



## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

### Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

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#### RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Who: Silvia Valeria Coella-Mena

When: April 28, 2016

Where: Jackson Medical Center – Ryker Trauma Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Ms. Coella- Mena was interviewed in her hospital room with her parents and a girlfriend from Ecuador present.

According to Ms. Coella-Mena, she and Fernando Guispe-Diaz were enrolled in the flight program at Florida Aviation Academy and were training for their multi-engine rating together. Prior to the flight, their flight instructor, Geoff White, provided ground instruction and reviewed emergency procedures. Ms. Coella-Mena said Mr. White "drilled it into their heads" that they needed to anticipate an engine failure at any moment and needed to be prepared. During the flight, she flew the first half and received 1.7 hours of training. She said she practiced VMC SE, simulated loss of engine on the takeoff roll, and engine shut-down/re-starts at altitude, before landing and switching seats with Mr. Diaz. Ms. Coella-Mena said they then flew for about an hour before Mr. Diaz did a single-engine instrument approach into PMP, landed, and then taxied back to the runway for another departure. Ms. Coella-Mena stated the takeoff was normal and Mr. Diaz made a right crosswind turn. She was not sure of their altitude or if they had leveled out on the cross wind leg, but she saw Mr. White reach over and pull the left engine throttle to idle to simulate a loss of engine power while announcing they had an engine failure. Ms. Coella-Mena said that she wasn't sure what happened and thought that maybe Mr. Diaz reacted wrong to the simulated emergency, because she heard air traffic control ask them if everything was ok. Mr. White immediately took control of the airplane and the airplane entered a steep, descending left hand turn toward the ground. Ms. Coella-Mena said the airplane momentarily leveled out, but they were too low to recover before impacting the ground. She said she did not remember the impact, but did recall being in the burning wreckage. Mr. White had exited and was taking "baby steps" away from the airplane. Mr. Diaz was having difficulty removing his seatbelt and she said she was yelling at Mr. White for help, but it was too loud and she knew that he could not hear her. Ms. Coella-Mena said Mr. Diaz got free of his seatbelt and both of them got out of the airplane.

Ms. Colla-Mena reported everything was normal prior to the upset and that there were no mechanical problems with the airplane or engines.

Leah D. Read

Sr. Air Safety Investigator

National Transportation Safety Board



## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

### Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

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#### RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Who: Fernando Diaz

When: July 21, 2016

RE: ERA16FA170

Mr. Diaz was interviewed via the telephone at his attorney Skip Pita's office. Also present for the interview were his parents and Mr. Pita's paralegal.

According to Mr. Diaz he incurred a head injury in the accident and did not remember exact details; however, he recalled that he had performed several simulated single-engine out maneuvers before returning to Pompano Beach, where they did a "touch and go". During climb-out, at an altitude about 500 ft, he began a right hand turn on to crosswind. Mr. Diaz said the flight instructor, Mr. Geoff White, then reached up and pulled "an engine", but he did not recall which one. The airplane then banked right and nosed over. The next thing Mr. Diaz remembered was "waking up" in the airplane all alone and it was on fire. He said he was only wearing a lap belt and no shoulder harness. Mr. Diaz said that he tried several times to un-do the lap belt buckle, but the buckle was underneath the seat. Mr. Diaz said that he and Silvia always had problems unlatching this particular seatbelt because it was positioned almost under the seat near the floor and they would have to help each other get it unlatched. He also said his fingers were burned, which made it even more difficult to unlatch. Mr. Diaz said that he was able to finally unlatch the buckle and exit the airplane.

Mr. Diaz said Mr. White never told him which engine he was going to fail before they took off because Mr. White always wanted him to feel which engine failed via the rudder pedals. This was the first time Mr. White had simulated an engine failure on takeoff and Mr. Diaz had only practiced simulated single-engine out maneuvers at altitude. Earlier that day, he watched as Silvia practiced single-engine maneuvers. On one occasion, she struggled with the emergency procedure, but he instructor was there to help her recover.

Mr. Diaz said there were no mechanical issues with the airplane or engines prior to the upset.

Leah D. Read, Sr. Air Safety Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board