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Date: 01/07/2025
Subject: ERA24FA391, Pilot history interview
Contact: Bethany Oates, pilot spouse

The following are a summary and excerpts from an email interview with the pilot's spouse:

Q: What time did Mr. Whittaker wake up the morning of the accident day (September 23, 2024)?

A: Around 8-9 am

Q: What time did Mr. Whittaker go to bed the day before the accident (September 22, 2024)?

A: Around 10 pm

Q: What was his day like on September 23rd leading up to the flight?

A: He had a busy week before with corporate flights with Davinici Jets and was wore out after a long week. He was excited to be off for the next week to practice his future airshow routine to get his airshow waiver so that we could start doing airshows across the country. Around 1ish he got his flight suit on. Once he took off he flew over our orchard and I was waving and then he came back around again and flew low over our house.

Q: Did Mr. Whittaker share any details about the planned flight and what he planned to do? Any concerns with weather or the airplane?

A: After Darrel flew over the orchard and house for me, he made his way to the aerobatic box, where he would always practice. I could hear the sounds of the plane practicing as usual but then I stopped hearing it after awhile and thought it was odd that he wasn't back home yet. The weather was very nice that day. I noticed it was a little windy, but no gusts just a nice breeze. I remember looking at the weather because it was supposed to rain all week long and he was trying to get his first practice flight in before the rain came the next day.

Q: Was Mr. Whittaker taking any medications? Did he have any recent or ongoing health concerns?

A: [He] had beat prostate cancer 2 years prior and had no underlying issues related to that. He had just had his 6 month first class medical renewal about 2 weeks prior.

Q: Is there anything else that you feel the investigation should be aware of?

A: [He] had over 25 years of experience and was extremely skilled and talented and he followed safety rules to the T. He did not budge on any checklists or safety protocols in any way in his professional corporate flying nor in his personal flying. He was very comfortable flying the plane and knew what the plane was capable of and how powerful it was. He was a very skilled instructor as well and continued to teach and knew how to get out of spins/stalls/engine failures/etc.