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Office of Aviation Safety, Eastern Region

Date: July 22, 2024

Subject: NTSB# ERA24FA310

Contact: Bo Dalbotten (Private Pilot, Witness to Accident Flight)

The individual noted above provided the following information via an interview via telephone. The below contents are a summary of what was reported:

- He reported that he resided in the Dayton, Ohio area and had driven to the accident airport to take a demonstration flight in the accident airplane. He was a private pilot with about 200 hours and was considering a purchase of a Titan T-51. It was his understanding this was Titan's Demonstration airplane.
- He reported that prior to the flight, the accident pilot had performed maintenance on the airplane, to include work on the pitot static system, a fuel filter replacement, and the addition of engine oil.
- They met around Noon on the day of the accident. He described further that the accident pilot mentioned that the pitot static system was "getting old" and it needed replaced. The accident pilot completed the work and "pushed pressure on the system" and it appeared to be working.
- The private pilot reported that the accident pilot had completed a few run-ups, and ground taxi runs.
- After the ground runs and run-ups the pilot returned to the ramp. The accident pilot checked the oil and told him it was low. It was the private pilot's impression that the accident pilot seemed to think it was weird that the engine needed oil and seemed frustrated that it needed oil. He did add oil after his observation that it was low. He recalled that the accident pilot stated to him, "I didn't think I needed to add oil."
- Following the run-ups, the accident pilot also said, "The fuel pressure is too high." The pilot had to pull a few panels off the airplane and change a fuel filter in the fuel pump. He observed the pilot pull the filter out and he said, "the screen

is clogged.” The accident pilot then told the private pilot he couldn’t find “carb clean” but he did find, in what the private pilot described as a “stinky sweet cleaner” that he did not recognize. The accident pilot proceeded to clean the filter.

- The private pilot also recalled that the accident pilot remarked that “I hope that O-ring holds. I nicked it.” The private pilot believed the accident pilot was referring to a fuel filter O-ring.
- The pilot completed an additional run-up and told the private pilot, “We are back within parameters” and he then told the private pilot he was actually going to takeoff. The private pilot remained on the ground and observed the flight.
- The private pilot recalled that a “quick fix” for his demo flight turned into well over 2-3 hours of fixes.
- The accident pilot then departed for a quick flight to ensure everything was functional with the airplane.
- The private pilot observed the accident pilot perform maneuvers over the airport, to include aileron rolls and a few “laps” above the airport. He estimated the maneuvers were completed well above the field elevation, above 3,000 ft mean sea level. Everything appeared normal.
- The private pilot then observed the airplane approaching runway 1 to conduct a lower pass.
- He observed that the pilot pitched down, increased engine power, and then performed a pull up maneuver where he was standing near the runway. When the airplane pitched up into the climb, he heard the engine go to a “super high RPM” and then the “entire prop hub shatters.” He observed several parts and pieces fall from the nose section of the airplane, and then the engine noise went silent.
- He then observed the airplane turn left and complete a 180 degree turn and descend towards a road that was about a ¼ mile west of the runway. The airplane eventually descended out of his view flying southbound. It was his observation that the pilot was navigating towards the road to the west of the airport to complete an emergency landing.
- He reported that cowling fragments were located near and on the runway at the north threshold area. Two propellers were located, one on the runway, and one just north of the runway.

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