Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PECOS, Texas	**Accident Number:**	FTW01LA090
Date & Time:	March 30, 2001, 15:10 Local	**Registration:**	N4498H
Aircraft:	Mooney M20J	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The airplane was climbing through 5,500 feet when the pilot heard a loud noise and felt a rush of air. The pilot turned around and noticed that the baggage door was open. He elected to return and land at the departure airport. The pilot stated that his reference paper with the traffic pattern altitude written on it was blown away with the rush of air. He entered downwind low and continued a low approach until final where he attempted to add power to arrest his descent rate. The airplane continued to sink and impacted the ground short of the runway with the right wing low.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's failure to obtain a proper glide path during landing, which resulted in the airplane's impact with terrain short of the runway. Contributory factors were the open baggage door and the pilot's diverted attention to the open door.

Findings

Occurrence #1: MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER
Phase of Operation: CLIMB - TO CRUISE

Findings
1. (F) DOOR,CARGO/BAGGAGE - OPEN

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings
2. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND
3. (C) PROPER GLIDEPATH - NOT OBTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On March 30, 2001, at 1510 central standard time, a Mooney M20J airplane, N4498H, was substantially damaged when it impacted terrain during a precautionary landing at the Pecos Municipal Airport, Pecos, Texas. The aircraft was registered to and operated by the pilot. The commercial pilot, who was the sole occupant, was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a visual flight rules (VFR) flight plan was filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The cross-country flight originated from Phoenix, Arizona, and had a final destination of Venice, Florida. At the time of the accident, the flight was departing Pecos, which was an intermediate fuel stop, and was destined for Henderson, Texas, another intermediate fuel stop.

During a telephone interview conducted by the NTSB investigator-in-charge, the pilot reported that he landed at Pecos and added 27 gallons of fuel. He removed a sandwich and a quart of oil from the baggage area. The pilot added the oil to the engine, ate his lunch, called the flight service station for a weather briefing, and filed a VFR flight plan to Henderson. The pilot stated that he held the baggage door handle as he climbed onto the wing. The pilot started the airplane, taxied to runway 14, conducted an engine run-up, and took off. The pilot stated that the takeoff and climb were normal. The airplane was climbing to 5,500 feet when he heard a "loud noise and felt a rush of air." The pilot looked over his shoulder and noted that the baggage door was open. The pilot elected to return to runway 14 at Pecos. The pilot had the traffic pattern altitude written down on a piece of paper; however, it was blown away in the rush of air. He stated that he entered downwind a "little low," and while on downwind, he extended the flaps to 15 degrees and extended the landing gear. He reported that everything appeared normal on base leg; however, when he turned onto final he noticed that he was low. The pilot added power; however, the "aircraft was sinking" and the additional power did not arrest the descent rate. The airplane impacted the ground short of the runway with the right wing low. The right wing, right main landing gear, and the propeller impacted the ground. The airplane came to rest upright on the runway. The pilot attempted to taxi the airplane to the ramp; however, the engine would not produce power, and the airport manager towed the airplane to the ramp.

The FAA inspector, who responded to the accident site, stated that the right wing spar was bent upward, the right main landing gear door was damaged, one of the propeller blades was curled forward, and both propeller blades were broken loose in the hub. The baggage door was bent at its upper hinge.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	**Age:**	72,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	July 29, 1999
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	February 16, 2001
Flight Time:	3200 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1800 hours (Total, this make and model), 2800 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Mooney	**Registration:**	N4498H
Model/Series:	M20J	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	24-0787
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 20, 2000 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	2740 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	82 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2229.4 Hrs at time of accident	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming
ELT:		**Engine Model/Series:**	IO-360-A3B6D
Registered Owner:	Raymond G. Conley	**Rated Power:**	200 Horsepower
Operator:		**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	INK	**Distance from Accident Site:**	
Observation Time:	14:53 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	210°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.78 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	22°C / 8°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	PECOS, TX (PEQ)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	VFR
Destination:	Henderson, TX (F12)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	15:00 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Pecos Municipal PEQ	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	2611 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	14	**IFR Approach:**	Unknown
Runway Length/Width:	6236 ft / 80 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Full stop;Precautionary 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:**	31.399303,-103.500205(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Charnon, Nicole
Additional Participating Persons:	Jack Swenson; FAA; Lubbock, TX
Original Publish Date:	July 30, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=51993