

RECORD OF ☒ VISIT ☐ CONFERENCE OR ☐ TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 9:20 AM	DATE 10/21/2021
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION James Michael Steele		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
SUBJECT A&P mechanic that worked on N9639D			
DIGEST			
On 21 October 2021 at approximately 0920, accompanied by ASI Sarah Allen, I went to meet			
with James Michael Steele in reference to work he had performed on James Larry Vestal's			
crashed Tri Pacer N9639D. In Vestal's statement he reported that Steele had worked on the			
brakes of his aircraft and disconnected the radios during the time work was being performed			
and provided a logbook entry that showed that Steele had in fact worked on the brake			
cylinder.			
During the conversation Steele said that he highly doubted Vestal's competence and			
further said that the only time he would let Vestal fly N9639D was when Vestal had an			
instructor or Steele in the aircraft to ensure that Vestal was safe. Steele said that he			
went so far as to park a front end loader or other piece of farm equipment in front of			
Vestal's hangar to prevent him from flying the aircraft unsupervised.			
About two weeks prior to the accident, Vestal notified Steele that Vestal had found a			
hangar to keep N9639D in located at Causey in Liberty. Steele said that he himself had			
flown aircraft N9639D to the new location in Liberty NC and then told the attendants there			
that they should not, under any circumstances, allow Vestal to (Cont...)			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
DATE 10/21/2021	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector AV/AS	SIGNATURE Shane J A Graham	

(Cont...) take his plane out of the hangar without having an instructor in the aircraft with him.

I asked Steele if he had, at any point, disconnected the radios for any reason or if he had noticed the brakes malfunctioning when he flew N9639D to Liberty. Steele said, "The radios worked perfectly and the brakes obviously worked or I would have had an issue myself!"

At the accident site the night of the crash in Walnut Cove, I observed that none of the radios, nor the transponder were left in the on position, however the mag was left in the "Both" position post crash. I also tested the brakes on the spot and they too were able to stop the tire rotation.

Steele also said that Vestal had not had a BFR (Bi-Annual Flight Review) in a long time and when Steele asked Vestal about it, Vestal did not know what a BFR was.

The flight that involved the accident was the first flight N9639D had after it was transferred to Liberty.