



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Timothy W. Monville**  
**Sr. Air Safety Investigator**  
**Eastern Region**

---

**Date: January 17, 2018**  
**Person Contacted: Ryan Lefebvre**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA17FA017**

---

### Narrative:

Mr. Ryan Lefebvre was contacted by phone on October 17, 2016, at 1632 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

At the beginning of the phone call he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He indicated that he is a flight instructor, and had been teaching for 3 years. He reported that Mr. Tawfig became a flight instructor the beginning of Summer 2016. Because of that, he (Ryan) began working with him.

He reported that on Wednesday (October 12, 2016), 5 airplanes of the flying club departed CYSN between 0830 and 1100 on pleasure/instruction, and flew to various airports in the United States including NY, VA, SC, and GA. All arrived in the U.S. on Wednesday, and all airplanes flew every day. He was flying in C-GNOP, and had 3 students/occupants on-board.

He provided the following timeline for October 16, 2016 –

While at Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR), Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, he and Mr. Tawfig discussed the weather, which included the locations of cold and warm fronts, making note they might need to deviate to the west to avoid the cold front. They also discussed that it might be necessary to execute an instrument approach to the destination airport (CYSN). He also indicated all the pilots were tired of the previous days of flying, but not to the point of being fatigued.

Three airplanes (C-GNOP, C-GYSN, and C-GYGZ) were flown from Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR), Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, to Richmond International Airport (RIC), Richmond, Virginia, and all landed uneventfully. After landing, they had lunch.

Airplanes C-GNOP and C-GYSN, neither of which were equipped with on-board weather radar, were both topped off from the same truck. Ryan later reported no fuel related issues of his airplane (C-GNOP) on his flight from RIC to CYSN.

He had on-board his airplane, C-GNOP, an I-pad with GPS, and a GNS 430 transceiver. He had charts appropriate for the flight. He was not sure if Mr. Tawfig had a flashlight, but reported Mr. Tawfig did not have an I-pad. Mr. Tawfig did have IFR and VFR charts, and was familiar with GPS.

One of the aircraft, C-GYGZ, departed RIC first, then Ryan and Mr. Tawfig had a conversation and he (Mr. Tawfig) said he was good. Ryan indicated Mr. Tawfig did not make any comment about concern for the weather. It was agreed that Mr. Tawfig would follow Ryan, and Ryan would call him if there was any adverse weather, and would attempt to vector him.

In advance of the flight, they started their engines at the same time. He was asked if he could tell seating positions and noted Mr. Tawfig was in the right front seat, but could not tell who was in the left front seat. He (Ryan) flying C-GNOP departed RIC about 1 minute ahead of C-GYSN. During the beginning of the flight he heard radio calls being made by Benjamin Jeffries. He indicated that the flight was crystal clear until about 20 miles south of Bradford, PA, when at that time it started getting dark and cloudy. The Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center controller vectored him (Ryan) westbound and said to remain on that heading for 40 miles to stay clear, and then vectored Mr. Tawfig in the same direction, but also said that nobody has been on that route that day. Ryan said the controller emphasized light to moderate precipitation. Ryan reported that Mr. Tawfig was too far east.

The controller noted a right turn and heading change to the south from C-GYSN, which was not reported by Mr. Tawfig. At that time he knew Mr. Tawfig had crashed. He reported there were no radio calls made by Mr. Tawfig at that time. He did not hear any "mayday" call, but he did hear words "a something us", then heard a scream that sounded to from Mr. Tawfig. He thought the scream was because someone had accidentally or inadvertently hit the microphone switch. He then took the controls from his student and flew from this point forward. He looked at his phone and noted Tyler had landed, so he told him to report the downed airplane to the flying club. He was asked by the controller to monitor the guard frequency, which he did but did not hear the signal from an emergency locator transmitter.

When he (Ryan) turned to the west, they were VFR, but his airspeed slowed from between 100-105 to 60-70. Ryan reported it was dark when turning to the west, and there was no ground reference lights until he turned west then north. He reported he briefly entered IMC when turned to a northerly, then westerly headings, reporting he was on instruments because he was going in and out of the clouds. He experienced some "wavy turbulence" when he made the turn to the west, and he reported he could not see the stars, but could see the ground 80-90 percent of the

time after turning to the west and north. During his flight he gave a PIREP, reporting light rain and a smooth ride. He continued in and out of the clouds and encountered some rain for about 15 minutes, then near Jamison VOR was VFR with a ceiling at 8,000 ft msl. He flew proceeded home and landed about 2100, which was about 1 hour later than planned. He did not have to execute an instrument approach at his destination.

While at 6,000 ft mean sea level (msl), the outside air temperature (OAT) was between 9 and 10°C, and when at 7,000 ft msl, the OAT was 7°C. He did not encounter or observe any signs of freezing rain, and the lowest freezing level was at 14,000 ft msl. At some point of the accident flight, Corey Mijac sent a text message advising of the weather conditions they had encountered.

While in-flight, he and Mr. Tawfig were on the same frequency, but were not communicating via cellular phone. There was no direct communication between himself and Mr. Tawfig. Ryan was not sure why Mr. Tawfig turned to the right, again confirming that Mr. Tawfig did not announce the turn.

He clarified that the first airplane that departed RIC, C-GYGZ flown by Tyler Hill, diverted to Baltimore, MD, due to engine rpm decrease, and he had landed there about 1800, which was before the accident.

He indicated that Mr. Twfig did not consume alcohol, was religious, and went to bed early. He (Ryan) has been a friend of his for about 1 year. He knew Mr. Tawfig was instrument current, and had flown C-GYSN many times and have never had a problem with the airplane. He reported last flying C-GYSN the past month.

He also indicated that he flew with Mr. Tawfig the week before during instrument training, conducting hold entries for him (Mr. Tawfig) to keep current. They flew at night with no vision restricting device. He indicated that Mr. Tawfig was not doing that training for currency, but rather for practice.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on July 3, 2017, at 0921 EDT. He received the e-mail but did not reply.



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Timothy W. Monville**  
**Sr. Air Safety Investigator**  
**Eastern Region**

---

**Date: December 22, 2016**  
**Person Contacted: Ms. Betty Klingel**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA17FA017**

---

### Narrative:

Ms. Betty Klingel was interviewed on October 20, 2016, at 1524 EDT. She was interviewed at her house located at [REDACTED] Port Allegheny, PA [REDACTED]. She provided a phone number of [REDACTED].

She indicated that on the date of the accident just about dark, or about 1900, she was at her cellar of her house and was outside. She indicates that she does hear aircraft frequently, and thought she heard a sound consistent with an airplane in a "nose-dive" though she did not see it, nor did she hear the impact. She also did not see any smoke or fire related to what would be the impact. She indicated that at her location it was not raining at the time. She indicated that the engine sounded steady, and she did not hear any sputtering.

When asked about the weather conditions and route of flight, she indicated there was some wind at the time, and thought it was flying southeast of her location.

The location she was standing when she heard it was at 41 degrees 42.000 minutes north latitude and 078 degrees 11.759 minutes west longitude at a GPS elevation of 1,990 feet.

The digest was reviewed with her during the interview and she agreed with the content.



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Timothy W. Monville**  
**Sr. Air Safety Investigator**  
**Eastern Region**

---

**Date: January 17, 2018**  
**Person Contacted: Michael Neave and Scott Montean**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA17FA017**

---

### Narrative:

Messrs. Michael Neave and Scott Montean were contacted by phone on October 31, 2016, at 1033 EDT. They were called at [REDACTED]

The St. Catharines Flying Club was established in 1928, and they operate out of 2 bases. They have 30 active student pilot's and 6 flight instructors. Their airplanes are maintained on the field. They do have an AB Initio program, and students Jeffries and Mijac were in that program. They had 6 airplanes including the accident airplane, consisting of 2 Cessna 172's and 4 Piper PA-28-161's. The flying club is considered a flight training unit. Scott Montean is the most senior flight instructor at the club.

They indicated that the 5 airplanes of the flying club (C-GYSN; C-GNOP; C-GQXP; C-GYGZ; and C-GFVS) had flown to the U.S.. Airplane C-GFVS returned to St Catharines/Niagara District Airport (CYSN), St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, on October 15, 2016. Airplane C-GYGZ, piloted by Tyler Hill, was the first to depart on October 16, 2016, from Richmond International Airport (RIC), Richmond, Virginia, en route to CYSN, but diverted to Martin State Airport (MTN), Baltimore, Maryland, due to an engine rpm issue; the flight landed uneventfully.

With respect to dispatch, they indicated that flying club personnel knew of Mr. Tawfig's experience. Mr. Tawfig did sign the logsheet of October 12, 2016, and they (flying club) knew he was flying to Buffalo, New York. As far as club personnel knew, Mr. Tawfig was IFR current.

Michael indicated he has possession of Mr. Rifat's pilot logbook. His first logged flight in a Cessna 152 was dated January 9, 2010, and his last logged flight was September 27, 2016. The last logged flight was done in a flight simulator in which IFR instrument approaches were performed under direction of Scott Montean. The simulated portion lasted 0.8 hour.

Michael was asked about whether the airplane was operated/flown during the time it was in the process of being imported into Canada. He indicated it was not operated, and the import inspection by Transport Canada took a long time.

Mr. Montean holds a commercial pilot certificate with ASEL, AMEL, IA ratings. He also holds a Class 1 instructor, and has been supervising Mr. Tawfig since June 18, 2016. In that capacity, if Mr. Tawfig had a student that was ready to solo, Mr. Montean would have had to fly with the student first before the student was allowed to solo. He (Mr. Montean) gave Mr. Tawfig training for his flight instructor.

With respect to a Class 4 flight instructor, that person would have to work under the supervision of an instructor, and can't teach on his/her own. Everybody starts as a Class 4 instructor. If a Class 4 instructor has 3 student's successfully pass within 1 year, and 3 student solo recommendations, that person would then become a Class 3 instructor. If the instructor does not have 3 student's pass within 1 year, or 3 student solo recommendations, he/she must be retested. He (Mr. Montean) was supervising Mr. Tawfig as a flight instructor, Scott had also flown with Mr. Tawfig for 5 hours of instrument training in the Spring of 2016.

With respect to the flights to the U.S., there was no special training requirement for Mr. Tawfig.

Mr. Tawfig underwent training in advance of taking an Instrument Proficiency Check flight because he was not instrument current. As part of the training, Scott flew with him twice, Ryan Lefebvre flew with him, and Conrad Hatcher did the IPC flight test, which was done in the accident airplane on October 8, 2016. During that flight, Mr. Tawfig missed a hold, which required further training. Mr. Tawfig received additional training, and passed his IPC flight on October 11, 2016; the flight was performed in the accident airplane, and was given again by Conrad Hatcher. Mr. Montean was asked to provide a document outlining his training with Mr. Tawfig, and Mr. Tawfig's instrument training. This was provided by Mr. Neave as a Word document on November 2, 2016, at 0921 EDT.

They provided the following timeline –

October 15, 2016 (Saturday) –

About midday while in Mr. Montean's hotel room near Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR), Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, using his laptop computer, Scott accessed aviationweather.gov web site, and accessed the "Flight Path Tool", looking at routing using flightplan.com. He (Mr. Montean) did not call 1-800-WX-Brief. They also obtained the significant weather prognostic charts. Also present was Mr. Tawfig, and Scott's student. They noted the location of a cold front, expecting rain for the later portion of the flight. The lowest freezing level when checked at 2200 hours was forecast to be at 14,000 ft. Mr. Montean indicated that Mr. Tawfig did not express any concerns at that time about the weather. Mr. Montean did not save any of the accessed weather products on his computer.

October 16, 2016 (Sunday) –

Mr. Montean did not interact with Mr. Tawfig this day, and was not with him. Mr. Montean checked the weather again using his laptop. He (Mr. Montean) flew from MYR to Lynchburg Regional Airport/Preston Glenn Field (LYH), Lynchburg, Virginia, and then flew to CYSN; the flight was done in C-GQXP, a Piper PA-28-161. While en route to CYSN, the flight was flown at 7,000 ft mean sea level (msl), but when near Bradford, PA, the flight descended to 5,000 ft msl. The flight continued and when just past Bradford, PA, air traffic control vectored him to the west to avoid precipitation ahead. He reported that he was in clouds no more than 5 minutes, and encountered light rain and turbulence. He indicated that at 5,000 ft msl, the outside air temperature was between 10 and 12°C.

Mr. Montean reported that before Mr. Tawfig departed RIC, he called his mother in Saudi Arabia and reportedly discussed the weather and to pray for him.

The question was asked when was the last time that Mr. Tawfig flew in actual instrument conditions; Scott indicated he was not sure.

With respect to the accident flight, Scott thought that it was Ben's leg to fly in the left seat, and that Corey had flown in the left seat from MYR to Richmond International Airport (RIC), Richmond, Virginia.

Postaccident, based on conversations with Ryan Lefebvre, no icing was encountered, and only light rain occurred during his flight in C-GNOP.

The digest was e-mailed to them for review on June 29, 2017, at 1611 EDT. Scott Montean replied the same day at 1634 EDT, with, "Tim I don't require any changes to what has been said... Scott". Per Michael Neave June 30, 2017, at 1402 EDT, he provided input that was incorporated into the digest.