RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Witness Statement

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: December 20, 2021
Person Contacted: Briana Pretininzi, wife of pilot
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA047

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mrs. Pretininzi called into an interview at 0900 EST on December 20, 2021. She provided a phone number of [redacted] and an e-mail address of [redacted].

At the beginning of the interview, she was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. She was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; she agreed to the interview with representation, and her attorneys were present on the phone call.

Her son had school the morning of the accident, so Mr. Pretininzi was handling the morning shift with him. Mr. Pretininzi worked from home as a mortgage officer, and he could choose his hours. He was a runner, and he ran Wednesday and Thursday before the accident. He was very excited about getting the airplane and he and a friend had mapped everything out. They had talked to the owner to make sure everything was good. She had the baby Wednesday and Thursday nights, so her husband had slept well both nights before the accident. He woke up Friday morning and did the morning routine and brought her a Starbucks coffee. He said he was leaving and that he would call her.

He called once he landed at the airplane, and again once he landed in Alabama to get the logbooks. Then he called her in Georgia to let her know that there seemed to be an issue with the landing gear, but he felt it was okay and he was departing for Rock Hill. He was taking what seemed like a long time to Mrs. Pretininzi, so she and her son were calling and texting him. Her first call to him went to voicemail; however, he answered the second call. Her husband stated, “I can’t get the landing gear to come down. I am circling the airport and I will call you once I land.” His tone was aggravated. She did not talk to him further after that.

Mrs. Pretininzi stated that he was very meticulous about his logbook and there were also additional hours on an app that she will send me. She stated that flight instructing was not his full-time job. He did not wear glasses, nor

use glasses for reading. He did not take any medications and he was a runner and ran at least 3-6 miles 5 times per week.

She inquired as to whether I spoke to the owner and the broker, and I responded that I had not. She is concerned about the oil and the nose landing gear that her husband had on his phone, and she will send me contact information for both as well as the photos on his phone. She would also like me to see the additional hours he had on his app. His logbooks stop in August or September and there were additional hours that were logged.

In his phone are the times that they talked, and I asked that her attorneys please send me those times.

The digest was e-mailed to her attorneys for review on December 20, 2021. Her attorneys replied on December 29, 2021, with no edits. The final digest was e-mailed to her attorneys on July 24, 2022.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Witness Statement

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: November 8, 2021
Person Contacted: James Burns (Witness)
Contact # [redacted]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA047

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. James Burns was contacted by phone on November 8, 2021, at 1534 EST. He was called at [redacted]. He provided an e-mail address of [redacted].

Mr. Burns stated that he flew Rob to SNH in Savannah, Tennessee. Rob had been his CFII, had trained him and then they became friends and started to fly together. They had known each other for about 2 years. He said that Rob had always talked about buying a Twin Comanche and he finally got one.

He stated that Rob had twin-engine experience, but he didn't know in what airplanes. This was his first time flying the Piper PA-30. They flew out of UZA IFR to SNH, departing around 0900 EDT and arriving around 1030 CDT. He sat there with him for 1-2 hours while "the avionics guy" showed him everything. Rob said, "Okay, well it's time to go!" Mr. Burns stated that the mechanic had not left the maintenance logbooks in the airplane, so Rob had to fly to Alabama to get the logbooks, and he flew home. He received a phone call from Rob when he was flying and speaking with ATC, so after he landed at RDU around 1645 EDT and was with his wife, he called Rob back (around 1700-1710 EDT. He said, "Is everything okay? I got a missed call from you." Rob replied, "I am on the way to Rock Hill. My breaker keeps popping for my landing gear." Mr. Burns asked, "Is everything okay?" to which Rob replied, "Oh yeah." Mr. Burns said, "Okay, well call me when you land." He did not receive any further phone calls.

Q: Were you with Rob when he fueled his airplane in Savannah?

A: Yes, he was only filling his main tanks. I don't know why he only decided to fill the main tanks.

The call ended at 1544 EST.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Witness Statement

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: November 6, 2021
Person Contacted: Beth Duncan, Sarah Kelley (SkyTech employees/witnesses),
Contact # [redacted]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA047

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individuals named above:

Ms. Beth Dunkin was interviewed in person on November 6, 2021, at 1400 EDT. She provided a phone number of [redacted] and an e-mail address of [redacted]. During the interview, she called Sarah Kelley on her cell phone, who I interviewed.

Ms. Dunkin stated that she was working flight operations at the SkyTech FBO the night of the accident and she was in her office. Sarah Kelley was working at the front desk and heard on UNICOM about 1830-1840 EDT that a pilot was having landing gear issues and was circling and likely coming in to land. Ms. Dunkin called Charlotte Approach to ask if they were working the flight and they stated that they "had no comms." She looked up his flight track on FlightAware and saw that he was circling south of the Rock Hill Airport. She then noticed that he was not tracking any longer and she looked the flight up in Foreflight and she did not see him anywhere.

Ms. Kelley stated that the first call at 1830-1840 basically indicated that "the gear was not going down and the pilot was doing loops south of the airport trying to get it down." The second UNICOM call came in around 1900 EDT and the pilot was calling to another airplane, a Cessna 172 from the Fly Carolina flight school on the airport, to let him know that he was circling to troubleshoot landing gear.

Not too long after, a mechanic called and asked if N8924Y had landed. He stated that he was on the phone with the pilot and that he was having gear problems and was having trouble finding the manual gear handle. He said he was on the phone with him when the call dropped.

Ms. Kelley stated that they have AWOS on the airport and that conditions were light winds and clear skies. Runway 02 was in use and used a left traffic pattern.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Witness Statement

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: November 9, 2021
Person Contacted: Thomas Twiddy, T.T. Aerotech Corp
Contact # [redacted]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA047

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individuals named above:

Mr. Thomas Twiddy was called at 1522 EST at [redacted].

He stated that on the day of the accident, he had his technician explain to Rob how everything worked after he arrived at the airport there in Savannah. When Rob then had questions about the airplane, he told him to call Stoney (the mechanic) so that he would have the correct answer. When they were in the airplane, he asked Rob, "What is your experience?" and Rob responded that he "had about 30 hours in that type airplane." Mr. Twiddy knew that Rob had owned the airplane for a while and he had completed this work for him 3 weeks earlier but he had a lot going on at home, and he told him to take him time.

He knows that he had the airplane for a while and he had completed the avionicst work 3 weeks earlier. Why did Stoney have all the logbooks? Stoney did the annual, and when they flew the airplane here, the logbooks did not follow. Stoney made a copy of the last annuals and the weight and balance so that he would have everything he needed to do his avionics work. He gave Rob the stickers to put in the logbooks. He is 30 years Navy and he is very organized and he put everything in a packet so that it would not get disturbed. He also kept copies.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Mechanic/Witness Statement

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: November 6, 2021
Person Contacted: Sherman (Stoney) Powell (Mechanic, Witness)
Contact # [redacted]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA047

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. Sherman Powell was contacted by phone on November 6, 2021, at 1524 EDT. He was called at [redacted]. He provided an e-mail address of [redacted].

Mr. Powell stated that Robert just bought the airplane last Spring and that he had met him only one time. On the day of the accident, Robert was in Savannah speaking with Thomas Twiddy at TT Aerotech and Mr. Powell was at Abernathy Field Airport (GZS), Pulaski, Tennessee.

Mr. Powell received a call from Robert asking about which tanks were the mains and which were the aux tanks. Mr. Powell assumed it to be his first flight. Mr. Powell, who had been maintaining the airplane, responded that there were 8 fuel tanks on the airplane but that to return home he would only need to fill the main and auxiliary tanks. Robert responded that he only wanted to fill the main tanks and wanted to know which those were. Mr. Powell told him that the main tanks were inboard of the engine nacelles, and Robert asked if he was sure. Mr. Powell explained that yes, he was sure: the main tanks were inboard of the engine nacelles and held 30 gallons each, and the auxiliary tanks were outboard of the engine nacelles and held 15 gallons each. This conversation concerned Mr. Powell. He had thought that perhaps Robert was an airline pilot, but he was thinking to himself, "if you don't know which tanks are the main tanks, you don't know this airplane." He wanted to be diplomatic, so he said, "Robert, leave that thing there. That thing has been sitting for years. Take a rental car and go home. Come back next week and I can check you out in it." Robert stated that he "needed to get back," and said that he was going to fly to "his place" (Blackstone, Mr. Powell's business located at the Hartselle-Morgan County Regional Airport (5M0) in Hartselle, Alabama) to pick up the airplane's logbooks.

Later that day, at 1:05 Robert called Mr. Powell from 5M0. He greeted Mr. Powell with, "Well, I made my first flight in the twin Comanche!" Mr. Powell responded, "How'd it go?" Robert responded, "Everything went great!" Robert told him that he had gotten the logbooks from the girl who works for Mr. Powell at Blackstone Aviation. He asked about some oil on the nosewheel strut. Mr. Powell asked him to send a photo. He said, "as long as it is holding air, you are okay." Robert stated, "Well, I'm gonna go on then" and again Mr. Powell was concerned

because there was some weather east of them with low ceilings. He stated that he “didn't know his experience level and I wanted to err on the safe side.” He again encouraged him the leave the airplane and take a car, telling him, “Come back next week and I will fly back with you.” Robert declined and let him know that his next stop was Lagrange, Georgia.

Robert called him at 638 EDT from the airplane. He said he had a gear problem; however, it was very difficult to hear him, and the call kept dropping. He said he was having a circuit breaker continue to pop for the landing gear. Mr. Powell told him that he could manually extend the landing gear to which Robert responded, “Well I am pulling on the red handle.” Mr. Powell explained to him that there are TWO red handles, but he could tell that Robert was stressed. Mr. Powell said, “Let's just start at the beginning, and I’m going to talk you through this…” but the call kept dropping and they would start again: “There are two red handles. Pull the circuit breaker; release the jackscrew handle, and that frees the gear from the motor. You release the jackscrew, then you grab the other red handle, and you stick it in the hole, and you push.” Mr. Powell could tell that Robert was straining his voice and he was trying to calm him down. Robert sent him a photo of the handle, and Mr. Powell saw that he had released the jackscrew. “Okay, now you need to find the emergency extension handle.” Robert seemed hyper focused, and Mr. Powell had to start over several times. Robert was looking and could not find it, but then finally found it. Mr. Powell told him to put it in the one of two holes that were at offset angles in the torque tube. “You push the handle till it goes over center, until the gear is locked,” but “it was like it was not registering with Robert what I was trying to describe.” Robert said, "gotta add some power," and then the phone went dead. He tried to return the call, but it never answered. The last call was at 1913 EDT and lasted 13 minutes.

Q: When did Robert purchase airplane?
A: Back in the Spring he purchased the airplane which had been sitting for about 10 years. “The only time in the past 5-7 years that it flew was when he flew it.” The owner kept the annuals up, and they changed the shock cords (bungees) on the landing gear.

Q: How long have you been maintaining it?

A: About 20 years except for when the owner moved it to a different airport for a while. About 5-7 years ago he started doing the annuals on when the owner brought the airplane back. Sometimes he would do the annual and then put it back in the hangar until the next year; sometimes he would do the annual and go fly it after he did the annual. When Robert bought it, he wanted him to take it up to the radio shop. He went up there and landed at Pulaski airport then took it to the radio shop in Savannah; there was some oil on the nose strut that leaked down (needed o-rings and air). Shop at Savannah said they would repair the seals. That was his last time in the airplane.

Q; Where was Robert when he was asking about the fuel?

A: In Savannah. That’s when I told him that the airplane had 8 tanks, but don't worry about those. You only need to use main and aux and you can crossfeed. The tip tanks may have had a little in them from months ago. Each main and aux feed its respective engine unless you crossfeed.

The call ended at 1602 EDT

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on November 7, 2021. He replied on November 9, 2021, at 0935 EST with a corrected digest and at 1641 EST with further clarifications which were incorporated into the digest. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on November 10, 2021.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Witness Statement

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: August 3, 2022
Person Contacted: Dale Foerschler, Great Lakes Air Ventures, Mason, MI
Contact # [redacted]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA047

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individuals named above:

Mr. Dale Foerschler was called at [redacted] at 1020 EDT. I asked him to please check his logbooks and records and let me know if he had any records of flights with Mr. Robert Pretininzi in May of 2020. He checked his logbooks and verified that he flew with Mr. Pretininzi for 8 hours on May 20, 2020, and for 7 hours on May 20, 2020, and that both flights were out of Mason Jewett Field Airport (TEW), Mason, Michigan.