:35 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N9355M
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Mooney M20E	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

After takeoff, the pilot flew towards the west and determined that a VFR departure in that area was not possible. He then headed towards the southeast paralleling the east side of the mountains. After turning around, he thought he observed a break in the clouds and attempted a VFR climb. The aircraft then entered the clouds. He continued to climb while in instrument conditions and shortly thereafter, the aircraft impacted upsloping, mountainous terrain at an elevation of 8,500 feet. The wings were sheared off during the impact sequence, the fuselage was crushed and broken into several sections, and the tail was bent 90 degrees to the left. Weather conditions near the accident were reported as overcast ceilings at 3,400 feet agl. A pilot who was performing a GPS approach into the airport near the time of the accident reported the ceilings to be 600 feet overcast at the airport.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's poor judgement due to his intentional and continued flight into instrument meteorological conditions. Factors were the existing weather conditions that included clouds and obscuration.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER  
Phase of Operation: CLIMB - TO CRUISE

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
3. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) JUDGMENT - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: CLIMB

Findings

6. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
7. TERRAIN CONDITION - UPHILL

## Factual Information

On June 16, 1999, approximately 0835 mountain daylight time, a Mooney M20E, N9355M, registered to and operated by the pilot, was destroyed when it collided with terrain during climb shortly after takeoff from Fremont County Airport, Canon City, Colorado. The instrument-rated commercial pilot and instrument-rated commercial certificated passenger received minor injuries. No flight plan was filed for the personal cross-country flight being operated under Title 14 CFR Part 91 with an intended destination of Rifle, Colorado. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed in the accident area.

According to the pilot, he departed Canon City and climbed to 1,000 feet above ground level (agl). He followed the Arkansas River upstream to the west and "determined there was not a VFR departure in that area." He followed the river back east, and then headed towards the southeast paralleling the east side of the mountains. Shortly after turning, "it appeared that there was an opportunity for a VFR climb." He initiated a climb, and soon thereafter entered the clouds. He continued in a climb while in instrument conditions, and attempted to use the airplane's Global Positioning System (GPS) to either return to Canon City or divert to Pueblo, Colorado. Shortly after initiating the climb, the aircraft impacted upsloping, mountainous terrain at an elevation of 8,500 feet on an approximate heading of 210 degrees. The wings were sheared off during the impact sequence, the fuselage was crushed and broken into several sections, and the tail was bent 90 degrees to the left.

According to Denver Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS) records, no weather briefing was obtained under the registration of N9355M. However, according to the pilot, he obtained a weather briefing using another aircraft registration of N303MD. AFSS records confirmed that a weather briefing was obtained under that aircraft registration number, and the briefer advised the pilot during that briefing that VFR flight was not recommended. At 0754, weather conditions at Pueblo, located 35 miles east of the accident site, were reported as overcast ceilings at 3,400 feet agl. At 0854, overcast ceilings were reported at 3,600 feet agl. According to a pilot who was performing a GPS approach into Fremont County near the time of the accident, the ceilings were approximately 600 feet overcast at the airport.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	71, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	May 12, 1999
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	4300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 690 hours (Total, this make and model), 4300 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 22 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 22 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Mooney	<b>Registration:</b>	N9355M
<b>Model/Series:</b>	M20E M20E	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	1287
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	July 9, 1998 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2575 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-360-A1A
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	RICHARD E. CROUSE	<b>Rated Power:</b>	200 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Instrument (IMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	PUB ,4726 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	35 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	08:54 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	92°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Unknown	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 3600 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	4 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	100°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	13°C / 10°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	, CO (1V6 )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	RIFLE , CO (RIL )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	08:15 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	38.440296,-105.230957(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Scott, B. beach
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	JAMES E MACK; DENVER , CO
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	March 31, 2000
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=46579">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=46579</a>

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