



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Date: 2/22/2018

Person Contacted: Charles Wesley Smith (Owner of Accident Airplane, Witness)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA084

Narrative:

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

Mr. Smith was interviewed at the Tri-County Airport (1J0), Bonifay, Florida, terminal. He reported that he paid for an annual for the accident airplane, N3568K, on June 26th, 2017. The accident airplane had not flown for more than 2-3 hours from the annual in June 2017 to the accident day. He reported that the mechanic who performed the annual was Ed Bowers, who was also the accident pilot. Mr. Smith reported that he bought the airplane about two years earlier.

On the day of the accident, February 21st, 2018, Mr. Smith reported that he added 10 gallons of Avgas per side at 1J0 in the accident airplane, about 2:00-2:30PM local time, which resulted in both tanks being full. He reported that he planned to practice traffic pattern entries and touch and go's at 1J0. He reported that the weather was a south wind at 10-20 knots, "right down the runway." He added that the visibility was 10 statute miles, and the sky was scattered clouds. He reported that he sumped both fuel tanks during his preflight, and did not see anything abnormal. He added that he performed a run-up, and the engine produced 1800 rpm. The magneto check was normal.

Mr. Smith reported that he took off runway 19, climbed to 1,800 ft mean sea level, and maneuvered within 3 to 4 nautical miles of 1J0 for a few minutes. He reported that he reentered the traffic pattern and completed a touch and go landing. He added that nothing was abnormal with the engine during this portion of the flight. Subsequently, Mr. Smith reported that during the climb, after the touch and go, the airplane "seemed like it didn't want to fly." He reported that at 300 ft above ground level (AGL), he checked the throttle, mixture, and carburetor heat, all of which were "full forward." He reported that the airplane would not climb about 400 ft. to 500 ft. AGL, and even with full throttle, he had "drop the nose" multiple times to get the stall warning light to stop illuminating. He added that the engine was not popping or shaking, and it was not running rough, it just would not produce full power. Mr. Smith further reported that he then made a 180 degree turn back to the airport to land the opposite direction he had just taken off.



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During the turn and approach to runway 01 at 1J0, he maintained full throttle. He added that the landing on runway 01 was fast, and there was a tailwind for the landing, but he was able to land without incident. He added that he then turned off on a taxiway, and immediately performed a runup. He reported that the engine produced 2200 rpm and there was nothing abnormal that he noticed. He then taxied the airplane to his hangar and found Ed Bowers, the mechanic who had worked on N3568K previously.

Mr. Smith reported that when he got of his airplane, he spoke with Mr. Ed Bowers. According to Mr. Smith, he told Mr. Bowers what he had just experienced in-flight. Mr. Smith stated to Mr. Bowers that there was a "problem with the engine" and that "the airplane wouldn't climb."

Mr. Smith reported that Mr. Bowers immediately boarded the airplane, started it up, and performed a run-up. Mr. Smith reported that the run-up seemed normal, and then Mr. Bowers multiple times asked Mr. Smith to get into the airplane, and Mr. Smith reported that he did not want to fly in the airplane again, because of what he had just experienced. According to Mr. Smith, he observed Mr. Bowers taxi from the hangar, and then a minute or two later, he saw the accident airplane liftoff on runway 19, about half way down the runway. Mr. Smith reported that he saw the airplane climb on upwind, crosswind, and then enter a downwind, in the traffic pattern for runway 19. He reported that the altitude appeared to be a normal traffic pattern altitude. He added he saw the airplane descend on downwind and turn left base. The airplane then descended out of Mr. Smith's view on a base leg to runway 19. Mr. Smith shortly thereafter observed a plume of smoke and rushed to the accident site, where he observed the airplane engulfed in flames.