



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Belle Glade, Florida	<b>Accident Number:</b>	MIA02LA061
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	February 16, 2002, 08:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N715RM
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Smith, Ted Aerostar 601P	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Serious
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation		

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## Analysis

The pilot was aware of thunderstorms along his route of flight. He paralleled a line of storms for about 20 minutes looking for a hole in the storms to penetrate, without any success. He turned, and climbed to an altitude of 13,500 feet. He noticed what seemed to be an opening to the south, and turned southbound, through the hole, for about 2 or 3 miles, and then the hole closed. He turned the airplane to the right to reverse course, when he inadvertently penetrated a cell. At this point he said he "lost control of the airplane, and was turned upside down.....heading straight down towards the ground.....traveling at a high rate of speed.....the airspeed indicator was pegged." At an altitude of about 2,000 feet, he was able to level the wings, reduce power and raise the nose. He said he was then able to slow the airplane for a "controlled crash landing," straight a head in a sugar cane field. According to the Sheriff's Report, he struck the field in which the aircraft was lying in immediately after slowing the airplane. The distance from the initial impact area to where the airplane came to rest was about 75 yards.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot continued flight into known adverse weather resulting in a loss of control and subsequent impact with the ground.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE(THUNDERSTORMS)
2. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

3. AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - OPEN FIELD

## Factual Information

On February 16, 2002, about 0800 eastern standard time, a Ted Smith Aerostar 601P, N715RM, registered to and operated by Trans Porter International Airlines, as a Title 14 CFR Part 91 business flight impacted the ground near, Belle Glade, Florida. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. No flight plan was filed. The airplane was destroyed. The commercial rated-pilot reported serious injuries. The flight had originated from Boca Raton, Florida, at 0730, and was en route to Marathon, Florida, to pick up some individuals and then fly them to North Carolina.

The pilot said he was aware of reported thunderstorms near the departure airport, and along his route of flight. He said, initially he "paralleled" the weather to the west and north of the line of storms. He flew west for about 20 minutes looking for a hole in the storms to penetrate, without any success. He turned back to the east, and climbed to an altitude of 13,500 feet. He noticed what seemed to be an opening to the south, and turned southbound "through the hole," for about 2 or 3 miles, when "the hole closed." He turned the airplane to the right to reverse course, when he "accidentally penetrated a cell." At this point he said he "lost control of the airplane, and was turned upside down...heading straight down towards the ground...traveling at a high rate of speed...the airspeed indicator was pegged." He said he was able to level the wings, reduce power and raise the nose. He said he was then able to "slow" the airplane for a "controlled crash landing," straight ahead in a sugar cane field, about 25 miles southeast of Belle Glade, Florida.

According to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Report, the pilot told a deputy at the accident scene, that at an altitude of about 13,000 feet, in the middle of a large storm, he lost control of the airplane, the airplane began spinning out of control, that he was not able to regain control until he reached 2,000 feet, where he was able to lift the nose of the airplane, and impacted in the field. The sheriff's report stated that the distance from the initial impact area to where the airplane came to rest was about 75 yards. The deputies observed about 15 to 20 gallons of fuel.

The airplane was released to Mr. Charles Maynard, Claims Adjuster for for the owner's insurance company, on February 20, 2002.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	45, 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--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	February 5, 2002
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	September 5, 2001
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1884 hours (Total, all aircraft), 120 hours (Total, this make and model), 1380 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 55 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 23 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Smith, Ted Aerostar	<b>Registration:</b>	N715RM
<b>Model/Series:</b>	601P	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	61P0216-024
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	6
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	September 5, 2001 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	6000 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	130 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	1950 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-540-51A5
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Trans Porter Intl Airlines	<b>Rated Power:</b>	300 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	PBI,19 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	25 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	08:52 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	90°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Scattered / 1500 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Broken / 7000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	5 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	310°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.07 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	21°C / 17°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	Moderate - None - Rain		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Boca Raton, FL (BCT )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Marathon, FL (MTH )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	07:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	26.680067,-80.669075(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Yurman, Alan J.
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	John Roseborough; FAA; Fort Lauderdale, FL
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	August 26, 2002
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=54202">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=54202</a>

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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](#).