



The National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety
Central Region
Memorandum for the Record
Pilot Interview Summary
CEN16LA394
Pearland, Texas
September 24, 2016

Interview Summary:

I haven't had a problem with that aircraft since the annual. The day of the accident, I convinced my wife to go with me. My grandkids were going to go next. They were watching the flight. I've done 7 landings recently. I did a good preflight and topped off the left wing. My wife didn't want to go flying with ¼ tank in the left wing, so I topped it off. I taxied to 14. I checked the instruments and did the run-up to 1800/1900 RPM. I checked the magnetos and carb heat. Everything seemed ok.

I lined up on the runway and throttled up. Everything seemed ok. At 65, I pulled back and got in the air. I got up maybe 100-200' and noticed that the RPM was not getting any higher than about 1800 and the plane wasn't getting any higher. My wife didn't know anything was wrong because her headset wasn't working. She was getting ready to take pictures.

I was hoping that I had enough juice to get a little higher and turn. I turned crosswind and saw houses. I turned to avoid the houses. As you know, you lose altitude when you turn. I was looking at a field and thinking that maybe I could make it. Then I clipped a tree and we went down nose first.

Q – Was the aircraft running smoothly?

A – The engine was still running at 1800 RPM all the way into the tree. I checked the mixture and throttle, but no more power.

Q – Did you use carb heat?

A – I didn't use carb heat.

Q – Was the run-up smooth?

A – The run-up was good. I checked the mixture and carb heat. Everything was fine.

Q – When did you know that there was a problem?

A – I could see the airspeed and the tach. Normally, the tach is about 2200-2300 rpm. My main concern was not hitting the residential area.

Q – Have you had any maintenance issues?

A – I had the Annual done with Christian Waldon. It took Chris from December to April to do the annual. He said it would take a week because the Colt is easy, but every time I went over there the plane was just sitting there. I wanted Randy to check the plane, especially the tach. I was nervous the first time I took the plane up after the annual. I think I flew it about six times after the annual. The pitot tube was plugged up, but he fixed that. Randy said that Chris is a good mechanic when he works, but he drinks a lot. The first flight out of annual, I had no brakes. So, I brought it back to him and he fixed it. I believe that Chris didn't check everything on the annual or maybe he didn't tell me if more work needed to be done.

Q – In the flight, did you switch the mags or the carb heat?

A – No, I just messed with the power. It stayed at 1800 all the way through.

Q – How much fuel did you have?

A – Maybe half fuel on the right, and I had just topped it off on the left.

Q – What were your injuries?

A – Two broken wrists, a broken face and a broken jaw.

Q – Did you have aviation insurance?

A – No. I kept everything else current except that. I was down for so long for the annual that I didn't put the insurance back on.

Q – Then you will be responsible to remove the aircraft from that field. What are your plans for that?

A – My sons will go over there and remove it.

Q – Can you please consult with me before you move the airplane? Also, I will need the maintenance records.

A – OK. You can have the maintenance records. I don't need them. I think the plane is destroyed.

Q – Well, if you want to part out the airplane, you will need the logbooks.

A – Yeah, ok. It took me a year to get the plane registered because they said that it had been wrecked or that there was a problem with parts or something like that.

Q – You mentioned before that you wanted to have the tach looked at before. What made you want to have the tach looked at before the accident?

A – Before, the engine used to run up to about 2500, but lately it normally only goes to 2200-2300. I asked him if 2200-2300 was ok. He told me to bring it by. I want to bring the plane to him on Saturday, but he wasn't there. Yeah, I flew Friday and Saturday. 3 touch and go's and there was no problem.

Q – Did you notice any difference in the sound of the engine from the time that you applied power until you impacted the tree?

A – No, it just sounded smooth and sounded the same.

(Inspector directed the same question to Mary Ramon, and she answered the same.)

Q – Did you notice any difference in the length of the takeoff roll?

A – Oh yeah. It definitely took longer. Like I said, by the time that I was up over the height of the buildings, there was no runway left to come back down to.

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