



## MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

**Aaron McCarter**  
**Air Safety Investigator**  
**Eastern Region Aviation**

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**Date: August 5, 2018**  
**Person Contacted: Witness/Ground Crew: Cody Collins**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA18FA208**

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### **Narrative:**

The pilot and his passenger observer, who was learning how to how to fly banners performed their preflight checks; the engine sounded good, the prop and mag check sounded normal. He (Collins) was speaking to the pilot via radio.

All indications were "in the green" After takeoff, they flew in the pattern and lined up on final approach for banner pickup. The banner was a 20 foot by 65 foot panel also known as an air sign. It was connected by a 300 foot rope.

As the airplane approached the banner pickup, about 30 feet out from pickup, the airplane engine went to full power, which is normal. He (Collins) made a radio call that confirmed the banner pick up by radioing to the pilot "good hook, you got it." The airplane made a rapid rotation and steep climb out. The training edge of the banner had just barely become airborne as the airplane reached the top of the climb.

The engine sounded strong during the climb. At the top of the climb, he saw the right wing dip, then the nose dropped, and it spun down. It appeared to go into a flat spin and made several full revolutions before it "pancaked" into the ground. The airplane caught fire shortly after impact.

The altitude was about 300 feet at the top of the climb when the airplane spun down. Somewhere during the descent, the pilot released the banner to recover.

Fueled the airplane with 30 gallons of fuel for about 45 gallons total. It was more than enough for one banner flight. They normally conduct 6 to 7 flights a day.

The pilot was highly experienced and had 3,000 hours pulling banners. The pilot rated passenger had about 180 hours and was observing.

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