

Millicent Hill
Aviation Accident Investigator
AS-ANC

Date: September 19, 2024
Subject: ANC24FA092 - Witness
Contact: Steve Wooliver

Mr. Wooliver stated the pilot had built the airplane at the pilot's home in Anchorage, then brought the airplane to his hangar in Wasilla. He reported the airplane was in Wasilla for one week while the pilot completed putting it together. The pilot added 30 gallons of fuel and started the engine for a quick magneto check. He watched the taxi and takeoff, he said when the airplane was over the departure end of the runway he sounded like the pilot reduced power, as if he had closed the throttle. He reported that the engine noise was not as loud as he expected it to be. He said after the power reduction the airplane was still climbing over the trees, then the nose came down, there was a slightly left bank to line up with Beaver Street before he lost sight of the airplane.

The engine was new in 1976 or 1977, in the early 1990's it had a propeller strike and sat unused until the pilot purchased it for his airplane. He knew the pilot added a new oil pump, and re-ringed the cylinders. He looked at the carburetor and did not think the pilot had removed it from the engine. The pilot did not want to do a prolonged ground runup, he initially wanted to tow it to the runway before starting the engine. The pilot had done a couple short engine run-ups that took a couple minutes, then he did a leak check and another run-up, for a total of less than 5 minutes. The time from startup to taxi and takeoff was about 5 minutes. Based on the sounds of the engine and how it performed he suspected it was an issue with the carburetor. He stated the pilot had done all the work on the engine and is an airframe and powerplant mechanic with inspection authorization.

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Subject: ANC24FA092 - Witness
Contact: Jason Schmidtt

Mr. Schmidtt stated he was nearby and saw the airplane taxi out of the subdivision towards the runway. He saw Steve Wooliver following behind the airplane. He watched the airplane turn onto the runway and advance the throttle. He thought the engine sounded anemic, like it wasn't developing enough power. He assumed the pilot was going to do a highspeed taxi. Then the airplane became airborne and he said it sounded unusual, as if it wasn't making enough power. He stated there was no popping, snapping, but that the engine didn't sound good.

He watched the airplane clear the trees and then lost sight of the airplane. He talked to Mr. Wooliver after the accident and he told him the pilot had built the airplane at his home in Anchorage and brought it out to Wasilla to fly. The engine had sat for a while after a prop strike in the 1990's. The pilot did not want to do many ground runs because he did not want to glaze the cylinders. There have been two airworthiness directives for the carburetor, he did not know if they had been complied with. He stated the engine sounded like it was running rich and may have flooded and quit. He noted that the flaps were not deployed for the takeoff.



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Date: September 19, 2024
Subject: ANC24FA092 - Witness
Contact: Dave Beaver

Mr. Beaver stated he was outside and on a side street north of the runway when he heard normal engine sounds, then heard a severe engine sputter. He said that the engine sputtered until he couldn't hear it anymore.



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Date: September 19, 2024
Subject: ANC24FA092 - Witness
Contact: Kathy Richardson

Ms. Richardson stated she lived near the airport and that she was in her living room when the accident occurred. She heard the takeoff and then heard the engine stall and the airplane crash. She looked out her window and saw the airplane on fire.