



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: Li-Tsu Chen

When: May 1, 2018

RE: ERA18FA137, Gainesville, GA

In an interview, Mr. Chen stated that the purpose of the flight was to practice maneuvers for a single-engine add-on to his commercial certificate. His check-ride was scheduled for May 1st.

Mr. Chen had the airplane booked from 1600 to 1800 on the day of the accident. He conducted a preflight inspection of the airplane and the fuel tanks were topped off with fuel. Mr. Chen stated that when he started the engine, it ran rough, until he leaned out the mixture to “burn off carbon.” The engine then ran smoothly. He said he had about 10 hours in the airplane and it was normal for the engine to start rough and then smooth out.

Mr. Chen said that after they departed (about 4:15), they flew to the flight’s schools practice area, which was over Lake Lanier, before returning to the airport to practice landings/pattern work. On the way back to the airport, while in level flight between 3,500 and 5,000 ft mean sea level (msl), he simultaneously heard a loud bang from the engine and saw the cowling expand. Engine oil then sprayed over the entire windshield and obstructed their view. The engine was producing some power, but they were unable to maintain altitude.

Mr. Chen said he immediately focused on finding a place to make a forced landing. Their only two options were Highway 369 or the lake. Fearing the lake would be too dangerous, they elected to land on the highway. The flight instructor, seated in the front right seat, took control of the airplane, and made two, descending orbits over the highway and prepared to land to the west. On the second circuit, the landing gear were extended. The instructor also made a distress call to air traffic control. The flight instructor opened the cabin door, so he could see outside and lined up on the road. Mr.

Chen said he was looking out the left side window. When the airplane was about 20-30 ft in the air, the flight instructor began to flare.

Mr. Chen said that he remembered an impact, but was not sure what it was, and then the airplane flipped over. The last thing he remembered was seeing the top of the fuselage caving in before losing consciousness.

Leah D. Read, Sr. ASI



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Record of Conversation

Who: Shen-Yang Wu

When: May 1, 2018

RE: ERA18FA137, Gainesville, GA

In an interview, Mr. Wu stated that he had been in the United States for two days and this was his first flight with the flight school. He was observing the flight from the left, rear seat.

Mr. Wu said they had been practicing maneuvers when he heard a loud bang and the airplane began to shake. Oil then covered the windshield from right to left. The instructor said they were going to make an emergency landing. The instructor opened the cabin door, so he could make sure the landing area was clear, because he could not see out the windshield. The passenger said as they touched down there was a loud crash sound. The next thing he knew he was upside down still strapped in to his seat via his lap belt. Mr. Wu unbuckled the belt and exited the airplane.

Leah D. Read, Sr. ASI