



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Jennifer Rodi
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Person Contacted: Clayton Bruton - Pilot
NTSB Accident Number: CEN17LA202

Narrative:

During the conversation, Mr. Bruton stated the following:

Mr. Bruton had suffered significant injuries, multiple surgeries, and several hospital-stays as a result of the accident. At the time of the interview he did not recall many events leading up to the accident or the accident flight.

The airplane was stored in a hanger and prior to flight he would tow the airplane from the hanger and sump the fuel. He never recalled seeing any visible contaminants in those fuel sump samples.

On the morning of the accident, he recalled having a difficult time starting the engine. He stated that it sounded like the left cylinders were firing and the right cylinders were firing slowly, one at a time. Once the engine started he heard a deep rumble and popping from the engine. This eventually cleared up and the engine ran without further issue.

He did recall that the airplane had exhaust work done but the airplane had flown for 100 hours since without issues. He also remarked that the low fuel light would illuminate in a turn. In response he would turn on the fuel pump and the low fuel light would go out. He also recalled that recent maintenance found blue foam in the fuel system.

The pilot had vague memories of the airplane descending, losing altitude, and he attempted to level the wings and arrest the descent. He also recalled trying to egress from the window following the accident. He did not recall any other details of the accident flight nor the phase of application operations he was in at the time of the accident.



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During the conversation, Mr. Bruton stated the following:

Mr. Bruton was the owner of the accident airplane and Trade Wind Ag Aviation Service Inc. He estimated that, at the time of departure, the airplane was loaded with 135 gallons of fungicide and the fuel tanks were each $\frac{1}{2}$ full. The airplanes were fueled from a fuel tank where the airplanes are loaded with product. The tank has a sediment filter and is sumped daily. He stated that several airplanes had used that fuel source and reported no issues.

He stated that they purchased the airplane about a year prior to the accident. On occasion they had issues starting the engine and this was remedied by adjusting the gap on the spark plugs. During flight, the low fuel pressure light would come on. If the pilot turned the fuel pump on, the light would go out and the fuel pressure would increase. During routine maintenance, just prior to the accident, a mechanic found blue foam, consistent with the internal foam baffles in the fuel tanks, in the fuel filter at the engine. The contaminant was described blue in color, some of which was fine like sand or dirt. The filter was cleaned and then checked periodically without further findings. The internal foam baffles were not replaced at the time of the finding.