



National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety – Central Region

Interview Summary: Courtney Liedler – ERA19LA027

Date: October 26, 2018

Location: Accident Site

Interviewers: Courtney Liedler NTSB, Denver

Interviewee: Michael Murphy (Pilot)

During the Interview, Mr. Murphy stated the following:

Mr. Murphy arrived at Centennial Airport (APA) approximately 0645 that morning and completed the airplane preflight. About 0700, he went to let his friend (Adam Clapper) into the airport gate.

When Mr. Murphy started the engine, he stated everything appeared fine. He checked the ATIS and taxied out of parking tie down area Hotel. He contacted ground and received taxi clearance down taxiway D. Mr. Murphy stated he sat for about 5 minutes at the runup area to let the engine heat up. He then completed the engine runup and preflight check. He recalled checking the carb heat and cycling the magnetos twice. Everything appeared normal. He cycled on/off the Bendix starter, he explained there was an AD he was aware of with those starters.

Mr. Murphy stated he received a weather brief and opened his flight plan at 0727. He called ground and received taxi clearance to runway 17L. He then transferred to ATC frequency and was cleared for a straight-out departure. He started his takeoff roll at the end of runway 17L. He stated he noticed the takeoff roll was a "little longer than normal" but said he attributed it to weight of full fuel and a passenger. During climb out, Mr. Murphy explained the airplane did not have good climb performance. He retracted the flaps to get better lift. Air traffic control cleared him to turn westbound (right-hand turn). As he started to turn, he estimated the airplane was climbing about 200 ft per minute. However, after the turn the airplane started to descend. He cannot recall if ATC called him or he made a call to ATC that he needed to return to APA. He considered making another right turn for downwind, but the airplane was still not climbing. He had verified the fuel pump was on and the fuel selector was in the "right" tank position. Mr. Murphy explained he was on the left tank at engine startup and then switched to right tank during taxi to the runup area. He stated he had full throttle and mixture full rich but heard the

engine “surge,” which he explained sounded like it was losing power. The airplane continued to descend, and he radioed to ATC that he was “going down.”

Once on the ground, the passenger opened the door and got out. Mr. Murphy turned off the power and got out after the passenger. Later, Mr. Murphy re-entered the airplane to turn off the master switch, fuel, and anti-collision.

Mr. Murphy was the airplane owner. He purchased the airplane in late April or early May of this year (2018). He estimated he had about 1,000 hours total time and 150 hours in N5575U since purchasing. The flight prior to the accident flight was on Sunday, October 21, 2018 to Laramie, Wyoming.

Mr. Murphy said he had a 100-hr maintenance check completed right after he purchased the airplane. The only other maintenance completed were oil changes and a new directional gyro installed a couple weeks prior. He advised the maintenance sticker for the DG installation may not be included in the maintenance records yet.



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Interviewee: Adam Clapper (Passenger)

During the Interview, Mr. Clapper stated the following:

Mr. Clapper verified he held a private pilot license; however, he was not current and had not flown an airplane in years.

He stated he arrived at Centennial Airport (APA) that morning and Michael (the pilot) told him the preflight was completed and they were ready to go. Mr. Clapper loaded a cooler with ice in the back seat and got seated.

They taxied to the north end of the airport for run-up. They sat in the run-up area to “warm the engine up” and then Michael completed the preflight. They received their takeoff clearance to the south and departed on runway 17L. Once airborne, Mr. Clapper noticed they had a positive rate of climb, but it was not a high rate of climb. He estimated between 100-200 ft per minute. They reached between 400-500’ above the ground (6,100-6,200 msl) and stopped gaining altitude. They made a turn to the west, which was a right-hand bank. Once they began the right bank, the positive rate of climb stopped, and they began to lose altitude. Michael acted quickly, leveled the airplane and found a landing spot. From the time they began the bank to the time they were on the ground again was about 10 seconds. Mr. Clapper said he did not see a positive climb rate at any point after the bank. He stated he did not hear a “power surge” or anything that caused him concern from the engine but said that was his first time in the airplane so he may have noticed something different than normal.

They landed with a hard force and the airplane “drug a little.” He was not seriously injured and reported soreness in his back.

He explained he and Michael planned to fly to Utah to eat at a restaurant and bring some food back for their families. He packed a 20-pound bag of ice in the cooler, but some of the ice was already used so it was not a full 20-pound bag.